

BYLAW 1

Student-Athlete Eligibility

1.1 Amateurism

- 1.1.1 An amateur athlete is one who engages in a particular sport for the educational, physical, mental, and social benefits derived therefrom, and to whom participation in that sport is an avocation.
- 1.1.2 An amateur athlete may be involved in professional sports activities under the following conditions:
- A. An athlete may be a professional in one (1) sport and an amateur in all other sports but shall be ineligible only in that sport in which the athlete has been deemed to be a professional. Professional athletes who have their amateur status restored shall still be considered professionals in that sport according to this *Constitution*.
 - B. Athletes shall be eligible if they have, prior to enrollment and attendance in a collegiate institution, tried out at their own expense with a professional sports organization or received not more than one (1) expense-paid visit—provided the visit did not exceed 48 hours.
 - C. A student athlete shall not try out for a professional team while participating in a California community college season of sport.
 - D. An athlete may participate as an individual or as a member of a team against professional athletes as long as all other sections of the *Constitution* are observed.
 - E. An athlete may participate in a sport competition with individuals who are competing for cash or comparable prizes provided the athlete does not receive payment for participation.
 - F. Athletes who compete against professional teams or individuals may receive reimbursement for their actual cost of food, lodging, and transportation as verified in writing by the event sponsors.
 - G. Attending a school or a clinic sponsored by a professional organization is not interpreted as “trying out” or “playing” for a team, provided no scheduled games are played.
 - H. Athletes may officiate and/or teach as a part of private or public instructional programs.

- 1.1.3 Students shall not represent a college in any athletic competition unless they are an amateur athlete in the sport(s) in which they compete. Students shall be deemed professional and ineligible to participate in that sport if any one (1) of the following exists—If the student:
- A. Takes or has taken pay in any form for sport participation.
 - B. Has signed an agreement of any kind to compete in a professional sport.
 - C. Has been paid for his/her athletic participation. (Exception: Athletes who compete against professional teams or individuals may receive reimbursement for their actual cost of food, lodging, and transportation as verified in writing by the event sponsors.)
 - D. Has ever played on a professional team, unless the student meets the criteria as listed in Bylaw 1.1.2.
 - E. Has agreed to be represented by an agent of an organization in the marketing of his/her athletic ability.
 - F. Subsequent to becoming an athlete at the collegiate level, has accepted any remuneration for or permitted use of his/her name or likeness to advertise or endorse a product or service of any kind.
 - G. Is an international student and has his/her educational costs partially or fully paid by the student's national sport body or sport club.
- 1.1.4 Full-time enrolled student-athletes cannot be paid by a community college to coach while eligible to compete in that community college sport.

1.2 Residence

A student who has been admitted to attend any California community college shall be eligible to compete in the college athletic program, provided the student athlete is eligible under all other provisions of the *Constitution*.

1.3 Academic Eligibility

- 1.3.1 In order to be eligible for non-conference, conference, and PC, a student athlete must be continuously and actively enrolled and attending class in a minimum of 12 units at his/her California community college during the season of sport. Students dropping below 12 units are not eligible for competition until they are once again actively enrolled and attending class in at least 12 units.
- 1.3.2 If the season of sport spans two (2) semesters or quarters, a student athlete who was not enrolled in 12 units at the end of the first semester or quarter cannot become eligible until the second semester or quarter has begun and the student is actively enrolled in at least 12 units. Students becoming ineligible during a sport season which goes over two (2) terms and who do not reestablish eligibility, i.e. 12 unit requirement, during the first term may not become eligible in that sport until the first day of instruction of the second term.

