

October 8, 2024 – Eligibility Committee Meeting @ 5pm EST

1. Call To Order:

Rob Chaney, Eligibility Committee Chair, and Darin Monroe, Sports Governance Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM EST on October 8, 2024 at NJCAA National Headquarters in Charlotte, NC.

2. Roll Call:

Present: Vice-Chair: Christina Hundley (2024), Immediate Past Vice-Chair: Mike Saddler (ex-officio), Jeff Willis (2024); Division II Reps: Brian Anweiler (2024), Troy Larson (2024); Division III Reps: Kurt Kohler (2022), Kristen Schuth (2024), Dr. Tom Huebner, Troy Tucker (BOR Chair) Men's Administrator: Rob Nielson (2024)

NJCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance: Jeff White, Wanda Bodey

Absent:) Division I Reps: Deron Clark (2023), Mary Young (2021) Women's Administrator

Other NJCAA Staff Members in Attendance: Dr. Christopher Parker, Lauren Pritchett, Tyler Broderick, Rod Lovett, Michelle Meadows, Brett Monaghan, Andrew Givens, Anthony Taylor

3. Approval of Agenda: Rob Chaney approves to start the agenda breakdown at 5:01 PM EST

4. NJCAA August National Office Updates

National Office staff introduced themselves to the committees.

Dr. Parker notes that the only consistency in today's world of college sports is change.

5. Direction of the NJCAA / Realignment

The opening session of the joint meetings of the Eligibility and Sports Governance Committees focused on the direction of the NJCAA and how it would like to move forward and adapt in the everchanging landscape of college athletics.

- Sadiia Jones asks if the NJCAA is prepared to expand its resources and being more detailed if the NJCAA chooses to continue to mirror a more detailed NCAA
- Where does the NJCAA stand with the NCAA? Michelle Meadows is charged with liaising with NCAA.
 - Dr. Parker notes that he is asking the NCAA to honor NJCAA rulings.
 - Michelle Meadows notes that NJCAA has to be strategic in relationships with NJCAA (i.e., getting in front of ("lobbying") and knowing the direction NJCAA wants to go.

- Dr. Parker notes that the relationships being formed are headed in the right direction; conversation and dialogue are more frequent.
- Jeff White notes that the relationship with the Government Relations team at NJCAA is fostering relationships moving forward.
- In response to Dr. Huebner's question about academics... there is pressure from the top down that the NCAA is committed to academics in the same manner it is committed to athletics.
- Jake Ripple comments that football calendars are set in the previous April and in June, DI football oversight made changes to signing dates and transfer periods which makes NJCAA football in a quiet period and after signing dates.
 - The NJCAA as a reactionary association is frustrating for members.
 - Michelle Meadows responds that a carve-out exception has been requested.
 - Jake Ripple notes that this specific policy change came from the NJCAA Council (an NJCAA representative is on that Council; meeting was called without his awareness).
 - Has the determination already been made on the high level players? "Homework" for recruiting has been done at that point.
 - Sadiia Jones asks if an exception can be made that was similar to basketball. Jake Ripple responds that has been asked for. Michelle Meadows responds that it was not supported by the Oversight Committee.
- Darin Monroe questions if NJCAA wants to make rules for itself or continue to be reactionary as an association to follow suit with the NCAA. Different schools have different interests, but the association must make policies that benefit the greater good.
- Mike Saddler notes that the more this is talked about the more evident it becomes that it is time to do away with ... but make rules for likeminded institutions. Trying to make rules that cover every institution is impossible. It is not the NJCAA's responsibility to make student-athletes eligible at the next level, but it should not be making rules that make them ineligible.
- Dean Myrick notes one size fits all does not work.
- Jeff White notes that Honest Game software takes NJCAA bylaws and rules and acts as a clearinghouse. The organization works with the NJCAA as well. He asks how much a school would be willing to pay to utilize it.
 - Jake Ripple says that in 'theory', it is a good idea.
 - Schuth says that is only one piece of the puzzle. A young coach does not necessarily know that they are breaking rules.

- Darin Monroe asks about looking down the road by division... do schools have to declare one division across the board. This would also have an impact on regional realignment, not necessarily harder or easier.
 - To make regional realignment work, the entire concept has to be 'blown up'. It would create problems up front but create a clearer path moving forward.
 - Dr. Tom Huebner questions whether coaches would have to suggest other schools to prospective student-athletes.
- Kristen Schuth adds that some institutions have endowments where money cannot be moved.
- Some schools make the decision to move divisions because of availability of opponents.
 - Kristen Schuth echoes this
 - Are some schools holding onto divisions to accommodate other schools? Yes.
- Darin Monroe calls for a vote for focusing on realignment by institution. 13 votes to approve. 2 votes in support of keeping the same. 1 abstention.
 - Rob Chaney notes that the opportunity for schools and athletics to grow could have been because of different divisions in different sports.
 - Allison Mohr echoes Rob Chaney's sentiment. She adds that enrollment and economic feasibility plays a part too.
- Dean Myrick comments that he is more in favor of scholarship/non-scholarship divisions.
 - Mike Saddler comments that the gap between scholarship and non-scholarship is large.
- Darin Monroe asks whether there should be separate eligibility and ... rules for scholarship versus non-scholarship. The Committee(s) feel that it is the responsibility of the institutions, not the NJCAA.
- Mike Saddler adds that some programs are just trying to fill rosters while others have future goals for their student-athletes and that the expectations for each are different. He says that if NJCAA wants to address all member schools, the bar needs to be low.
 - Jake Ripple adds that that gives more opportunities.
- Darin Monroe comments that this could give DIII schools the opportunity to look at bylaws and see what they want to apply to them.
- Kristen Schuth asks (1)if there are rules DIII know now that they would want to change and (2) what are they getting out of it besides the money portion.

