

DIVISION II “LIFE IN THE BALANCE” INITIATIVE

**AN OVERVIEW OF FOUR PROPOSALS FOR THE
2010 NCAA CONVENTION**



I chose
Division II

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*SPOPL—Second Publication of Proposed Legislation

The “Life in the Balance” Initiative

Background/History

The Life in the Balance initiative making its way to the 2010 NCAA Convention is Division II’s latest effort to align policy with platform.

In accordance with a charge from Division II presidents and chancellors to ensure that policies, rules, regulations and budget decisions are consistent with the division’s strategic-positioning platform developed in 2005, last January, the Division II Presidents Council authorized an extensive review of playing-and-practice-season legislation and championship policies to make sure that the athletics/academics/community balance the platform advocates is, in fact, being achieved.

At its core, the Life in the Balance project is a four-proposal package designed to streamline seasons and reduce contests where appropriate. As a supplementary effect, the package also introduces better business practices that would alleviate some of the financial pressures that currently are plaguing not only athletics programs, but all of higher education.

While each of the four proposals will be outlined in detail later in this paper, it is important to explain the impetus behind the package and the reasons why this presidentially led initiative is critical to the future of Division II.

Maintaining balance

First of all, why is the initiative called *Life in the Balance*?

A group of about 70 presidents, who gathered at a 2009 Convention meeting, had reason to believe that the balance that is so integral to the strategic-positioning platform had become skewed by athletics time commitments that compromised class work, and a playing schedule that, over the years, had become more populated with exempted contests, regular-season games and postseason tournaments. In short, the presidents and chancellors in that Washington, D.C., ballroom wondered whether student-athletes were spending more time on the fields and courts than they were in the classroom.

Recent data from a longitudinal study of time demands supported that notion, showing that Division II student-athletes in some sports were devoting almost as much time—if not more—to athletics as their Division I counterparts. In addition, tales of teams in some sports playing as many as 60 or 70 games in a season alarmed leaders, who were concerned that Division II’s on-field behaviors were straying from the attribute-based identity presidents and chancellors worked so diligently to develop four years ago.

The identity campaign that began with a presidential summit in 2005 produced the [Division II strategic-positioning platform](#) that was anchored by a “Life in the Balance” statement proclaiming:

Higher education has lasting importance on an individual's future success. For this reason, the emphasis for the student-athlete experience in Division II is a comprehensive program of learning and development in a personal setting. The Division II approach provides growth opportunities through academic achievement, learning in high-level athletics competition and development of positive societal attitudes in service to community. The balance and integration of these different areas of learning opportunity provide Division II student-athletes a path to graduation while cultivating a variety of skills and knowledge for life ahead.

This statement and the rest of the attributes identified in the platform have guided Division II decision-making ever since. The Division II community-engagement and game-environment efforts in past years were natural outcomes from the platform, and presidents and chancellors believed it made sense to carry that analysis to the division's athletics behavior, as well.

Thus, the Division II Presidents Council charged the Legislation and Championships Committees with leading the playing-and-practice-seasons review—with the Legislation Committee examining possible legislative changes and the Championships Committee offering postseason policy modifications.

A well-vetted approach

As might be expected, a review of whether student-athletes were playing too many contests during too long a season was rather alarming to some coaches, administrators and the athletes themselves who tended to regard those activities as among their core pursuits. Instead of perceiving the initiative as *taking away* from these individuals, however, presidents and chancellors see these concepts as *giving back* in the form of student-athlete well-being, work/life balance and more time to devote to the social and educational experience.

Initial reaction to the project, though, was that it was happening too quickly—that the division would not have adequate time to develop proposals on which to make informed decisions by the 2010 Convention.

Presidents and chancellors, however, realized the need for expediency. Some conference commissioners and athletics directors already were voicing concerns about an unforgiving economy that was threatening their ability to provide the quality of athletics experience their student-athletes had come to expect. Without swift and strategic action, entire sports on some campuses would be at risk. Some conferences, in fact, had already begun implementing playing-season restrictions in an attempt to avoid more serious decisions down the road.