- 1.3.3 Of the 12 units, at least 9 shall be attempted in courses counting toward remediation, career technical education/certificate courses, associate degree requirements, transfer/general education, and/or lower division theoretical major preparation courses as defined by the college catalog and/or articulation agreements and be consistent with the student athlete’s educational plan. *(Approved April 4, 2008, Effective July 1, 2008)*
- 1.3.4 For eligibility purposes (with the exception of the transfer rule), multi-college district students may count units from any of the colleges within that district.
- 1.3.5 Mini-course (less than semester/quarter in length) units shall be counted if the student is enrolled and attending classes or has completed the mini-course during the semester or quarter of the season of sport. Mini-course units in which the student expects to enroll and attend shall not be counted for purposes of athletic eligibility.
- 1.3.6 Units from a course repeated to raise a grade of "D" or better may be used to satisfy Bylaw 1.3.1.
- 1.3.7 By the start of the second season of competition at a California community college, the college shall certify that the student athlete has a comprehensive individual educational plan on file.
- 1.3.8 A student must be registered, enrolled, and attending class no later than four (4) weeks after the first day of class instruction in order to represent that California community college in athletic competition during that season.

1.4 Eligibility Certification

- 1.4.1 Conferences shall require each college to certify athletic eligibility by submitting Form 1, Student Eligibility, and Form 3, Team Eligibility, to the conference commissioner’s office postmarked, emailed, or posted on the COA website prior to the first game, meet, or match. Addendums to Form 3 may be submitted at a later date, but the athletes listed on the addendums are not eligible until the postmarked date.
- 1.4.2 Colleges are required to verify weekly that all student athletes participating in COA-sanctioned sports are in compliance with Bylaw 1.3.1.
- 1.4.3 Within ten (10) working days after the end of the competitive season, colleges shall post the final Form 3 on the COA website indicating which students competed in a game, meet, or match to the conference commissioner.

1.5 Season of Competition

- 1.5.1 Playing in a scheduled game, meet, or match shall be recorded as a season of competition, even if the student competed in a non-scoring position (i.e., the number 8 golfer). For student athletes competing on behalf of the college in any game, meet, or match during a season, that shall be recorded as a season of competition in that sport.

- 1.5.2 When the start of a college's semester or quarter is after the starting date for a sport, the college will certify all athletes eligible and able to compete in the sport. The athletes must be registered in 12 units even though they cannot attend the classes until the college starting date. The athletes must meet all other eligibility rules.
- 1.5.3 When a sport season spans two (2) semesters or quarters, continuing students who meet the requirements of Bylaw 1.3.1 may compete until the next new semester or quarter has begun.
- 1.5.4 A student athlete, regardless of whether a member of a varsity, junior varsity, reserve team, or any combination thereof, may not participate in more than the number of games, meets, or matches as authorized for a sport as listed in Bylaw 3.

1.6 Eligibility for Continuing Competition

- 1.6.1 Once a student competes in any scheduled game, meet or match, as defined in Bylaw 1.15, the student must complete and pass 24-semester/36-quarter units to be eligible for the second season of that sport. Furthermore:
- A. The 24-semester/36-quarter units must be successfully completed at an accredited postsecondary institution(s). The 24-semester/36-quarter unit count begins with and includes the units taken during the first semester/quarter of competition for that sport and must be successfully completed prior to the beginning of the semester/quarter of the second season of sport.
 - B. Units from a course repeated to raise a grade of "D" or better shall not be counted to satisfy the 24-semester/36-quarter unit requirement for second season of sport eligibility.
 - C. Incomplete grades are part of the academic work of that semester/quarter. The units may not be used for eligibility purposes until the course work is made up and the grade is officially changed and recorded to be above an "F."
 - D. Of the 24-semester/36-quarter units to be completed, 18-semester/27-quarter units shall be in course work counting toward remediation, career technical education/certificate courses, associate degree requirements, transfer/general education, and/or lower division theoretical major preparation courses as defined by the college catalog and/or articulation agreements and be consistent with the student athlete's educational plan. (*Approved April 4, 2008, Effective July 1, 2008*)
 - E. In addition to the 24-semester/36-quarter unit requirement, the student must also have a cumulative 2.0 grade point average in course work completed for credit at accredited postsecondary institutions. This grade point average must include all courses taken since the start of the term of the first competition in any COA-sanctioned sport, with the exception of course work where substandard grades (D, F) were forgiven through course repetition or academic renewal per regulations of Title V.