- Darin Monroe asks about the Sports Procedures Chart... do the amount of hours and games fit the DIII schools.
 - Does it make things better for scholarships?
 - Jeff White suggests that this could become a membership issue. It could result in more membership, shorter travel, etc....
- Mike Saddler wants DIII to make rules that are tailored to ensuring success for them and not necessarily DI or DII.
- Kristen Schuth suggests how this would become a prep school issue.
- Dean Myrick adds that it would give more of a voice to DIII members. A perfectly level playing field will never be created.
- Marci Henry asks why the committees are choosing between DI/DII and why can't they just choose one.
- Sadiia Jones comments that some equal standards should still apply.
- Melissa Grau asks what is the issue with DIII? What is the issue trying to be solved?
 - Lack of success is not because of eligibility.
 - Proactive v. reactive. Rob Chaney does not want to be so proactive that ineligibility issues are being created.
 - Unintended consequences may have been created due to Last Semester Part-Time Enrollment or Graduate Exceptions.
- Kristen Schuth asks if DI schools should be allowed to play DII schools and vice versa.
- Darin Monroe reiterates that the only issue here is today is whether there are avenues worth exploring.

The joint Eligibility Committee and Sports Governance Committee meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM EST.

Rob Chaney called the meeting of the Eligibility Committee back to order at 7:11 PM EST.

Jeff Willis offers that he sees value in scholarship and non-scholarship divisions.

Kurt Kohler cannot see why a school would have to declare either. The schools know what is best for their student-athletes.

- Rob Chaney shares that Oversight Committees felt that teams and/or schools could be lost. Some schools saw a need within their district for adding certain sports in a different way than they already had. It would solve some challenges, but is the expense worth it?

- Mike Saddler shares that programs with all three divisions are unique. He thinks the bylaw aspect could be cleaned up. Saddler struggles with it from a philosophical point of view. He does not like that an athletic department gets to pick and choose how they support student-athletes.
 - How schools are supporting their athletes are all based off of DI services.
 - Kurt Kohler offers that if a student-athlete does not want to play at a DIII school, they won't choose to.
 - Brian Anweiler adds that many schools are classified as DI but do not get the 'perks' of DI.
 - Rob Nielsen shares that he would be concerned about Title IX.
 - Kristen Schuth adds that her student-athletes should be receiving the same opportunities as student-athletes at higher levels.
- Mike Saddler adds that it creates opportunities for rule violations.
- Being able to choose by sport would force some colleges ... 7:30 PM
- Dr. Tom Huebner reiterates that the Committee has not yet identified the problem that needs to be solved.
- Jeff Willis asks why it cannot be left up to DIII schools.
 - Kristen Schuth adds that it would be different for every school
 - Rob Nielsen questions how it would play out in the Board of Regents
 - Christina Hundley shares that AZ recently went through the same process. She believes that a I/II/III vote could be a temporary fix.
 - Jeff White believes that wouldn't be a "National Association" but rather a "regional association". He shares that the Board should be responsive to Committees and their recommendations should weigh heavily.
 - Kristen Schuth asks if the conversation came to this point because of the proactive v. reactive question.
 - Rob Chaney shares that the rules cannot be so loose that it makes student-athletes prospectively ineligible when they transfer.
 - Mission is to promote academic growth and success of student-athletes.
- Regions are free to impose stricter regulations than the NJCAA does
- Kristen Schuth shares that the Sport Procedures Chart is what needs to be changed.
- Christina Hundley shares that in some instances her program cannot fill scholarships because no one is willing to play.
- Kristen Schuth shares that she believes the issue is women's teams dropping sports.

- Jeff Willis asks if those programs had full-time coaches, would it be different.
- Brian Anweiler shares that North Carolina schools receives no athletic funding.
 - Community Colleges are being recognized
- Jeff White shares that both things can be done... 7:49
- Rob Chaney asks whether there are Articles that DIII schools would view as prohibitive.
 - Kristen Schuth shares that getting rid of prep schools would be problematic for DIII schools.
 - Kurt Kohler shares that part-time students would benefit west coast DIII schools.
 - Christina Hundley asks
 - Troy Larson shares that changing rules will lead to an influx of student-athletes. He thinks it's a very unique time to make impactful changes and NJCAA could potentially totally revamp as an organization.
- Jeff Willis shares that NCAA is moving towards ... and 5 years of eligibility ... 9 semester hours make sense with 5 years of eligibility
- Kurt Kohler believes the student-athlete should be given the choice.
- Jeff White shares that he believes conferences will move away and do more things as compact conferences.
- Kristen Schuth offers that if separate rulebooks were made, DIII could write their rulebook to the disadvantage of DI and DII schools.
 - Rob Nielsen offers that there should be one general rulebook and then other division specific rulebooks
- Christina Hundley asks if there needs to be something specific discussed rather than the general conversation looking forward. Reactive in the moment is better than playing catchup a year later.
- Tom Huebner offers that the NJCAA is more of a partner to the NCAA than anybody realizes.
- Kristen Schuth thinks it would be beneficial for NJCAA events (i.e., Convention, Championship bids) to occur after NCAA discussions so it is more informative. It would be strategic to be able to make informed decisions.
- NJCAA and NCAA have made strides and the relationship is completely different than it used to be... Jeff White counters this – NJCAA needs NCAA, NCAA does not need NJCAA
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6. LOI

a. Cancellation

- Jeff White mentions the cancellation of aid and being held ‘hostage’ by a student-athlete.
- An addendum can be used, but it must be signed at the same time as the LOI.
- Is there an opportunity to look at those rules and a cleaner way to manage it that empowers the institution?

7. Amateurism

Current Article VII, Section 3.A.2, “Impermissible Inducement: No member institution shall permit a prospective student-athlete to be solicited or recruited to attend such institution by the promise of gift or any aid or inducement other than that of a grant-in-aid as permitted by these bylaws.”

Jeff White comments that the Association obviously needs to add a “catch all” provision that allows for NIL as it is used in multiple states. States have passed statutes that authorize their institutions to use NIL as a recruiting inducement (and generated lawsuits from the TN and VA attorneys general).