With an appetite for change already having been expressed—and realizing that it was important for action to be taken on a national scale rather than locally to have a sustainable impact—the Division II Presidents Council asked that the comprehensive review of playing and practice seasons be completed in stages, with some of the more obvious measures being developed for the 2010 Convention and the more nettlesome areas—such as exempted contests and non-championship seasons—addressed afterward.

The Division II Legislation Committee focused on Bylaw 17, developing proposals calling for a later reporting date for fall-sports student-athletes, a seven-day “dead period” over the winter holiday break and reduced contests in 10 sports.

These proposals were not developed in a vacuum. Even before the Legislation Committee developed most of these proposals in June, committee members and national office staff sought feedback from coaches associations, the Division II Conference Commissioners Association and the Division II Athletics Directors Association, as well as from other governance groups and the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

By the time the proposals made their way to the Division II Presidents Council’s summer meeting, they were met with unanimous support by the Council. If anything, Council members were concerned that the package did not go far enough. However, they reasoned that a phased-in approach would best provide a patient and prudent review that enabled decision-makers to address any unintended consequences the broader concepts might present.

Addressing the pushback

Such consequences generated several concerns. Among the criticisms from people who do not look deeply enough into the problem is the perception that the initiative is all about cost savings, rather than platform alignment, and that were it not for a depressed economy, no review would be undertaken.

Not so. Even in a time of economic prosperity, it would be prudent to ensure alignment between athletics policy and division attributes, including the need for better business practices.

The cumulative effect of the modest reductions in the sports identified in this particular package may very well allow institutions to avoid dropping intercollegiate athletics sports.

One of the primary (and most well-received to date) elements of the package in this regard is the later reporting date for fall sports, which reduces the lodging and meal burden on institutions during a time when the rest of the student body is not on campus. That is a significant cost savings for most schools.

Yet, that suggestion triggered a domino effect that raised another popular criticism—that fall sports, such as soccer, field hockey and volleyball, are unfairly being asked to cut contests in order to address broader concerns.

However, with the season essentially moved back one week, it became a choice of moving the championship back one week as well, or reducing games to account for the shorter season. Football moved its championship, while other fall sports chose not to because of the potential conflicts of hosting championships during the Thanksgiving holiday.

Since fitting the same number of games into a shorter season was not an option for the Division II Presidents Council (indeed, members said that would have defeated the purpose altogether), soccer, field hockey and volleyball proposed reductions based on the average number of games

played in a given week in those sports. In effect, that resulted in about a 10 percent reduction, a figure that presidents and chancellors had tossed out early on as a goal. Proposed cuts in other sports such as baseball and softball follow a similar percentage.

The third most frequently voiced concern is that football seemingly has been left untouched, which critics believe exposes the package to hypocrisy. They say that since football games generate revenue at some institutions, the sport's absence in this package proves presidents favor profits over balance.

A look below the surface of that argument, however, reveals a different story.

The “season creep” that has plagued many sports comes in the form of regular-season games, conference tournaments and the so-called “exempted contests” that have been added over time. Football has maintained an 11-game season for many years (several schools choose to play only 10 games), and football does not have discretionary exemptions that add playing dates. Also, games are almost always on Saturdays, and the NCAA championship bracket is only 24 teams, meaning that most programs are done with their seasons by Thanksgiving. Further, football has a very limited nonchampionship segment that provides for no outside competition, but rather an inter-squad game or scrimmage.

That is not to say that football is “unscathed” in this discussion. As mentioned earlier, the Life in the Balance initiative is not a one-time effort. The Presidents Council has asked that the review be expanded to include areas such as nonchampionship seasons, exempted contests and additional game reductions in all sports—including football—for the 2011 Convention cycle.

A call to action

The Life in the Balance initiative may appear dramatic to some, though such a reaction likely is rooted in the effort's effect on actual games, rather than the rules and regulations surrounding them, as most legislative reviews typically target.

In reality, this initiative resembles all other presidentially led examinations since the adoption of the platform four years ago. Presidents and chancellors in Division II are committed to ensuring that the division's behaviors in and out of athletics competition match the attributes identified in the platform. Every strategic decision the division makes—from determining membership standards to allocating dollars from the Division II budget to setting eligibility requirements—hinges on platform alignment.