- 1.6.2 In order to continue athletic competition in the same COA-sanctioned sport or to begin competition in a different COA-sanctioned sport after previously participating in another COA-sanctioned sport, the student athlete shall maintain a cumulative 2.0 grade point average (GPA) in course work completed for credit at accredited postsecondary institutions, computed since the start of the semester/quarter of the first competition in any COA-sanctioned sport. If this participation in a different sport is the athlete's first participation in that particular sport, there is no 24-semester/36-quarter unit requirement.
- 1.6.3 In sports which go over two (2) terms; i.e., basketball, at a semester institution or baseball or track and field at a quarter school, a student who is certified eligible at the beginning of the sport season maintains that eligibility for the entire sport season as long as he/she is continuously enrolled in 12 or more units.
- 1.6.4 In order to use course units for eligibility purposes, the student athlete's name shall be registered and recorded on the official class roster for that course prior to the end of the course.
- 1.6.5 Only a student who meets Constitution academic eligibility requirements at the beginning of the first semester/quarter of that sport season shall be eligible to compete during that season of sport provided the athlete is attending and enrolled in 12 or more units during competition. Units earned in an intersession (winter or summer) offered outside of the 175-day academic calendar may be used to meet academic requirements, provided they are completed prior to the start of the semester/quarter of that sport season. (See Bylaws 1.6.1, 1.6.2, and 1.10.)

1.7 Number of Seasons of Competition

No athlete shall be allowed more than two (2) seasons of collegiate competition in any one sport.

1.8 Illness or Injury

- 1.8.1 A student athlete may have a year of collegiate competition reinstated for reasons of medical hardship. Medical hardship is defined as an incapacity resulting from injury or illness that has occurred under certain specific conditions. A Form 4, Injury/Illness Waiver Request, is filed with the conference commissioner of the conference in which the student plans to compete who will grant the waiver if all the following conditions are met:
- A. There must have been an incapacitating injury or illness that caused the athlete to become unable to complete the season. It is not necessary for the injury or illness to be the direct result of the institution's practice or game competition.
 - B. The incapacitating injury or illness must be specifically defined and validated by the licensed physician who treated the athlete at the time of the injury or illness. The written statement must accompany the waiver request and must indicate the date of the injury or illness and the reason(s) the injury or illness was incapacitating and prevented the athlete from completing the season.

- C. The injury or illness must have occurred prior to the beginning of the contest that begins the second half of the playing season in that sport as measured by the number of completed contests in that sport, excluding postconference competition. The institution's sport schedule must accompany the Form 4. For each tournament on the schedule, the institution must indicate how many contests were played. The institution must also indicate any scheduled contests that did not occur.

An athlete who is injured in the first half of the season, attempts to return in the second half, and is unable to compete further as a result of aggravating the original injury does not qualify for the injury/illness waiver.

- D. The injury or illness must have occurred before the student participated in more than 20 percent of the institution's completed contests in that sport, excluding postconference competition. The sport schedule that accompanies the Form 4 must indicate the contests in which the athlete competed. PC and/or bowl game contests shall not be counted in the injury/illness number of contests.
- E. The following are to be used in determining the percent calculation under these "medical hardship waiver" provisions:
1. Any computation of the percent limitation that results in a fractional portion of an event shall be rounded to the next whole number (e.g., 20 percent of a 31-game basketball schedule, 6.2 games, shall be considered 7 games).
 2. The denominator shall be the institution's completed contests in that sport, using the counting method outlined in Bylaw 1.8.1.E.
- F. Participation in scrimmages shall not count as contests in the administration of the "medical hardship waiver."
- G. Conference championship events shall be counted as one (1) contest in determining the institution's completed events in that sport, regardless of the number of days or games involved.
- H. Tournaments and multiple-team events—For the purposes of the injury/illness waiver rule only, tournaments and multiple team versus team events will be counted as follows:
1. Individual sports: Any competition involving participants from more than two (2) institutions, conducted and organized as one (1) event at one (1) location on one (1) calendar day; (e.g., triple-dual meet in wrestling, team invitation in track or swim meet) shall count as one (1) contest, even though team scores against all participating institutions are kept separately, or the athlete competes against more than one (1) opponent.
 2. In individual sports, each day of an individual's competition in a tournament or meet shall count as one (1) contest.

