

In The SAAC

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The Voice of the D-I National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

Hardship vs Redshirt 101 -Michael Piscetelli, Atlantic Coast Conference

Redshirt, hardship waiver and medical redshirt – do you know the difference? Take a look at the information below and see if you can determine whether it is a case of a redshirt year or a hardship waiver:

Carol, a soccer student-athlete, participates in the first two regularly scheduled contests of the 2005-06 season. Prior to the third contest, Carol suffers a knee injury that requires immediate surgery, rendering her unable to participate for the remainder of the season.

Doug, a football student-athlete, participates in practice all year with the team during the 2005-06 season. He was academically eligible

and was not injured, but his coaches never put him into a game.

Before making conclusions about Carol and Doug, here is some information to help you. A “medical redshirt” is not a term used in the NCAA bylaws; however, this term has crept into college athletics. For the most part, when someone uses the term, “medical redshirt,” they are referring to a hardship waiver in the NCAA’s terms.

So, what exactly is a hardship waiver and why should student-athletes be

aware? A student-athlete typically has five years in which to use four seasons of competition. Generally, anytime a student-athlete competes, whether in one minute or one play, the student-athlete has used a season of competition. Occasionally, a student-athlete can gain an additional season if specific circumstances, such as a season-ending injury, arise. With such a season-ending injury, an institution may request a hardship waiver for a student-athlete from the conference office if certain

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Injuries can happen at anytime and have lasting and dramatic effects on student-athletes' careers. Knowing your options is important.

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2 Much Txt Messag'n?

-Anna Chappell, Pac-10 Conference

How many times a day would you say you send or receive a text message from friends or family? I would say that text messaging has recently grown into one of the most commonly used modes of communication amongst college students. If you think about how often you use text messages, imagine if you are an elite prospective student-athlete and you get bombarded with endless text messages from coaches looking to get your attention.

The Division I Academics/ Eligibility/ Compliance Cabinet Sub committee on Recruiting has become increasingly concerned with the actual amount of text messaging that is happening between coaches and prospective student-athletes and has made suggestions for regulations.

After reviewing the impacts of text messaging the A/E/C cabinet has suggested that there be a time limit put on when text messages can be sent. The time limit gives prospective students-athletes time without intrusion from coaches via text messaging. Mon-Fri 4pm -8pm, and 8am-8pm on weekends are the only time coaches and their assistants may contact prospects. The goal of the A/E/C Cabinet is to restrict the use of text messaging and electronic communication, as well as limit the amount of intrusion imposed upon prospective student-athletes. But what do the athletes have to say about this?

When text messaging was brought up to the Division I student-athlete population, the same concerns seemed to be prevalent. Division I National SAAC recently asked for feedback on the issues surrounding text messaging and it was found that text messaging was:

a) too intrusive upon prospective student-athletes,



Photo courtesy of fotosearch.com

b) said to be an inappropriate means of conversation with an adult

c) placing unnecessary costs upon families who are left to pay the bill for text messaging usage.

Even though text messaging is the latest style of communication there are still many concerns out there surrounding how to control and monitor it. Coaches are trying to reach prospective student-athletes as soon as possible and with technology increasing, the NCAA is going to have to take further measures to protect athletes. SAAC

In The SAAC Staff

Article Editor

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Big South

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Lani Gholston,
NEC

Q & A

Corey Steven,
Horizon League

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Student-Athlete

Issues

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SEC

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Pac-10

NCAA Advisor

Jeremy Michiaels

SAAC Spotlight

Brad Daniels,
America East

Corrections

If additions or subtractions need to be made, please contact the editor via e-mail. For any errors the editor sincerely apologizes. Please forward your concerns to Beth Waggoner at Flyhigh11@hotmail.com



Signs similar to this, were made by student-athletes and posted around campus in hopes of swaying the Board of Trustees at the institution to retain the school's DI status. Though the signs and protest and petitions with both student-athlete and non student-athlete signatures did not produce the desired effect, the crisis gave the student community the opportunity to unite for a common cause.

SAAC Spotlight-

Each issue we will feature a campus SAAC that is making waves in their athletic department, on campus, and / or in the community. These are real students, real lives that are making a positive difference for others. If you have a great SAAC that you would like featured in the next issue or would like further information regarding the programs in this piece, please send an email to: Brad Daniels at BD2928@Albany.edu

The Sunday before finals week began this spring, student-athletes at Birmingham-Southern College read in the Birmingham News that their college was considering a move from Division I to Division III—their Board of Trustees was to vote on the issue the week after school ended. The student-athletes were left with only the week to voice their opinions to these leaders.

The BSC SAAC chair, Andra Krautmanis, held a meeting Monday night at which a protest march, petition signing and letter writing campaign were organized for Wednesday. An email blitz was also set up for 10:00 p.m. that night so that all opposed to the move could send emails to President Pollick stating their desire to stay Division I.