Simply put, the Life in the Balance initiative is an appropriate review that comes at a time during which all institutions, including those in Divisions I and III, are seeking efficiencies in their athletics programs to keep the experiences for their student-athletes the best they can be.

The proposals that follow come with the full support of the Division II Presidents Council and are arranged in the order they will appear in the Division II Official Notice, which will be distributed before the Division II Business Session January 16 at the NCAA Convention in Atlanta.

Proposal No. 2010-8 (SPOPL No. 11)
Playing and Practice Seasons—Fall Sports

- *Proposed Change No. 1:* Move the start date for the first contest or date of competition by one week later.
 - *Application:* Thursday preceding September 6.
 - *Rationale:*
 - The proposed change provides greater balance to student-athletes and coaches by giving time back in the summer.
 - The additional week in the summer will give student-athletes more time to continue working or to spend time with family and friends.

- *Proposed Change No. 2:* Preseason practice starts a week later in the summer.
 - *Application:*
 - Cross country, field hockey, soccer and women's volleyball—Start practice 17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition or five days prior to the first day of classes, whichever is earlier.
 - Football—Start practice 21 days prior to the first permissible contest or seven days prior to the first day of classes, whichever is earlier.
 - *Rationale:*
 - Uniform application for the first reporting date for preseason practice.
 - Permits an institution that begins classes on the same day as the first day of preseason practice to start five days (or seven in football) prior to that day to allow student-athletes and coaches to practice and prepare for the upcoming championship while classes are not in session.
 - Incidental benefit of cost savings for institutions—most institutions will have one less week of feeding and housing student-athletes while classes are not in session.

- *Proposed Change No. 3:* Establishes limitations on student-athlete participation in countable athletically related activities during the preseason practice period while classes are not in session.
 - *Application:* Only applicable to cross country, field hockey, soccer and women's volleyball (no changes to the football preseason practice period)
 - Countable athletically related activities limited to six hours per day.
 - Only five of six hours per day shall be devoted to physical activities like practice, weight training or conditioning.
 - Any session with physical activities shall not last longer than three hours.

- Three continuous hours of recovery time is required between any sessions with physical activities. The three hours of recovery time cannot include meetings or any athletically related activity, but medical treatment and meals are okay during the recovery time.
 - *Rationale:*
 - The proposed change is tied to the later start of the first contest or date of competition and a later start to the preseason practice period before the first day of classes or first contest or date of competition, whichever is earlier.
 - Under current legislation, except in football, there are no time limitations on physical activities during the preseason practice period.
 - Under the proposal, student-athletes and coaches will have fewer practice days when classes are not in session and, as a result, many coaches may try to squeeze in more practice, so a structured number of hours for countable athletically related activities were appropriate.
 - This change will benefit student-athlete safety and well-being by reducing the risk of injury and heat-related illnesses, while minimizing catastrophic health events.
- *Proposed Policy Change:* The Division II Championships Committee maintains the current dates of the national championship, except football.
 - *Application:* Overall length of the fall season is shortened by one week, except football.
 - *Rationale:*
 - Division II sports committees in cross country, field hockey, soccer and women’s volleyball agreed to maintain the current championship dates.
 - The sports committee in football agreed to move the championship by one week later in the fall, resulting in the same length of season.
 - This policy change addresses concerns about the fall season overlapping with the start of winter sports, challenges associated with access to facilities and championships contests occurring during the Thanksgiving holiday.
- *Proposed Change No. 4:* Shortened season = reduction in contests or dates of competition
 - *Application:*
 - Field hockey—Reduction from 20 to 18 contests.
 - Soccer—Reduction from 20 to 18 contests.
 - Women’s Volleyball—Reduction from 28 to 26 dates of competition.
 - *Rationale:*
 - Since the policy decisions made by the respective sports committees will result in the championship season being shortened by one week, reductions to the contests or dates of competitions are proposed to provide better balance to student-athletes.
 - Maintaining the same number of contests or dates of competition in a shorter season is detrimental to student-athlete well-being.