Also, should definitions for “Inducement” and “Gift” be considered?

8. Good of the Order

Rob Chaney shares that looking forward was a good starting point for discussions and reflections.

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 9, AM, Charlotte, NC

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Rob Chaney at 8:54 EST.

October 9, 2024 – Eligibility Committee Meeting @ 9 am EST

1. Call To Order:

Rob Chaney, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM EST on October 9, 2024.

2. Roll Call:

Present: Vice-Chair: Christina Hundley (2024), Immediate Past Vice-Chair: Mike Saddler (ex-officio), Men's Administrator: Rob Nielson (2024), Jeff Willis (2024); Division II Reps: Brian Anweiler (2024), Troy Larson (2024); Division III Reps: Kurt Kohler (2022), Kristen Schuth (2024), Dr. Tom Huebner, Troy Tucker (BOR Chair)

NCJAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance: Jeff White, Wanda Bodey

Absent: Division I Reps: Deron Clark (2023), Mary Young (2021) Women's Administrator

Other NJCAA Staff Members in Attendance: Carly Pitts, Lauren Pritchett, Tyler Broderick

3. Approval of Agenda: Rob Chaney approves to start the agenda breakdown at 9:00 AM EST

4. Duplicate LOIs

Jeff White mentions that having student-athletes pay for a unique identifier might solve some problems, but not all. He reiterates that this is a miniscule issue in the big picture.

5. Presentation of Bylaws Revision

NJCAA Staff Member Lauren Pritchett presented edits and revisions made to the Handbook Bylaws.

- The Eligibility Committee voted to approve edits to the Hardship section of the bylaws to now include “Medical Hardship – Physical”, “Medical Hardship – Mental”, and “Non-Medical Hardship”. The language of the bylaws reflects such a change and include required documentation from licensed medical or mental health professionals.
- The Eligibility Committee discussed utilization of the term “redshirt”. Lauren Pritchett acknowledged that it is the industry term widely used but also causes a lot of confusion and misunderstanding as the NJCAA does not utilize redshirts in the same way as the NCAA.
- The Eligibility Committee discussed including a Force Majeure clause in the hardship section of the bylaws. This was brought up in response to Hurricane Helene's impact on South Georgia and the inability to continue the women's soccer season.

6. Mid-Term Enrollment Exception

Student-athletes who are not enrolled full-time at the college of participation when the regular season schedule of the sport of participation begins shall remain ineligible throughout the season schedule, unless the student-athlete enrolls on the first possible enrollment date after one of the following:

- a. Their release from Active Armed Services with a discharge other than dishonorable.
- b. Their return from an official church sanctioned religious mission.
- c. Their graduation from a high school or receipt of a state department of education approved equivalency diploma.
- d. Their transfer from a college or university which has permanently ceased competition in that sport after the school year begins.

This is mostly an issue in two-term sports like basketball, indoor T&F, wrestling, bowling, etc.

Scenario:

The student-athlete meets one of the exceptions for mid-term enrollment in Article V, Section 2.C.2.b.i. Enrolls and participates in the spring term. The next fall the student-athlete is a second season athlete, but does not have an accumulation of 24 credits with a 2.0 GPA to be eligible as second season athlete. They only have one previous full-time term, and no opportunity to complete another full-time term to meet the second season requirement for the fall.

Should there be an exception for the fall term in these cases?

In fall and spring sports they have the opportunity to enroll full-time in two full-time terms to meet the second season requirement. If they choose to enroll in less, then 12 credits that is their decision and there would not be an exception.

The NJCAA currently rules that the student-athlete is not eligible for the fall but could become eligible in the spring.

Should there be an exception to the second season requirement in the following fall?

Should we continue with the exceptions for mid-term enrollment?

Is it a disservice to those student-athletes that meet those exceptions since they only play half of the season but are charged a full season and then cannot meet the second season requirements prior to the following fall term?

- Mike Saddler offers that this is the most misunderstood bylaw.
- Change the wording in C.2.B.i:
 - “Student-athletes whose initial enrollments occurs after the 18th calendar day of the regular term may become eligible in the subsequent term.
 - Anybody using C.1 who enrolls after the 18th calendar day
 - Should C.2.B. be struck?
 - Mike Saddler agrees.
- Mike Saddler suggests including a different section for two-term sports.
- Jeff White asks if what is really being discussed is mid-season participation.
 - “Student-athletes who are not enrolled when the term begins are not eligible for participation.”
- Committee agrees that transferring down (NCAA → NJCAA) would be allowable
- Interest would be protected by putting student-athlete on roster and marking them as a Non-Participant ... can make necessary adjustments from an audit perspective
 - Put them into system if you want to protect them
 - Conceptually easier to understand and apply but difficult because it is different and new
 - Now saying just have to be enrolled THIS semester, not the fall semester
- Want to provide avenues for part-time students to become eligible in the next term
- Rob Chaney clarifies that the Committee is in favor of four-year transfer
 - But not NJCAA members
 - Also getting rid of the bylaw stating student-athletes cannot play the same sport at two different schools in the same year (except basketball)
- Jeff White offers we should be doing everything to make enrollment and participation easier
- Rob Chaney asks if the mid-year enrollee still needs 24 hours as a second-season participant
 - Committee says yes
- Kurt Kohler points out that will help DIII schools and he would rather the student-athletes have those tools to be eligible in the spring
- Brian Arnwein questions about sitting a student-athlete in the fall and potentially ‘using them as a weapon’ in the spring
- Exceptions are no longer needed

7. Next Meeting: October 9, PM, Charlotte, NC

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Rob Chaney at 11:57 AM EST

October 9, 2024 – Eligibility Committee Meeting @ 9 am EST

1. Call To Order:

Darin Monroe, Sports Governance Board Chair, called the joint meeting between the Eligibility and Sports Governance Committees to order at 12:55 EST on October 9, 2024.