3. In team sports, an institution's participation against another institution in each contest in a tournament, doubleheader, or multiple-team engagement shall count as one (1) contest; (e.g., a four (4)-game baseball tournament will count as four (4) contests, three (3) games in a double-elimination basketball tournament will count as three (3) contests, and a six (6)-team volleyball pool will count as five (5) contests.

I. Reinstatement of season of sport:

1. The reinstatement of a season of sport shall be treated as if the partial season of competition never existed for athletic purposes.
2. For academic purposes, if the reinstatement occurred in the first year of competition, that period will not affect eligibility. If the reinstatement is in the second year of competition, all rules of eligibility shall apply.

1.8.2 Eligibility Verification of Reporting Error

Appeals from otherwise eligible students supported by the college president in which a reporting error that results in ineligibility is allegedly involved. The conference commissioner may grant the waiver if all of the following conditions are met:

- A. The appeal must include an explanation in writing from the college president.
- B. A completed Form 4B must also be submitted.
- C. The athlete must satisfy all of the remaining eligibility requirements of the *Constitution*.

1.9 Multi-College District Competition

- 1.9.1 In a multi-college district, a student attending one (1) college may participate in a sport offered by another college in the same district, provided the student is enrolled in the course for that sport at the college of participation.
- 1.9.2 Once a student in a multi-college district has participated in any COA-sanctioned sport at one (1) college in a multi-college district, that student must meet the transfer rule in order to participate in sports at another campus if both colleges offer the same sport.
- 1.9.3 For eligibility purposes (with the exception of the transfer rule), multi-college district students may count units from any of the colleges in that district.
- 1.9.4 Multi-college district students shall be exempt from the transfer rule at a second college in the district (Bylaw 1.10.1) only for the sport(s) not offered at the college of previous participation.
- 1.9.5 Multi-college students shall not use units earned while participating at a second college in the district to satisfy the transfer rule.
- 1.9.6 In multi-college districts, college teams shall be identified by a college name.

- 1.9.7 The COA Board may declare consenting contiguous California community college districts to have multi-college status in specified sports for the purposes of this section. This must be reviewed by the COA Board on an annual basis.

1.10 Transfer

- 1.10.1 A student transferring to a California community college for athletic participation purposes whose last competition in COA sanctioned intercollegiate athletics was at another California community college must complete 12 units in residence prior to the beginning of the semester/quarter of competition for that college. (See Bylaw 1.5 for definition of “season of competition.”) Transfer status is determined by where the athlete last competed, not necessarily where the student last attended.
- 1.10.2 In addition to meeting the residence requirement of the transfer rule, the student athlete must also satisfy applicable unit and grade point average requirements. If the student wishes to compete in a different COA-sanctioned sport for the first time, he/she must have a cumulative 2.0 grade point average in course work completed for credit at accredited postsecondary institutions. This grade point average must include all courses taken since the start of the term of the first competition in any COA-sanctioned sport. If the competition is the second in that particular sport, then in addition to the grade point average requirements stated above, the student must also have completed 24-semester/36-quarter units since the term of the first competition in that sport.
- 1.10.3 Student athletes who are participating in a sport shall not earn units at a second college to satisfy the transfer rule until that season of sport has ended.
- 1.10.4 A student athlete who has competed at a California community college and who wishes to compete in a sport not offered by that community college/district must meet the requirements of the transfer rule. (Multi-campus district colleges: refer to Bylaw 1.9.)
- 1.10.5 When satisfying the 12-unit residence transfer requirement, a maximum of 8 units may be from courses completed during the summer session(s) or winter intersession(s) immediately preceding the completion of the transfer.
- 1.10.6 If five (5) or more years have passed since last competing at a postsecondary institution the 12-unit residency rule shall be waived.
- 1.10.7 A transfer student who has competed in a COA-sanctioned sport at a four (4)-year institution or non-California community college before competing at a California community college is required to have a cumulative 2.0 grade point average as described in Bylaw 1.10.2. A student participating in a second season of a sport must also meet the required 24-semester/36-quarter unit rule.

