

NCAA Proposes One-Time Transfer With Immediate Eligibility Across All Sports



The NCAA announced on Tuesday afternoon that its Transfer Waiver Working Group is considering a concept that would allow Division I student-athletes in all sports to transfer without penalty.

“The current system is unsustainable. Working group members believe it’s time to bring our transfer rules more in line with today’s college landscape,” said Mid-American Conference commissioner Jon Steinbrecher, who serves as the working group chair. “This concept provides a uniform approach that is understandable, predictable and objective. Most importantly, it benefits students.”

The proposed model would give first-time transfers immediate eligibility provided they receive a transfers release from their previous school, leave their previous school in good academic standing, maintain that academic progress at their new schooling leave under no disciplinary suspension.

Under the current rules, student-athletes who play baseball, basketball, football or men’s ice hockey must sit out one year after transferring to another Division I program unless they are granted a waiver from the NCAA or have already graduated. All other sports sanctioned by the NCAA already allow a one-time transfer without penalty.

“More than a third of all college students transfer at least once, and the Division I rule prohibiting immediate competition for students who play five sports hasn’t discouraged them from transferring,” Steinbrecher said. “This dynamic has strained the waiver process, which was designed to handle extenuating and extraordinary circumstances.”

The Big Ten Conference proposed legislation in October that would bring the transfer exception to all sports, and the NCAA’s revelation comes just one day after the Atlantic Coast Conference announced unanimous support for the one-time transfer rule.

The working group will continue to seek feedback from Division I institutions, coaches, conferences and student-athletes with the goal of having the new criteria approved for transfers during the 2020-21 academic year. If approved, the waiver process will remain in place for student-athletes who have transferred previously or otherwise do not qualify for the one-time transfer guidelines, though working group members believe the waiver process “should be limited to truly extenuating and unique circumstances that threaten a student-athlete’s health and safety (for example, if the student-athlete is

a victim of physical/sexual assault) while recognizing the impact multiple transfers have on the likelihood that a student-athlete graduates.”