2. Roll Call:

Present: Vice-Chair: Christina Hundley (2024), Immediate Past Vice-Chair: Mike Saddler (ex-officio), Men's Administrator: Rob Nielson (2024) Division I Reps: Jeff Willis (2024); Division II Reps: Brian Anweiler (2024), Troy Larson (2024); Division III Reps: Kurt Kohler (2022), Kristen Schuth (2024), Dr. Tom Huebner, Troy Tucker (BOR Chair)

NCJAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance: Jeff White, Wanda Bodey

Absent: Division I Reps: Deron Clark (2023), Mary Young (2021) Women's Administrator

Other NJCAA Staff Members in Attendance: Carly Pitts, Lauren Pritchett, Tyler Broderick, Rod Lovett, Anthony Taylor

3. Approval of Agenda: Rob Chaney approves to start the agenda breakdown at 12:58 PM EST

4. Meeting with NCAA (Katie Ethridge, NCAA liaison)

Transgender Policies

Anne Rohlman – explains her role

Jean Merrill, Director of Inclusion at NCAA; leads LGBTQ inclusion

Incredibly complicated and evolving aspect of college athletics. Existing policy for pathway for male born student-athletes participating in female sports. The policy is not restrictive, colleges can choose whether they want to follow it or not.

NCAA will stay in Phase 2 of policy until further notice – intentionally vague.

Student-athletes who are assigned male at birth and want to participate in female sports must undergo hormone suppression for at least one (1) calendar prior to competing in women's sports. 2022 update includes that the individual has to meet sport specific testosterone thresholds and must be submitted to the NCAA; a group of five medical professionals evaluate those.

- Dean Myrick asks how policy is dealt with in states that have zero tolerance due to state legislation.

- State law supersedes NCAA policy; if state law does not permit, that participation pathway cannot be provided. A school can make that decision even without state law.
- This becomes more complicated with visiting schools. Need to work with legal counsel, conference, host school to determine how that may impact the school as a visiting team. Some legislation does not apply to visiting schools.
- It is the responsibility of the school to know what the host state and school require.
- Dean Myrick asks if state law is taken into consideration when awarding championships.
 - Anti-discrimination policy does exist for NCAA events and championship events.
 - When a bid is submitted, these questions are certainly asked, but not entirely eliminated. When there is restrictive legislation, the championships manager work with host schools to ensure safeguarding those student-athletes' health and well-being.
 - Emphasizes that the environment and culture of the community is taken into account when considering bids.

DIII Eligibility

Unique situation; NCAA has legislation that says if you participate in practice past the first regular season competition, a season of eligibility is charged.

Undergraduate transfers not subject to DIII legislation.

- Darin Monroe asks about transferring down and then transferring back up.
 - If only practiced for two years and then transferred back to four year level, not charged with a season of eligibility.
 - If played, they are charged with a season of eligibility

Amateurism

Goal is to create a level playing field.

Rolling basis, presented to DI Council at quarterly meetings – anticipated date of completion is October 2025

Prep School / Academy / Post Grad

NCAA is specific to each sport and is within the playing rules; generally, NCAA rules say you can't play against prospects

NCAA is unaware if an exception would be allowed for only playing against prep schools, but would allow for the one year grace period; based upon timely graduation from high school

NCAA feels full-time enrollment is a core principle and it stops the progression towards competition of a degree

Can participate in two scrimmages without using a season of eligibility

Redshirt

Continuing review and conversations

It is recommended that the NJCAA forward its questions to the NCAA Eligibility Review as soon as possible.

1st part of the Review is related to the athletic eligibility. The 2nd part is the academic side and whether anything needs to be shortened based on decisions with the 1st part.

2nd Part begins after October 2025 – sent to Committees with expertise and jurisdiction

Kurt Kohler asks whether there is a distinction between championship and non-championship seasons. Yes.

Michelle Meadows asks whether Last Full-Time Enrollment Exception could be a carve out

- Pushback would be that extra hours help advance them to a four-year degree
- Postgrads still have to be full-time

DI Council

House settlement and implications are being discussed to foresee what the future holds; what the eligibility model looks like going forward; sport specific items

Dean Myrick asks about the possibility of the elimination of LOI

- Financial aid and LOI will likely be rolled into one

Jeff Willis asks for elaboration on the possibility of 5 years of eligibility and elimination of redshirt rules

- NCAA can't clarify as Committees are early in the process

Dean Myrick asks about comparison international comparison and NIL – semi-professional / professional leagues and want to transfer back and play – how is that viewed with new potential payment structure at NCAA level

- NCAA responds that is not a different standard, but complexity of international space makes it more difficult; is ‘semi-pro’ considered amateurism?; implications with visa

Rob Chaney discusses 3 separate manuals – asks about the fundamental differences between the three

- Would vary based on philosophies of each division and how much regulation each division wants to implement
- Academics is the same across the board for the most part concerning philosophy and regulations

Kyle Kallander (Special Assistant to the President; former Big South Commissioner)

Reviewed the joint meeting with NCAA representatives and made recommendations on how the NJCAA can best move forward which are outlined below

Comprehensive Eligibility Review

- Make rules easier to understand and eliminate waiver opportunities; more streamlined and easier to follow
- 5 years to play 5 seasons – applying football time clock across the board; would definitely simplify things as it would count the same (eliminates hardship waivers)
- Possibility of NCAA taking action in January
 - Tom Huebner asks if it will implemented as ‘effective immediately’
 - Possibly next year, probably the year after that as legislation wouldn’t be complete until October 2025
 - Counterarguments / Points of Resistance to making this happen
 - Playing 5 versus four
 - Still a long way to go and is a staff driven exercise
 - Jake Ripple asks if this will eventually trickle down to DII/III
 - It could, but he is not as familiar
 - An advantage of DII/III would be that they honor NJCAA rulings
- More decentralization: less rules that apply to everyone – maybe even conferences creating their own rules
- Phase 2 will be transferring eligibility requirements, but they haven’t dug into that much yet