- Three years of data from the championships score-reporting system was used to determine the appropriate reductions to contests or dates of competition.
 - The proposed reductions reflect the average number of contests or dates of competition completed in a week per sport during the championship season.
 - Field hockey, soccer and women’s volleyball frequently schedule mid-week competitions. The change will assist with reducing student-athlete missed class time, missed study time and additional time away from campus.

- Why are there no reductions to the maximum number of contests or dates of competition in cross country and football?
 - *Rationale: No Reductions in Cross Country*
 - Although the length of the season will be shortened by one week, cross country has a limited number of opportunities for student-athlete participation in seven dates of competition.
 - The U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association noted that many institutions that sponsor cross country and indoor/outdoor track and field do not schedule and compete in the maximum dates of competition each year.
 - Most institutions schedule the dates of competition on a weekend, which does not result in missed class or study time.

 - *Rationale: No Reductions in Football*
 - Unlike the other fall sports, football does not permit discretionary exemptions (e.g., scrimmages, exhibition contest against a non-Division II four-year collegiate institution). Therefore, the concept of “season creep” does not readily occur.
 - Most football contests occur on the weekend, which reduces potential conflicts with a student-athlete’s time away from campus and other demands with academics.
 - Since the sports committee agreed to move back the current dates for the football championship, the length of the season remains the same (11 weeks).
 - The governance structure will continue its discussions on more complex issues, including the maximum number of football contests, over the next academic year and will address legislative changes at the 2011 NCAA Convention.

- *Proposed Change No. 5*—Amends the championship season calendar for institutions that sponsor golf and tennis in the fall alternative sport season.
 - *Application:*
 - Later start date for the first contest or date of competition.
 - Preseason practice starts a week later.
 - Time limits on countable athletically related activities during the preseason practice period before the start of classes.

 - *Rationale:*
 - The change is necessary because the alternative playing season legislation for golf and tennis is consistent with the calendar for all other fall championship sports.

- *Effective Date:* August 1, 2010; however, contracts signed before August 6, 2009, for contests or dates of competition occurring between August 26, 2010, and September 1, 2010, may be honored.

- *Application:*
 - If adopted, the proposed changes will be effective for the fall championship season in 2010.
 - An institution that signed a contract to compete between August 26, 2010, and September 1, 2010, may do so provided the contract was signed before August 6, 2009.
 - In this circumstance, a waiver is not needed to compete between the dates noted above.
 - If an institution wants to compete between the dates noted above but does not have a signed contract before August 6, 2009, a waiver must be approved before the institution does so.

- *Rationale:*
 - The membership has consistently been notified of the proposed changes, and should have considered them when scheduling for the championship season in the 2010-11 academic year.
 - August 6, 2009, is the date the Division II Presidents Council unanimously sponsored the proposed changes for the 2010 Convention.

Proposal No. 2010-10 (SPOPL No. 9)
Playing and Practice Seasons—Spring Sports

- *Proposed Change No. 1:* In baseball, to reduce the maximum number of contests from 56 to 50.
 - *Application:* Reduces the maximum permissible number of contests in baseball by six contests.
 - *Rationale:*
 - The proposed change would result in less missed class time, missed study time and time away from campus, which should contribute to improved academic performance overall.
 - Three years of data from the championships score-reporting system was used to determine the appropriate reductions to contests or dates of competition.

- *Proposed Change No. 2:* In golf, to reduce the maximum number of dates of competition from 24 to 21.
 - *Application:* Reduces the maximum permissible number of dates of competition in golf by three dates of competition.
 - *Rationale:*
 - Traditionally, golf competitions occur during the week, so the proposed change would result in less missed class time, missed study time and time away from campus, which should contribute to improved academic performance overall.
 - Institutions would be encouraged to schedule dual competitions (e.g., institution versus institution) and one-day tournaments, which would have the incidental benefit of cost savings.
 - Three years of data from the championships score-reporting system was used to determine the appropriate reductions to contests or dates of competition.