1.11 Cross-Gender Participation

Where both men and women’s teams exist in a sport, men will compete on the men’s teams and women on the women’s teams. When only one (1) team exists, women may compete on the men’s team; however, men may not compete on the women’s team. The student’s birth certificate is proof of gender.

1.12 Freelance Participation

Individual colleges requesting freelance competition in a sport may do so by satisfying all *Constitution* and present conference eligibility requirements and by receiving approval of both the conference and the COA. Colleges freelancing in a team or individual sport shall not be eligible for conference or PC. Colleges that freelance will remain members of their present conference.

1.13 Club Team Participation

1.13.1 A club team is defined as a group of students who do not meet COA eligibility and academic requirements and who, in an unrecognized manner, get together to take part in an activity by mutual agreement and are supervised by non-reimbursed faculty members.

1.13.2 A student competing as a member of a California community college club team which competes against a California community college intercollegiate sport team must meet all academic and eligibility requirements and shall use one (1) season of participation in that sport.

1.13.3 Guidelines for determining eligibility for university or non-California community college transfer students who have participated on a club team and request eligibility at a California community college are as follows:

- A. The student received academic units for his/her competition.
- B. There was a regular full-time staff person assigned to teach the sport activity for which he/she was given faculty load or pay as remuneration.
- C. There was a regular printed and published schedule for the sport.
- D. NCAA, COA, etc. eligibility forms were filled out in order to participate.
- E. Regular officials were used at the contests.
- F. Admission was charged for fans to attend contests.
- G. The students met eligibility standards in order to compete.
- H. The student practiced regularly in a formal setting.
- I. Number of games, meets, or matches held during the season constitutes a full season.
- J. Regular full-dress uniforms were worn during the activity.
- K. There was competition against intercollegiate athletic teams at postsecondary institutions.

1.13.4 If the club team falls into the above patterns, a season of sport has been used and all academic and eligibility requirements must be met in order to compete at a California community college.

1.14 Junior Varsity and Reserve Team Participation

- 1.14.1 Members of California community college junior varsity and/or reserve teams must satisfy all eligibility requirements specified in this *Constitution*.
- 1.14.2 Junior varsity and/or reserve competition shall be counted as regular competition as it pertains to the eligibility of the student athlete.
- 1.14.3 A student athlete, regardless of whether a member of a varsity, junior varsity, or reserve team or any combination thereof, may not participate in more than the number of games, meets, or matches as authorized for a sport (as listed in Bylaw 3.11).
- 1.14.4 Colleges that split or divide their varsity teams for separate contests shall have each contest count as part of the total COA allowable number of contests. Exception, Track and Field: (See Bylaw 3.14.3.)
- 1.14.5 Eligible team members who compete as non-scoring members of a team shall be assessed a season of sport.

1.15 Competition/Participation: Individuals

- 1.15.1 In order for a student to be eligible to compete in a sport, he/she must meet *Constitution* academic eligibility requirements; i.e., have satisfied transfer residence if necessary, have a cumulative 2.0 grade point average if necessary, and have passed 24-semester/36-quarter units between seasons of competition before a second season of participation in the same sport. These requirements must be met prior to the beginning of the semester or quarter of the specific sport season. Students not enrolled during the first term of the sport; i.e., a basketball student athlete not enrolled during the fall term may not compete during the winter quarter or the spring semester.
- 1.15.2 A student athlete becomes eligible for competition in a sport on the first day of instruction of the first semester or quarter of that sport season at his/her institution, except as provided under Bylaw 1.5.2.
- 1.15.3 A student who attends any intercollegiate athletic class at any California community college is considered as attending that college for athletic purposes and is not eligible at any other college during that season of sport.
- 1.15.4 A student athlete may practice, scrimmage, or compete with only one (1) California community college in any season of sport regardless of the semester/quarter starting or ending date. (Practice as defined in Bylaw 3.5.)
- 1.15.5 A student may practice at a four (4)-year college or out-of-state junior/community college and transfer to a California community college without penalty, but the student athlete may compete in a game, meet, or match at only one (1) postsecondary institution during the same season of sport with the following exception:

A student who transfers to a California community college and who has competed in a COA-sponsored sport which was considered to be part of a nontraditional or nonchampionship segment of the regular schedule for that sport is eligible to compete. The student may compete at a California community college in this sport during the same academic year, provided he/she would have been eligible for a regular season of competition at his/her previous institution. The total participation in this sport during the academic year would count as only one (1) season of competition.