- Major changes at DI level

Council

- Certain contingencies in favor of eliminating, but most will now be within NCAA legislation (effective immediately) – Institutional Financial Document will essentially cover everything
 - Are there restrictions in the language that can be added – not aware
- Transfer Portal – Football will have 20 day period

House Settlement

- Only partial approval, so implications are just now being seen
- Harder and harder to align because there will be different levels – conferences will be making their own decisions
- Michelle Meadows asks about few overarching rules with more specific
 - Less change on academic side
- If NJCAA feels like there are things they want NCAA to consider, must be communicated ASAP
- Dean Myrick asks what the role of NCAA will be in 5-10 years
 - Used to be provide championship opportunities and enforce rules; more control from external entities
 - Will still be conducting championships, but involvement will be different
- Jeff Willis asks about roster limitations NCAA is trying to impose
 - Opportunity to opt out – reductions of rosters in other sports may be necessary; will still be able to compete on that level but might not be a level playing field
 - Potential for walk-ons to go away
 - FCS programs will likely opt in
 - Opting in gives more opportunities to student-athletes

5. LOI

Signing Dates

Referencing Article II, Section 2.A.2 – revised the date that an official visit can be taken; nothing in LOI section as to when a prospective student-athlete can sign an LOI (established by sport and listed in Sports Procedures Chart)

Does it need to be fleshed out?

- Mike Saddler comments that although the signing window does not begin until a certain date, some high school seniors are signing LOIs for the current year when they have not graduated high school and the window hasn't opened yet.
 - Shouldn't be able to sign a LOI for the current year until high school graduation
 - Kurt Kohler adds that DIII could lock up student-athletes because there is no aid included
 - "When signing a high school senior for the current academic year, they must have graduated, obtained a GED, or past the date for Letter of Intent signing."
- Kurt Kohler moves that a student-athlete cannot sign a LOI for the current academic year until after graduation.
 - Not seconded
- - Dean Myrick asks for clarification on whether it will be completed graduation requirements or physically graduated.
 - Wanda Bodey adds that the NJCAA has the Early College program for student-athletes who have exhausted high school eligibility and are working towards completion of an associates degree.
 - Rob Nielsen asks how big a program is it – mainly a football issue
 - Football signing date used to be in November, but was then moved to February (no resources to get coaching staffs out until after completion of their season); reverting back could potentially solve the problem and shorten the window
 - The problem is not necessarily attendance, but locking the student-athlete down
 - Maybe not a graduation date (because of different dates) but put a set date
 - Should a high school senior have to sign for the upcoming year in order to receive aid for the current year?
 - Dean Myrick adds that schools should know what aid they have available on May 15th
 - Marci Henry asks if it is even an issue if they are recruitable after June 15th
 - Dean Myrick asks if we are creating an issue that is not really an issue. Mike Saddler responds no.
 - Ron Riggle asks if it is a big enough issue that they would be willing to change signing dates to November 1

- Jake Ripple states that does not know if it is a big enough issue that it needs to be legislated
- The key is that there are not that many who know they could do this
- Dean Myrick motions to table the issue and have the Football/Eligibility Committee come back with a proposal
 - Seconded by Jake Ripple
- Wanda Bodey shares that the previous Casebook deemed the issue an NJCAA violation – only allowed if a current high school student is receiving a benefit
- Marci Henry comments that Eligibility could make it that the high school senior is not bound
- Christina Hundley comments that February 1 should be the hard and fast cutoff
- Dean Myrick’s proposal passes

Cancellation

Instances in which a student-athlete leaves the team but refuses to sign a release, and as a result continues to receive aid.

In the past it was designed to protect student-athletes from being kicked off the team

- Marci Henry comments that she has added an addendum to the LOI to prevent – essentially treats as kicked off the team
 - Jake Ripple comments that he was told a year ago he could not do that
 - Dean Myrick comments that he was told he could add anything to an addendum
- Jeff Willis shares his experience with this
- Jeff White comments that the Addendum is the loophole
 - Need clarification between kicking off the team and quitting the team
- Jeff Willis moves to add language “student has chosen not to participate” – can be at any point in the season (prorated)
 - Brian Anweiler seconded the motion
- Wanda Bodey comments that the “Other” box has been checked in the past
- Dean Myrick asks why the language can’t be changed to “prior to completion of the season”
- Rob Nielsen asks if the student-athlete knows this when they sign the LOI
- Can add to initialed statements
- Jeff Willis’s proposal unanimously passes.
- Mike Saddler wants the three sections together

Bylaw update and form update

Duplicate LOIs

Appeal Committee went against student-athletes not being able to compete for a whole year in many cases.

Rob Chaney states that the Appeal Committee has received numerous duplicate LOI appeals. Currently, per the bylaws, a student-athlete is ineligible for the entire year.

- Ron Riggle states that the search function is not always function
- Jeff White states that there have been no instances in which the National Office has not been able to find the original LOI.
- Jeff White clarifies that the National Office has received 90,000+ LOIs in the past two years and only 40 duplicate LOIs have occurred. He says that a unique identifier could be used, but nothing is going to be fail-proof
- Jake Ripple comments it is not uncommon for multiple schools to create an LOI before signing day and hope the student-athlete signs it
- Mike Saddler comments that the simplest solution might be adjusting the penalty.
- It is in the college's best interest to make a good faith effort
- Rob Nielsen states if the occurrence is not as prevalent, then nothing should be changed
- Christina Hundley asks if it really matters
 - Only to the extent that the rules say it does
- Darin Monroe asks if the system shows when they are issued – yes
 - It should be down to whichever LOI is signed first
- Dean Myrick asks about searching by birthdate
- Mike Saddler adds that although there may be numerous duplicate LOI appeals, they are all nuisanced – he is confident that we only know of 40 duplicates
- Samantha Lowder confirms
- Dean Myrick moves to change the search engine to include birthdate and initiate education procedures for membership
- Tom Huebner asks if there is a pattern in duplicate LOIs (i.e., international students)
 - Ron Riggle asks if the penalty part is okay
- Dean Myrick calls to question and amends to include birthdate in the search engine and also revisit in a year
 - The motion passes 15-1

6. Allowal of School Apparel for Official Signings

Current rule states this is a benefit, but can also be used for marketing purposes.