- *Proposed Change No. 3:* In softball, to eliminate the tournament dates exception.
 - *Application:*
 - Eliminates the tournament dates exception in softball. The change would cause each scheduled contest to count against the maximum number of contests, which is 56.
 - An institution is still permitted to participate in softball tournaments. With the elimination of the exception, an institution must count each contest that is played during a tournament against the maximum number of contests (e.g., 56).

- *Rationale:*
 - The proposed change would likely result in less missed class time, missed study time and time away from campus, which should contribute to improved academic performance overall.
 - The change will have the incidental benefit of reducing costs for institutions for expenses associated with travel and/or game related expenses.
 - Three years of data from the championships score-reporting system was used to determine the appropriate reductions to contests or dates of competition.
- Why are there no reductions to the maximum number of contests in softball?
 - It is important to note that baseball and softball were reviewed independent of each other in this process. Although each sport permits scheduling a maximum of 56 contests, softball also has the tournament dates exception, which permits an institution to schedule and play significantly more than 56 contests.
 - Eliminating the tournament dates exception reduces the number of contests a softball team will play because each contest counts against the maximum of 56 contests an institution is permitted to schedule.
- Why was the length of the playing seasons for baseball, softball and golf not shortened?
 - Maintaining the length of the playing season allows institutions to spread the contests or dates of competition over a greater period of time, which will support the rationale for the proposed changes. In addition, the reduction in contests in baseball, dates of competition in golf, and elimination of the tournament dates exception in softball was to cut down on the amount of missed class time and time away from campus.
- *Effective Date:* August 1, 2010.
- *Application:*
 - If adopted, the proposed changes will be effective for the fall championship season in the 2010-11 academic year.
- *Rationale:*
 - The membership has consistently been notified of the proposed changes and should have considered them when scheduling for the spring championship season in the 2010-11 academic year.

Championships Policy Changes Regardless if Proposed Changes are Adopted:

- The length of the 2011 Division II Baseball Championship has been reduced by two days.
- Participants in the 2010 Division II Golf Championship will be limited to one practice date prior to the beginning of the championship. The championship is scheduled for May 12-15, 2010.

Proposal No. 2010-9 (SPOPL No. 12)
Playing and Practice Seasons—Winter Break

Proposed Changes:

- Establishes a "dead period" from December 20 through December 26 for winter sports (basketball, swimming and diving, indoor track and field and wrestling), during which it would not be permissible for an institution to have practice, competition or other countable athletically related activities (e.g., weight training, conditioning).
- Also, establishes a "dead period" during the same dates for all sports, during which it would not be permissible for a student-athlete to participate in voluntary athletically related activities on campus, unless the facility is open to the general student-body.

Application:

- In order for any athletically related activity to be considered "voluntary," all of the following conditions must be met: (a) the student-athlete must not be required to report back to a coach or other athletics department staff member any information related to the activity; (b) the activity must be initiated and requested solely by the student-athlete; (c) the student-athlete's attendance and participation in the activity (or lack thereof) may not be recorded for the purposes of reporting such information to coaching staff members or other student-athletes; and (d) the student-athlete may not be subjected to penalty if he or she elects not to participate in the activity.
- An institution would not be permitted to pay for travel expenses for its student-athletes during the "dead period." However, a student-athlete may travel to and from campus on December 20 or 26 provided he or she pays for such travel expenses.

Rationale:

- This change will benefit student-athlete well-being by allowing student-athletes to travel home during the winter break, work or simply relax.
- Institutional athletics personnel (e.g., coaches, facilities managers, athletic trainers) will be able to improve work-life balance because they will not be required to be on campus to attend to the management of student-athletes, athletic events and facilities.
- Shorter seasons and fewer games might actually help retain coaches from a work-life balance perspective.
- The seven-day period from December 20 through December 26 was chosen mainly in an attempt to create consistency among all institutions.
- There has been an increasing concern with the year-long nature of winter sports.
- Establishing the "dead period" as the same seven days for all institutions is better than the alternative of allowing institutions to choose seven consecutive days during the winter, which could present cumbersome scheduling challenges.
- A majority of institutions are already closed a few days during this seven-day period.
- Institutions traditionally have not played a significant number of contests during this period.

