



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

MEMORANDUM

September 8, 2009

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TO: Rachel Newman Baker and Division I Amateurism Cabinet.

FROM: Marcus Blossom  
Assistant Director of Championships.

SUBJECT: Recommendation from Women's Water Polo Committee.

The women's water polo committee recommends that women's water polo be included in Bylaw 14.2.3.2 which currently is specific to tennis, swimming and diving. However, the committee wants to add an exception that permits women's water polo student-athletes to be mandated to fulfill an academic semester (not an academic year) in residence before being eligible to represent the institution in intercollegiate women's water polo - after the initial one-year period that is needed to be immediately eligible.

Currently, there is no rule in place that prohibits potential women's water polo student-athletes from competing immediately after high school in clubs or leagues that are just as competitive as the NCAA collegiate level, and then enrolling in college and still having four years to compete. Also, there have been several instances where women's water polo student-athletes have enrolled at a university just to compete for a semester, then returned to their normal club team overseas. Mandating that a potential women's water polo student-athlete fulfill an academic semester will eliminate this possibility.

This recommendation will be beneficial because it will prevent players that are much older and have much more playing experience from competing against women's water polo student-athletes that are between the ages of 17 - 22. Hence, this recommendation will prevent institutions from recruiting players that have a tremendous physical advantage over most others. It also will emphasize the educational component of collegiate athletics by mandating that a future women's water polo student-athlete that has sat out at least one year fulfill an academic semester. Moreover, it attempts to assure us that student-athletes are competing in water polo with the idea of getting an education and not just competing athletically.

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Likely opposition will be women's water polo coaches that recruit international student-athletes that have been out of high school for more than a year. This recommendation could not only end up reducing the number of years these student-athletes are eligible to compete, but also require them attend a semester of school before competition begins. The committee's response to this opposition would be simple. The committee believes that coaches that recruit student-athletes that are legitimately interested in receiving a college education and that don't have a physical/mental advantage because of age and experience level that is close to that of being a professional.

There is some potential impact on the student-athlete if this recommendation is approved. This recommendation may cause a potential student-athlete to have to pay for tuition, room and board for a semester in which they are not competing. If this recommendation is rejected, then potentially a student-athlete can enroll in school only for the semester in which they plan to compete. Additionally, this recommendation will require student-athletes that have been a high school graduate for at least a year to fulfill a college academic semester before being able to compete in women's water polo. It may also reduce the number of eligible years some student-athletes have to compete if they have been a high-school graduate for more than one year because the eligible years are reduced after each one-year period.

Thanks so much for taking the time to review this recommendation from the women's water polo committee. And, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

MB:lc