- Melissa Grau comments that it should only be included for student-athletes and not family
- Dean Myrick asks why he can't give them anything
 - Darin Monroe comments that the problem is that the student-athlete receives the benefit before the signing date

7. Amateurism

NIL is permissible and professional contracts are not

Bylaws permit NIL that is in accordance with state statute

- Allison Mohr offers that NIL and high school players are completely different from international players – not the monetary standpoint, playing professional matters more than the money

Proposal to move from age 19 to 20 in the July cycle was tabled by Eligibility Committee

NCAA is just prior to college enrollment

- Allison Mohr asks if the difference is the clock in which students have to be enrolled in college in the NCAA
- Darin Monroe comments that there have been international instances in which there is no way to be sure what the student-athlete has done with pay to play. He feels that an unequal balance has been created because some are following the rules and some are taking the chance.
- Rob Chaney comments that the Eligibility Committee has visited a separate auditing process for amateurism
 - Now, only have to show the proof if reported
- Marci Henry asks what data supports 19 versus 20
 - The proposal most likely came from a basketball perspective and feeling like the pool has shrunk
- Dr. Parker confirms it is basketball related and shares that the NBA requested 20 based on the way students are graduating and being placed in academies
- Mike Saddler comments that there should be a carve out for basketball
 - Marci Henry is in support of this, but it was eliminated in previous years
- Dean Myrick asks if the effort is an attempt to prepare it for 25-26
 - Potentially could have voted on it October and coaches signing LOIs would be aware
- Rob Nielsen moves that the age is changed from 19 to 20

- Amanda Haseley seconds the motion
- Rob Nielsen comments that this could help enrollment and participation numbers
- The motion passes 12-3.

The joint Eligibility and Sports Governance Committees meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM EST.

Rob Chaney, Eligibility Committee Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM EST on October 9, 2024.

1. NCAA Redshirt Approval

The Sports Governance Committee approved a redshirt for DI football if they participate in less than four games.

- Kurt Kohler asks if DIII teams could play half of their seasons and then stop in order to retain eligibility to possibly get to the NCAA level.
- Christina Hundley asks how this affects DII/DIII
 - A DIII football player could transfer but playing in one game would count
- Kristen Schuth comments that this would not be in the best interest of student-athletes because DI is making up their own rules
- In most conferences, losing 3 games means that they can no longer compete in championships or the postseason
- Jeff Willis comments that he thinks the NCAA will rule and no longer allow the UNLV scenario
 - Jeff White notes that student-athletes playing a few games is nothing new
 - If the goal is to get in a four year school
 - Mike Saddler adds that this is the predicament of junior college athletics – advancing student-athletes to the next academic level and being able to compose
- Mike Saddler asks if NCAA redshirts are being honored at the NJCAA level
 - Yes
- Kristen Schuth says the number of games is a big difference on a divisional level. She notes that this is why separate rulebooks would be beneficial
- Wanda Bodey adds that the NAIA has a 30% rule for all sports
- Could be a potential problem extending to other DIII sports
- Kurt Kohler moves that the Eligibility Committee does not adopt the Sports Governance approval.

- There is a second with an amendment to only pass on a DI football level (this would be putting student-athletes first) – but there is no mechanism for this other than the Sports Procedure Chart
- The motion passes 2-0-1
- Rob Nielsen comments that there is currently not NCAA approval for this
- Mike Saddler asks how the NAIA treats their redshirts

8. Academic Grid Scenarios

The Appeal Committee heard an appeal in which a student-athlete was initially denied eligibility as a first-season participant

- Mike Saddler notes that the 2.0 should be common sense.
- Rob Chaney notes that he did not like making an exception for one student but not others.
- Rob Nielsen asks if 12 is no longer required
 - It is no longer an “and” statement, but meet the grid OR earn 12 credits with a GPA of 2.0 in their previous full-time term
- Extended grid and eliminated “Student-athletes that utilized Article V, Section 2.C.2.c or C.2.c.i in their previous term are not required to meet the 12 credits in their previous term”
- Christina Hundley moves to approve the extended grid.
 - Kristen Schuth seconded the motion. The motion passes.

9. Audit Requirements

- Samantha Lowder shares they are currently exploring methods to indicate 1st or 2nd season participants in the Admin Portal
- Rob Chaney asks what the purpose of the translation is
- Mike Saddler comments that the translation is not important, but finding the words in alignment with the NCAA International Academic Guide
- Wanda Bodey does not think the translation is important, but an evaluation is what is necessary – need to be evaluated through a transcript service

10. Foreign Classes / Transcripts

High School

“Foreign transcripts of student-athletes who attended a foreign high school and whose high school credentials confirming graduation or completion of secondary education which is in a language other than English must be translated.”

- Mike Saddler asks if it has language from the NCAA International Academic Guide, why does need to be translated?

- Must have proof of high school graduation to receive financial aid
- Not requiring high school graduation is instilling trust in the decisions that member schools make
- Jeff White asks if identifying a partner in evaluating transcripts would be beneficial
 - Lump sum for clearinghouse and additional payment for evaluation – would be a little bit more than evaluation
- Kristin Schuth points out that eliminating this might have an impact on other parts of the bylaws

“Foreign transcripts of student-athletes who previously attended a foreign college or university and participated in intercollegiate or club athletics must be translated.”

- Only has to be evaluated if they participated and are not from Canada.

11. Good of the Order

Making good progress.

Jeff Willis asked when the release motion would go into effect – August 1.

12. Next Meeting: October 10, AM, Charlotte, NC

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Rob Chaney at 5:45 PM EST.