Effective Date: August 1, 2010; however, contracts signed before August 6, 2009, for contests or dates of competition occurring between December 20, 2010, and December 26, 2010, may be honored.

○ *Application:*

- If adopted, the proposed changes will be effective for the championship season in the 2010-11 academic year.
- An institution that signed a contract to compete between December 20, 2010, and December 26, 2010, may do so provided the contract was signed before August 6, 2009.
 - In this circumstance, a waiver is not needed to compete between the dates noted above.
 - If an institution wants to compete between the dates noted above but does not have a signed contract before August 6, 2009, a waiver must be approved before the institution does so.

○ *Rationale:*

- The membership has consistently been notified of the proposed changes and should have considered them when scheduling for the championship season in the 2010-11 academic year.
- August 6, 2009, is the date the Division II Presidents Council unanimously sponsored the proposed changes for the 2010 Convention.

Proposal No. 2010-11 (SPOPL No. 13)
Playing and Practice Seasons—Winter Sports—Basketball

Proposed Change:

- This proposal reduces the maximum permissible number of contests in men’s and women’s basketball from 27 to 26.

Application:

- If this proposal is adopted, the Division II men’s and women’s basketball committees and Championship Committee will revisit the minimum number of contests for selection purposes in basketball.

Rationale:

- This reduction is necessary due to the recommended proposal for the winter break, which would shorten the overall length of the basketball playing season by one week.
- This change would likely result in less missed class time, missed study time and time away from campus for basketball student-athletes, which should contribute to improved academic performance overall.
- Basketball frequently schedules mid-week competitions.
- Maintaining the same number of contests in a shorter season is detrimental to student-athlete well-being.
- The governance structure recommended to reduce the maximum number of contests by only one this year due to the fact that “phase two” of the Life in the Balance discussions next year will include an examination of exempted contests in all sports, which might impact the sport in some manner.

Why are there no reductions to the maximum number of contests or dates of competition in swimming and diving, indoor track and field and wrestling?

- Although the length of the season will be shortened by one week, these sports traditionally do not participate in as many competitions as basketball; therefore, the time spent in the specific sport is not as much.
- Most institutions schedule the dates of competition in these sports primarily on weekends. These sports also do not use many discretionary exemptions, which keeps their number of overall competitions more manageable.
- “Phase two” of the Life in the Balance discussions next year will include a review of the sports that had no reductions recommended for the 2010 Convention. In addition, “phase two” will include an examination of exempted contests in all sports, which might impact these sports in some manner.

Effective Date: August 1, 2010

- *Application:*
 - If adopted, the proposed change will be effective for the championship season in the 2010-11 academic year.

- *Rationale:*
 - The membership has been notified of the proposed change and should have considered it when scheduling for the 2010-11 academic year.

Conclusion

All of these proposals, which will move to the membership for consideration at the 2010 Convention, were approved by a unanimous vote of the Presidents Council.

Over the next year, the Management Council and Presidents Council, as they continue to work with the Legislation Committee, Championships Committee and outside constituent groups, will continue to review playing and practice seasons regulations and championships policies to ensure they align with the strategic positioning platform. Key areas of review include (1) annual and discretionary exemptions for all sports; (2) nonchampionship segment activities; (3) non-championship competition opportunities in baseball and softball; and (4) the maximum number of contests or dates of competition in all sports.

Ultimately, the “Life in the Balance” initiatives is about aligning our behavior with who we say we are in our strategic positioning platform, and about giving institutions the resources they need to offer broad-based athletics experiences that allow athletes to be students.

Division II Fall Sports
2010 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 16, 2010</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 2, 2010</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 6, 2010</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 20, 2010*</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 6, 2010</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 12-14, 2010*</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 12-14, 2010</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 3-5, 2010</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 18-21, 2010</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 2-4, 2010</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 12, 2010</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 20, 2010</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

*Does not reflect date change for the 2010 Fall Championships Festival.