- 1.15.6 Students attending California community college intercollegiate athletic courses which are conducted prior to the official starting date of that sport season shall, for the purpose of eligibility and transfer, be considered as having practiced at that college for that semester.
- 1.15.7 Actual playing in a scheduled game, meet, or match (except scrimmages) at any accredited institution above the high school level during the sport season shall be recorded as one (1) season of competition in that sport. (Exception: Bylaw 1.8.)
- 1.15.8 A California community college student in a team sport may not compete or practice with any other California community college teams or with any other outside team in that sport during the season of that sport after the COA defined date when practice may begin. (See the COA Sports Season Dates Chart.) In exceptional cases, the COA Executive Director may issue an exemption to this section.
- 1.15.9 An unattached competitor is an individual who is enrolled in and attending a California community college as a California community college student and is not listed on an official college team roster Form 3. Such individuals may not compete as a member of that college team or unattached in any scheduled California community college game, meet, or match. Such student athletes are ineligible and all contests in which they compete are forfeited.
- 1.15.10 Definitions: Competitor/Participant
 - A. COMPETITOR—is defined as one who competes in a game, meet, or match in COA-sanctioned sports.
 - B. PARTICIPANT—is defined as one who is a team member but has not competed in a COA-sanctioned sport (excluding scrimmages).

1.16 Mandatory Service

A student athlete who has been away from college fulfilling a mandatory church mission or on a mandatory military assignment which prohibits the accumulation of units may ask for a waiver of Bylaws 1.6.1.A, 1.10.2, and 1.15.1. The conference commissioner of the college where the student competed is authorized to grant the waiver. In the event of a national emergency, the COA shall grant an additional season of competition to student athletes who serve on active duty in the armed forces regardless of the number of contests in which the student athlete had participated prior to being called to active duty. Any participation during the season in which the student athlete was involved when called to duty would be discounted and the student would be afforded a fresh start. Any previous years of participation would remain on the student's records.

1.17 Dropped Sports

- 1.17.1 If a sport is dropped before the first game, meet, or match, student athletes may request a waiver for that sport of any Bylaw that would prevent the student athlete from transferring and being eligible at another California community college that semester. The conference commissioner of the college where the sport was dropped has the authority to grant these waivers and shall notify the conference hearing board and the COA Executive Director of this action.
- 1.17.2 If a sport is dropped by a college and falls under the following criteria, the student athlete may request a waiver for that sport of any Bylaw that would prevent the student athlete from transferring and being eligible at another California community college that semester, or having the partial season count as a year of eligibility.
- A. The sport must be dropped prior to 20 percent of the institution's scheduled contests of that season. The number shall be calculated based on the number of allowable contests in that sport.
- B. Any computation of the percent limitation that results in a fraction portion shall be rounded to the next whole number. (Refer to Bylaw 1.8 to assist in computing the season.) The conference commissioner has the authority to grant this waiver and shall notify the conference appeals board and the COA Executive Director of this action.
- 1.17.3 If a sport is dropped at the end of the season, the student athletes shall be notified as soon as possible to permit the students sufficient time to become eligible to transfer. The college shall notify the conference commissioner, using Form 6, of the intent to drop the sport, including the date and student names.
- 1.17.4 If a sport is dropped at the end of the year and the student athletes have not been notified in sufficient time to register at another college, the students may request a waiver of the transfer rule for that sport. The conference commissioner has the authority to grant this waiver and shall notify the conference appeals board and the COA Executive Director of this action.

1.18 Emerging Sports

Exceptions can be made by the COA for emerging sports to compete against other California community colleges without meeting eligibility and academic requirements or using a season of sport.

1.19 Penalties for Violation of Bylaw 1

- 1.19.1 See Article 7.5.12.