October 10, 2024 – Eligibility Committee Meeting @ 9 am EST

1. Call To Order:

Rob Chaney, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM EST on October 9, 2024.

2. Roll Call:

Present: Vice-Chair: Christina Hundley (2024), Immediate Past Vice-Chair: Mike Saddler (ex-officio), Men's Administrator: Rob Nielson (2024) Division I Reps: Jeff Willis (2024); Division II Reps: Brian Anweiler (2024), Troy Larson (2024); Division III Reps: Kurt Kohler (2022), Kristen Schuth (2024), Dr. Tom Huebner, Troy Tucker (BOR Chair)

NCJAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance: Jeff White, Wanda Bodey

Absent: Deron Clark (2023), Mary Young (2021) Women's Administrator

Other NJCAA Staff Members in Attendance: Carly Pitts, Lauren Pritchett, Tyler Broderick

3. Approval of Agenda: Rob Chaney approves to start the agenda breakdown at 9:03 AM EST

4. Natural Disaster Hardship

The process allows for a member school to submit a hardship request collectively “in the any Act of God, pandemic (e.g. COVID-19), strike, fire, flood, governmental acts, orders or restrictions, or any other reason where failure to participate is beyond the reasonable control and not caused by the negligence of the NJCAA member institution's Athletics Department.”

- Kurt Kohler asks how far we are willing to take this (i.e., snowstorms, forest fires)
- Jeff White clarifies that a qualifying reason for the hardship does include the negligence of an athletic department.
- Jeff White notes that it would be useful to define commonly used terms in the industry.
 - The intent is to create a glossary of commonly used terms to add to the Handbook.
- Rob Chaney comments that it should only apply to a team that cannot complete their season.
- Christina Hundley asks if the Compliance department would want something more definitive and not necessarily open to interpretation.
- What does “completing a season” mean?
 - How specific does it need to be...

- The association determined that 30% of games is a significant part of the season
- “When a traditional hardship request does not apply and you are unable to complete the season, this option applies”
 - This would allow it to get to the Appeals Committee which determines the hardship situationally
- However the clause is worded, it is just providing the opportunity to submit the request
- This clause could potentially open the flood gates to hardship requests
- Keep the fee, if the appeal approved, it will be returned – not collected in advance
- Tom Huebner shares that such an instance happened at East Mississippi, but they continued to play at another location
 - Christina Hundley suggests, “Unreasonable accommodations are unable to be made”
- Wanda Bodey shares that an instance in the past, hardships were allowed for the student-athletes that had not met the 30% threshold, and not the entire team
- Christina Hundley moves that the force majeure clause is added to the hardship process and inserted in bylaws
 - Kristin Schuth seconded this motion.
 - “In the event of denial, the appeal fee will be collected from the member institution.”
- Rob Chaney asks when the addition to the bylaws can be approved in order to be added to the bylaws.
 - Jeff White believes that it should not have to wait until April for approval. This does not include academic requirements, which cannot be amended until April (not in the middle of the academic year).

The motion passes 9-0-0.

This addition would not yet apply to the Georgia member school (WSOC program) hit by Hurricane Milton; however, the Committee feels that it would be in the best interest.

- Jeff White suggests sending a letter to the member school and not going through the entire hardship process.
- BoR Chair Troy Tucker points out that making the school go through the hardship process is the right way to do it in terms of process. However, if that process is bypassed, there will still be complaints. Whichever way the Georgia member school goes about obtaining a hardship, there will be complaints – a lose-lose situation

The discussion moves to whether an appeal fee can be returned. The Appeal Committee rules outside the bylaws and policy.

- Kristin Schuth and Troy Tucker comment that it is best to follow the process and make them pay.
- Rob Nielsen asks why this will not just be treated as a blanket appeal.

5. Mid-Term Enrollment

There is a need to think about how the language needs to be worded between now and January.

The Eligibility Committee landed on striking the Mid-Term Enrollment altogether in this moment.

C.1. Enrollment Eligibility: “Student-athletes must be enrolled full-time or part-time on the 18th calendar day (not to end on a weekend or Federal holiday) as listed on the college academic calendar maintained.

4. Late Enrollment: “Student-athletes who are not enrolled fulltime or part-time

The way the current bylaw is intended to read: if a basketball player is not enrolled full-time in the fall semester on the 1st date of competition, they are ineligible. However, the Committee wants to open this up (C.1)

- Rob Nielsen asks if the 4 exceptions still apply.
 - They were struck as they no longer apply – i.e., no longer applies to just a student-athlete on a mission, but everyone
 - Sports Governance did not approve this change
- Mike Saddler comments that an NJCAA student-athlete should not be allowed to transfer and play the same sport (but a student-athlete at the four year level can)
 - Needs to be discussed with Sports Governance
- Kristen Schuth asks if the two Committees have to move something forward together or they can do it individually
 - Troy Tucker comments it would be more powerful presenting as one and the time the Committees spent on this carries more weight
- Even if mid-term enrollment is stricken, it is still a step in the process. The Committee could then evaluate the impact of that and see if it wants to move forward
- Kristen Schuth and Rob Nielsen ask what the intent of this is
 - Sports Governance is opposed to the transfer student-athlete coming in and playing a two-term sport

- Occurs in baseball – didn't view the same as actual regular season basketball
- Jeff Willis asks what the best thing for the student-athlete is

Eligibility Committee and Sports Governance Committee convene a joint meeting at 10:06 AM EST

1. Mid Term Enrollment

Rob Chaney shares that the current bylaw prohibits a student who is potentially not enrolled full-time in the fall is not eligible for the entire season in a two term sport (i.e., basketball) – should a path be created for that student to be eligible for participation?

- Should the first step be applying it to current students on NCJAA campuses and then evaluate?

Darin Monroe shows that the Sports Governance Committee believes mid year transfers need to be protected against in two-term sports. Is it fair to take opportunities from NJCAA students?