Division II Fall Sports
2011 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 15, 2011</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 1, 2011</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 5, 2011</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 19, 2011</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 5, 2011</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 11-13, 2011</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 11-13, 2011</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 2-4, 2011</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 17-20, 2011</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 1-3, 2011</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 11, 2011</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 19, 2011</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2012 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 13, 2012</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>August 30, 2012</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 3, 2012</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 17, 2012</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 3, 2012</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 9-11, 2012</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 9-11, 2012</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>November 30-December 2, 2012</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 15-18, 2012</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 29-December 1, 2012</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 9, 2012</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 17, 2012</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2013 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 19, 2013</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 5, 2013</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 9, 2013</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 23, 2013</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 9, 2013</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 15-17, 2013</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 15-17, 2013</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 6-8, 2013</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 21-24, 2013</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 5-7, 2013</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 15, 2013</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 23, 2013</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2014 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 18, 2014</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 4, 2014</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 8, 2014</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 22, 2014</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 8, 2014</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 14-16, 2014</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 14-16, 2014</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 5-7, 2014</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 20-23, 2014</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 4-6, 2014</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 14, 2014</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 22, 2014</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2015 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 17, 2015</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 3, 2015</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 7, 2015</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 21, 2015</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 7, 2015</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 13-15, 2015</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 13-15, 2015</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 4-6, 2015</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 19-22, 2015</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 3-5, 2015</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 13, 2015</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 21, 2015</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2016 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 15, 2016</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 1, 2016</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 5, 2016</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 19, 2016</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 5, 2016</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 11-13, 2016</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 11-13, 2016</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 2-4, 2016</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 17-20, 2016</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 1-3, 2016</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 11, 2016</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 19, 2016</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2017 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 14, 2017</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>August 31, 2017</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 4, 2017</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 18, 2017</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 4, 2017</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 10-12, 2017</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 10-12, 2017</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 1-3, 2017</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 16-19, 2017</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 30-December 2, 2017</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 10, 2017</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 18, 2017</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2018 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 13, 2018</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>August 30, 2018</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 3, 2018</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 17, 2018</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 3, 2018</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 9-11, 2018</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 9-11, 2018</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>November 30-December 2, 2018</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 15-18, 2018</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 29-December 1, 2018</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 9, 2018</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 17, 2018</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2019 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 19, 2019</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 5, 2019</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 9, 2019</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 23, 2019</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 9, 2019</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 15-17, 2019</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 15-17, 2019</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 6-8, 2019</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 21-24, 2019</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 5-7, 2019</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 15, 2019</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 23, 2019</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.

Division II Fall Sports
2020 Start and End Dates

Sport	Practice Start Date	Maximum Number of Contests or Dates of Competition	Competition Start Date	Championship Start Date	Championship End Date
Cross Country	17 days prior to the first permissible contest or date of competition; <i>August 17, 2020</i> OR Five days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).	7 dates of competition	Thursday Preceding September 6 <i>September 3, 2020</i>	Two weeks prior to Finals <i>November 7, 2020</i>	Saturday prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 21, 2020</i>
Field Hockey		18 contests		Saturday prior to Finals <i>November 7, 2020</i>	Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving (Friday to Sunday) <i>November 13-15, 2020</i>
Soccer		18 contests		Second weekend prior to Thanksgiving <i>November 13-15, 2020</i>	Weekend after Thanksgiving <i>December 4-6, 2020</i>
Women's Volleyball		26 dates of competition		Thursday to Saturday or Friday to Sunday prior to Thanksgiving weekend <i>November 19-22, 2020</i>	Thursday to Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend <i>December 3-5, 2020</i>
Football		21 days prior to the first permissible contest; <i>August 13, 2020</i> OR 7 days prior to the first day of classes (whichever is earlier).		11 contests	Saturday of the 12 th week after the first permissible date of competition <i>November 21, 2020</i>

Contest – A countable contest for a member institution is any contest by the member institution against an outside team in that sport.

Date of Competition – A date of competition is a single date on which any game(s), match(es), meet(s), exhibition(s), scrimmage(s) or joint practice session(s) with another institution's team takes place.