

NCAA Division III Playing & Practice Issues
December 13, 2010

Issue: NCAA Division III Playing & Practice concerns as relate to Small College Championships Program. Countable Dates of Competition and Countable Dates

Countable Competition Dates: Some D3 have interpreted advancing from Regionals to Small College Nationals as the same event, using the compass draw analogy. We need affirmation from the ITA and NCAA that this is accurate, and that Regionals and Small College Nationals (even advancing to the D1 championships) only counts as one (1) date of competition

Countable Weeks: Within D3, tennis programs have 19 weeks of practice and competition. Those are split between the fall and spring in most cases. It seems that many teams do not budget team weeks from the period of ITA Regional Championship through ITA Small College National Championships, thinking that if one or two players advance, the whole team need not be included and the 1-2 players can supervise their own preparation for Small College Nationals. Below, Roger has found an NCAA interpretation pertaining to other sports, that excludes up to three weeks of competition for 'qualifying competition' from counting towards the 19 weeks. I think most Athletic Departments are of the belief that this is a stretch and that the weeks between the different stages of this 'compass draw' do count towards the declared 19 week playing season. Our goal would be for the NCAA to include tennis within rule 17.1.8, so that as coaches we would not need to budget these as team weeks in our declared playing season.

NCAA Interpretation for Countable Weeks:

As for **Bylaw 17.1.8(h)**, it is important to read the bylaw in its entirety. The first part clarifies that the bylaw applies only to championships in which the NCAA does not have a championship in that sport. Since the NCAA sponsors a tennis championship, 17.1.8(h) **does not apply**. The operative phrase is highlighted below.

*Bylaw 17.1.8(h) **Non-NCAA Postseason Championships and Qualifying Competition.** Practice and/or competition in non-NCAA (or non-NAIA or non-NCCAA) postseason championships (e.g., an invitational tournament scheduled after a conference championship) must be counted against the institution's declared playing-season limitation; except practice and competition for one postseason championship in **each non-NCAA championship sport** used for sports sponsorship purposes in accordance with Bylaw 20.11.3.1.1. An institution may exclude a maximum of three weeks of competition from its declared playing season for qualifying competition for a non-NCAA championship event that is excluded from the declared playing and practice season. The qualifying competition shall be the only event from which teams or individuals are*

selected to participate in the non-NCAA championship event. In women's gymnastics, practice for and competition in the National Collegiate Gymnastics Association national championship are exempt from the institution's declared playing-season limitation. In men's volleyball, practice for and competition in the Division III Men's Volleyball Invitational Championship tournament are exempt from the institution's declared playing-season limitation

- During the period when ITA Regional Championships, ITA Small College Championships, and ITA Intercollegiate Indoor Championships take place, if a coach is involved with practice, the coach's involvement would count against the institution's 19-week limitation (noted in Bylaw 17.23.1). Per Bylaw 16.8.1.3(a), the institution may provide expenses for a student-athlete to participate in the event. Further, per Bylaw 16.8.1.3.1, the coach may be present and coach at the event without counting against the institution's 19-week limitation. However, the coach is limited to coaching at the event itself and not in preparation for the event. If a coach helps the student-athlete prepare (practice), then this time would count against the 19-week limitation.
- Also, as stipulated in Bylaw 17.23.4, it is important to note that even if the team has weeks left in the 19-week limitation, the end of this tournament must fall within the permissible playing period. Specifically, part (b) stipulates that for Division III tennis, fall practice and competition shall be completed not later than five weekdays before the beginning of finals.

NCAA Interpretation about Countable Dates of Competition:

For events that recognize a singles or doubles champion – each event counts as an individual date of competition and therefore should be counted separately, regardless of timing in between events and even though the winner of the Regional Championship qualifies for participation in the National Championship.