Immediately after the meeting, students began making posters, setting up Facebook groups and events, spreading flyers and spreading the word about the protest march—all on their own accord. T-shirts were made to wear to the protest and the local media was on campus to cover the evolving story.

Wednesday morning, members of the SAAC met to hang posters and set up petitions. To avoid the public perception of looking like a group of angry jocks, as many non-athletes as possible were encouraged to sign the petition as well. Student-athletes signed the petition in blue. Non-athletes in red.

At 11:00 Wednesday, the march left the gym and headed toward the bell tower at the center of the BSC campus with TV crews filming the chanting procession. At the bell tower students signed the petitions before marching to the next building where each wrote an individual letter to the Board of Trustees discussing what Division I meant to them.

When the Board finally handed down their decision—to begin the process of becoming a Division III institution—it was a loss for the entire school. BSC became one of a small handful of universities to reclassify from Division I to Division III. Although the protest, petitions and letters did not have their desired affect, the crisis showed a SAAC's ability to unite not just student-athletes but all students on a campus. The entire campus community—represented by the majority of red signatures on petitions—came together to support athletics and all because one SAAC had the courage to step up and use its voice. ^{SAAC}

Is Facebook the Face of Student-Athletes?

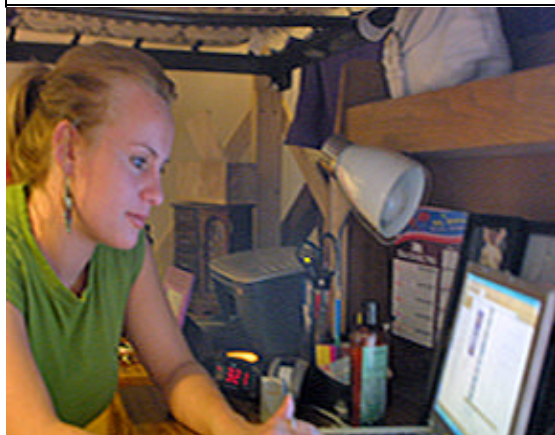
-William Brown, Southeastern Conference

You have probably heard of the many ongoing discussions in the media and at your schools about student-athletes and their use of social networking sites. *Facebook*, *Myspace* and *Xanga* are now dorm-room lingo and if you don't know what I'm talking about then you may be better off than the 6.5 million college students who poke, send messages and post pictures and comments on each other's profile.

Concerns have arisen from administrators as to the use of photographs, inappropriate language and general misuses of the site by student-athletes. In some instances, student-athletes have been removed from their squads because they misrepresented their institution's code of conduct. It doesn't end at your athletic director's computer either. Many companies and organizations are looking to these social networking sites to get a better understanding of their potential employees. How do they get access you may ask? You might want to ask your "friends". Most employers use their interns or alumni (whom you may or may not really know) to find out more information about you.

If you haven't checked your profile in awhile and you know you may have some material you wouldn't want your coach or potential employer to see, you may want to browse through and make some changes. Do you know your own institution or conference's code of conduct policy? Currently the University of South Carolina is adding social online activity to its code of conduct policy and the Southeastern Conference is addressing social online websites through a new informational pamphlet that gives usage tips to student-athletes.

It would be a shame for a student-athlete to be removed from a program because he or she didn't realize that the profile is open to anyone with internet access. You as a student-athlete, whether you like it or not, represent not only yourself, but your team, your school and the NCAA as well. You represent an organization that includes over 360,000 student athletes at over a 1,000 institutions. We are all teammates in this organization and each of us has a responsibility to each other. SAAC



Many student-athletes are finding online communities as safe havens, completely unaware of the implications and dangers that exist.

Photo courtesy of fotosearch.com

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criteria are met.

"Redshirt" is another term not often used in the NCAA bylaws, but it is heard in college athletics. A "redshirt" only refers to a year in which a student-athlete does not compete and can occur in any year.

To put it simply, a "redshirt" is when a student-athlete does not compete at all in a season, regardless of the reasons for not competing. A hardship waiver is needed if the student-athlete competed in a limited amount of competition during the first half of the season, gets injured or suffers from an illness that prevents the student-athlete from competing the rest of the season.

The requirements for a hardship waiver to be approved are as follows:

(see Redshirt Continued on page 5)

Q&A In The SAAC

-Corey Steven, Horizon League

Q: Is it true that student-athletes could be drug tested in the summer? And if so, why did this change occur in the NCAA?

A: Yes, it is true that student-athletes could be asked to be tested for drugs even in the summer. The NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports have approved the NCAA year-round drug-testing program for all Division I student-athletes. This first year will primarily focus on football and baseball players, but all other student-athletes are subject to random selection during the summer program. This change came about following concern related to student-athletes “bulking up” in the summer months. The NCAA felt that changing the drug-testing program to be year-round would eliminate these issues.

For more information or additional questions go to: <http://www.drugfreesport.com/index.asp>

Q: I am an incoming freshman and was wondering what my institution’s policy was for medical insurance. Is it the same for every university school?