Darin Monroe polls the Committees to see if they are comfortable with opening up the opportunity for students on their own campuses?

- Mike Saddler points out that is already the rule if 12 credits are found in the second half of the season
- Dean Myrick asks if they have to be enrolled part-time by the 18th calendar day – what is the reason or intent of this? He also points out that this will become competitive
 - Allows to fill rosters
 - Protecting the JUCO to JUCO lessens the competition and possibility of poaching
 - Could catch NCAA attention
- Kurt Kohler points out that not having enough kids to form a roster in January happens all the time and it would be nice to be able replace those
 - Is it better to exchange for the student-athletes who have the possibility to compete for the entire season
- Marci Henry points out that this would have significantly different divisional impacts
 - Dean Myrick believes it will be complete chaos at the DI level

Basketball is one season but treated as two different seasons of eligibility

- Jake Ripple comments that if programs know they have the opportunity to get other student-athletes, then they will likely try to make spots for them at the cost of others
 - They should be protected, but Troy Larson points out that this is already happening – it would be foolish not to take advantage of getting the DI player
- Mike Saddler comments that the transfer portal is not going away
- Darin Monroe asks if this is a pressing rule that needs to be fixed right now.

Taking away mid-term enrollment, but still has to be enrolled

- Rob Nielsen shares that adding an exception would solve the issue
- Marci Henry asks if the Eligibility Committee discussed what academic progress looks like for a part-time student
 - The year two requirement is unchanged and could be difficult – on the college / student athlete to pick up those hours in the summer; still a reasonable opportunity for that student to reach the required 24 credits
- Dean Myrick asks if this would impact schools only filing for one term – send back to Sport Committees
 - Rod Lovett comments that he has found only one school that has filed for track in the fall (but they are classifying it as a scrimmage)

Key point is protecting the membership and student-athletes.

2. Redshirt

The NCAA has granted football redshirt opportunities at the DI level, DII and DIII recognize what the NJCAA puts in

The next step is to ensure that the NCAA would recognize, then to Board approval for Fall 2025

The Eligibility Committee had concerns on DIII and felt that Board approval was needed before taking it to the NCAA (leverage)

- Kristen Schuth suggests taking the Board's 'temperature'
- Jake Ripple comments that it could possibly be a non-issue by April due to NCAA changes
- Kurt Kolher shares there is the possibility that DIII teams could potentially lose players during the mid-season because they know they could get a season of eligibility back – not what is best for the student-athletes
 - The rule now puts some 'skin in the game' for student-athletes because the season of eligibility is used with any competition
 - Jeff Willis asks if this is also a possibility in other divisions or levels

- Jake Ripple says this benefits Iowa schools more than anything and it was proposed by the Coaches Association who wanted to see it at the NJCAA level
 - Does it need rethinking due to changes with the recruiting calendar?
- Jeff Willis asks if the intent to help student-athletes at the lower end of the roster (Yes); he is concerned about UNLV's situations, so the NCAA has to push for the 5x5
- Tom Huebner comments that creating opportunities for student-athletes to leave is problematic and would happen in multiple sports – why should the issue be created

Currently, the NJCAA does not have separate rules by division – is this a divisional concern? There are positives and negatives, but this topic revolves around what is best for the student-athlete

- This could potentially be positive for student-athletes and negative for institutions
- Darin Monroe suggests Governance taking it to the Board but acknowledging that Eligibility does not support it
- Dean Myrick suggests defining what each Committee is responsible for to a further extent
 - Kristen Schuth sees this as an eligibility committee because it concerns getting a season of eligibility back
- Troy Tucker suggests that the Committees bringing this forward together carries a lot more weight
- There is a need to branch off which correlates with Regional Realignment

3. “NJCAA 2030”

Darin Monroe shares that Sports Governance voted and unanimously found that it is time to branch off divisionally through scholarship / non-scholarship. Bylaws must fit to the school and schools have to make preparations to go down this path

Can't get to DI/DII/DIII immediately

- First thing that needs to happen is commit to division, but the bylaws need to be written first – mainly for the DIII to decide if they go up

A two-year gap is needed to scholarship out

The Board is making the decision that schools are committing to scholarship / non-scholarship – when will this be proposed to the Board?

This 'realignment' gives the Regional Realignment Committee more direction – would be better for this Committee to pause and allow for the targets to be developed

- Rob Nielsen recommends putting a subcommittee together
 - Mike Saddler responds asking what the need for that is since it's coming from Eligibility and Sports Governance
 - There is no reason to delay
 - The response to this recommendation by Rob Nielsen is no

In 2013, a survey of the membership supported committing fully to a division by college – this is more palpable

How many Regions does this realistically affect? 5

Tomorrow's pre-board meeting opens the conversation

Eligibility Committee votes to approve moving forward with scholarship / non-scholarship

Sports Governance Committee

1. Red Shirts
2. Nonmember schools stats do not count for postseason purposes (i.e., rankings, accolades) – need to encourage member college competition
3. Ejection Policies – Vote in April; effective August 1

Follow the NCAA Ejection Policy by sport; keep noncollegial and racial slurs component (includes a spot in report for number of games ejected)

4. Scrimmages

Do not have to file ejection reports – only non-collegials

5. Term “Exhibition” removed – everything classified as “Scrimmage”

Only 1 scrimmage after a team's initial date of competition

Eligibility Committee

1. Revision / Reformat of Bylaws

Making document more interactive (i.e., clickable)

Glossary of terms

Approved additional hardship language to focus on mental health centered hardships; form will classify as “Medical – Physical”, “Medical - Mental”, “Non-Medical”

2. Force Majeure – Effective August 1

Blanket request submitted to National Office

Not being applied to South Georgia as it is not in the bylaws yet

3. Academic Grid

4. Mid-Term Enrollment

6. Good of the Order

Dr. Parker thanks both groups for taking time out of their busy schedule to do this important work.

7. Next Meeting: November 8, 1 PM EST.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Rob Chaney at 11:43 AM EST.