



The Management Council, as recommended by the Playing and Practice Seasons Subcommittee, has proposed legislation as outlined by proposal 2004-40 that would significantly change the playing and practice seasons for 27 sports including the sport of volleyball. The proposal is a wide-sweeping attempt to change many different sports but affects each sport differently. It appears there are various reasons for this type of proposal. However, its application will have unintended consequences. The American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) has reviewed this proposal as it has been submitted and the membership is opposed to this proposal.

The proposal as it was presented to the AVCA is as follows:

To modify the volleyball playing and practice season by eliminating the non-championship segment by eliminating the exempted spring competition dates (NCAA Bylaws 17.27.1, 17.27.7.2, 17.27.8.1 and 17.27.8.2) as well as eliminating various annual exemptions (NCAA Bylaw 17.27.9) including the following:

- Alumni Games
- Foreign Team Competition
- Fund Raising Activities
- Celebrity Sports Activities
- NACWAA Volleyball Classic competition
- Once-in-Four-Years Exemptions

The AVCA membership feels strongly that if this proposal would be adopted, it would severely hinder the competitive well-being of the sport of volleyball and therefore, the AVCA is not in support of this proposal. Below is some rationale regarding the position of the AVCA:

- As a student-athlete welfare issue, current student-athletes look forward to competition during the non-championship segment (spring season) as it gives them something to work for during this part of the playing season. The student-athletes dread the thought of no competitions, limiting the non-championship segment to only practice.
- With the revision of NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5.5, student-athletes are now required to have two days off outside the playing season during the academic year.
- Because of conference scheduling philosophies, the option of saving dates of competition for the non-championship segment is not realistic and would give some institutions an advantage over those who cannot save dates of competition.
- By eliminating the exemption of fund raising activities, this will eliminate student-athletes' ability to participate in institutional fund raising activities.
- By eliminating the NCAA Bylaw 17.27.10, institutions will no longer be able to realistically compete in foreign tours.
- In the past, alumni matches have been for the purpose of public relations and media attraction. It is a grassroots marketing strategy that does not affect the competitive spirit of the game.
- In women's athletics, the last thing that should happen is a reduced number of opportunities. Specifically in the sport of women's volleyball, the sport is still growing as is the fan base and media coverage. Therefore, the non-championship segment of the season is another opportunity to grow all aspects of the sport.
- Reviewing these changes long-term, it would appear that with these reductions in the non-championship segment would also follow reductions in full-time staff (i.e., reduction in the number of full-time coaching staff, shared coaching staff members between programs).

The effect of this proposal on student-athlete welfare is severe. The non-championship segment is utilized for the purpose of developing student-athletes for the upcoming championship segment. It provides an opportunity for those who were not able to participate with the team during the championship segment (i.e., transfer student-athletes, redshirt student-athletes) without using a season of eligibility. In general, student-athletes are motivated to train and practice with competition as their goal. If this proposal is adopted, the non-championship segment will not include any competitions which will be a detriment to the motivation of student-athletes. In short, student-athletes look forward to the unique competitiveness of the non-championship segment.

Based on our coaches' membership, the AVCA is opposed to this proposal and would ask that further research be conducted in order to determine a more accurate way of equalizing the playing and practice season among the NCAA membership in the sport of volleyball. For the purpose of growth and media coverage, the sport of volleyball cannot afford to reduce the number of opportunities available.