A: . All good questions; however, they really need to be asked of an administrator on your campus given much of what can be provided is left up to the institution to decide. I’ll share a basic overview of current NCAA rules regarding medical expenses as a first step but then recommend you talk with an administrator on your campus, such as the team’s athletics trainer.

NCAA rules allow a school to pay for student-athlete medical expenses for any injury or illness regardless of when injury/illness occurs or if injury/illness was athletically related. It is important to note that schools are not required to provide student-athletes with this benefit – it is permissive legislation – but the choice lies with each school on whether they will pay such expenses. In addition, another permissive rule related to medical expenses allows institution’s to purchase athletics medical insurance for student-athletes to assist with expenses associated with injury/illness related to athletics. It is important to note that this type of medical insurance (athletics medical insurance) is not the same as general student health insurance, which can cover a much broader category of injury/illness. Generally, under current NCAA rules, the only way a school can pay for student health insurance for student-athletes is if that type of insurance coverage is provided to the general student body on a required basis by the school. ^{SAAC}

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1. The student-athlete suffers season-ending injury;
2. The student-athlete suffers the injury/illness during the first half of the season and as a result, cannot compete for the remainder of the season; and
3. The student-athlete has not competed in more than 2 contests or twenty percent (whichever is greater) of contests during the season.

Another important thing to note is that the school must submit contemporaneous medical documentation to support that the student-athlete’s injury or illness incapacitated him or her for the remainder of the season. Student-athletes should be proactive in seeking medical treatment and in keeping treatment records.

In the above example, Carol and her program should consider whether they want to submit a hardship waiver to their conference office while Doug had a redshirt year and thus did not use a season of competition. Hopefully this has resolved any “redshirt/hardship” confusion and has provided you with a little more insight. ^{SAAC}

**Give Competitive Equity a Backseat
-Chas Davis, Missouri Valley Conference**

So you're back to school after a summer that was neither relaxing nor long enough, and now you have your mind back on your future academic plans. With the passage of the graduate transfer rule, you know that you can now attend a different graduate school after graduation and still use that last season of eligibility. That medical red-shirt you received doesn't have to be scrapped anymore to attend that prestigious graduate program you are likely to be accepted by.

But now your coach isn't thrilled that his star player will be going to a rival traditionally much stronger than your current program. His voice is one of the many that claims that this legislation snuck up on him, and that this will be a disaster for competitive equity.

Competitive equity is, without a doubt, important to the integrity of everyone's experience within collegiate athletics. But few rule changes in recent memory so effectively support the essence of what the membership says they are committed to: getting our student-athletes a diploma.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but the goal of the recently implemented Academic Progress Report was to hold institutions accountable for educating student-athletes and keeping them on track to graduate. The DI National SAAC couldn't have agreed more with this principal, which is why we also generally supported the adoption of this rule. In discussions between other representatives and our student-athletes, the general feeling was that a student-athlete has fulfilled their obligation to a school and themselves once they have graduated. Regardless of the intentions of their transfer or any unintended consequences, we're talking about another major step in many student-athletes' lives and careers. Those opposed to Proposal 2005-54 would have us believe that student-athletes' career paths should be dictated by athletics "obligations."

Of course abuse is always a concern. Sure, a star athlete from a mid-major could transfer to a powerhouse with no intention of seriously pursuing further education. Sure a national power could lose a depth player to a competing mid-major. Let's not forget that it's still an infraction for a school to recruit this student-athlete unless permission has been granted. Regardless of how many "what ifs" that coaches and administrators have mastered, let's keep in mind the 99% of student-athletes who are solid athletes, but know that their education--not a professional sports contract-

-will pay the bills.

Through my four years as a cross country student-athlete, I was given the privilege of interacting with hundreds of student-athletes, both within my athletic department and through my involvement with the SAAC. It has been my experience that the large majority of my fellow student-athletes were very loyal to their programs and their teammates. If at all possible, we usually wanted to complete our eligibility with the program that had afforded us so much opportunity assuming congruent academic ambitions. If coaches really are that concerned about their student-athletes' loyalty, then maybe they should be asking why that is, and not why the NCAA will allow them to escape.

A year of coaching experience after four years as a student-athlete has yet to jade me or make me blind to the fact that a diploma in my runner's hand is much more valuable than a medal. Sure, cross country doesn't carry the same stakes as a football or basketball program, but the stakes don't change the principles.

In the end, the Management Council and Board of Directors chose to send the right message: that student-athletes attend college first and foremost to earn a degree and that they should be able to proceed with their lives once this is complete. It is unfortunate that some now believe that the interests of the athletic department and coach trump those of the student-athlete at a critical time in their lives. ^{SAAC}



Student-athletes are heard every day on the official NCAA Blog.
Are you one of them?

Contact
Josh Centor -
jcentor@ncaa.org

www.doublezone.com

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