



## USOPC College Sports Sustainability Think Tank

### Sport Sustainability Recommendation: Swimming and Diving-Specific Recruiting Plan

September 12, 2021

**BACKGROUND AND CHARGE:** The USOPC Think Tank charged the sport sustainability group to develop recruiting proposals to help Olympic and Paralympic sports be more efficient and effective. This includes efforts to streamline operations to best manage sport-specific ecosystems.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The USOPC Think Tank recommends a sport-specific recruiting approach for swimming and diving, which will enhance the college experience for athletes/coaches and ultimately strengthen the sport.

#### ***Amend NCAA recruiting legislation to permit customized swimming and diving policies impacting: recruiting start date, official visit limitations and the recruiting calendar.***

<b>INTENT</b>	Amend existing swimming and diving recruiting practices to better serve the interests and needs of coaches, athletes and prospective student-athletes, creating a more appropriate and sustainable recruiting process. These sport-specific recruiting changes include: (1) delaying start dates for communication and in-person recruiting, (2) limiting the number of official visits and (3) establishing a swimming and diving-specific recruiting calendar to provide a healthier and more sustainable recruiting model that allows prospects and their families to make more informed decisions (more details below).
<b>RATIONALE</b>	<p>This recommendation seeks to reverse negative consequences resulting from NCAA Proposal 2018-93, which was intended to curtail early recruiting across many sports, but accelerated the recruiting process and broadened the recruiting operations in swimming and diving. The swimming and diving community is looking to have the recruiting process focus on the senior-year of high school to reduce the size of the recruiting cohort, limit official visits and establish a recruiting calendar. These changes would allow coaches, student-athletes and prospects to focus on the academic year and competitive season. Further, this customized recruiting approach is better suited for the sport given the delayed athletic maturation of swimmers/divers. Current conflicts impacting swimming and diving include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Less informed:</b> College coaches and prospective student-athletes are committing to a school before adequately assessing the academic and athletic fit. The early recruiting process resulted in coaches securing talent before the athletes have reached their physical and psychological maturity, which typically occurs during the PSA's senior year of high school.</li> <li>● <b>Admissions gap:</b> The early recruiting process occurs prior to PSAs receiving admissions decisions.</li> <li>● <b>Transfers:</b> Swimming and diving coaches have noticed increased transfer discussions due to poor fit.</li> <li>● <b>Youth pressures:</b> Youth coaches report an increase in pressure from parents to elevate training for younger swimmers (e.g., strength training, double workouts and nutritional supplements), which may cause early sport-specialization that can lead to injury and burnout.</li> <li>● <b>Inefficient:</b> Coaches are casting a wider cohort net, since the PSA are less mature, which increases the volume of official visits and recruiting activities. This also impacts current student-athletes that host PSA activities (e.g. student-athletes used to host recruits two to three weekends each fall, but are now expected to entertain recruits throughout the year).</li> </ul> <p>The swimming and diving community seeks a better balance of priorities and more efficient operations for the recruiting experience. The proposal will return swimming and diving to a pre-2019 recruiting approach.</p>
<b>IMPACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Estimated budget impact:</b> The fiscal impact of these efforts will vary given disparities in recruiting budgets across Division I programs. It is reasonable to expect that a program would save 10-30% of its operating costs through the reduction of campus visits, and 20-40% by containing the footprint to one recruiting class versus two.</li> <li>● <b>Impact on student-athletes:</b> The minimized recruiting period and official visit limitation allows student-athletes more access to their coaching staff and time to focus on their academics and training.</li> <li>● <b>Impact on PSAs:</b> A later recruiting timeline will enable PSAs more time to make an informed college decision and allow for increased academic, physical and emotional preparedness.</li> </ul>

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**PROPOSED NCAA DIVISION I LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS  
BYLAW 13: RECRUITING**

**1. Start Date for Off-Campus Contacts:**

13.1.1.1 Time Period for Off-Campus Contacts -- General Rule. Off-campus recruiting contacts shall not be made with an individual (or the individual's family members) before August 1 at the beginning of the individual's junior year in high school. U.S. service academy exceptions to this provision are set forth in Bylaw 13.16.1.

13.1.1.1.6 Exception – Swimming and Diving. In swimming and diving, off-campus recruiting contacts shall not be made with an individual (or his/her family members) before August 1 following the conclusion of his/her junior year in high school.

**2. Start Date for Telephone Calls:**

13.1.3.1 Time Period for Telephone Calls -- General Rule. Telephone calls to an individual (or the individual's family members) may not be made before June 15 at the conclusion of the individual's sophomore year in high school (subject to the exceptions below). Thereafter, an institution may make telephone calls to the prospective student-athlete at its discretion.

13.1.3.1.5 Exception – Swimming and Diving. In swimming and diving, telephone calls to an individual (or the individual's family members) may not be made before June 15 at the conclusion of the individual's junior year in high school. If an individual attends an educational institution that uses a nontraditional academic calendar (e.g., Southern Hemisphere), telephone calls to the individual (or the individual's family members) may not be made before the opening day of classes of the individual's junior year of high school. Thereafter, an institution may make telephone calls to the prospective student-athlete at its discretion.

**3. Start Date for Recruiting Materials:**

13.4.1 Recruiting Materials and Electronic Correspondence -- General Rule. An institution shall not provide recruiting materials, including general correspondence related to athletics, or send electronic correspondence to an individual (or the individual's family members) until June 1 after individual's sophomore year in high school.

13.4.1.4 Exception -- Swimming and Diving. In swimming and diving, an institution shall not provide recruiting materials, including general correspondence related to athletics, or send electronic correspondence to an individual (or the individual's family members) until June 15 at the conclusion of the individual's junior year in high school. If an individual attends an educational institution that uses a nontraditional academic calendar (e.g., Southern Hemisphere), an institution shall not provide recruiting materials, including general correspondence related to athletics, or send electronic correspondence to the individual (or the individual's family members) until the opening day of classes of the individual's junior year in high school.

**4. Start Date for Official/Unofficial Visits:**

13.6.2 Limitations on Official Visits.

13.6.2.1.6 Swimming and Diving. In swimming and diving, a prospective student-athlete may not be provided an expense-paid visit earlier than August 1 of the prospective student-athlete's senior year in high school. If a prospective student-athlete attends an educational institution that uses a nontraditional academic calendar (e.g., Southern Hemisphere), the prospective student-athlete may not be provided an expense-paid visit earlier than the conclusion of classes of the prospective student-athlete's junior year in high school.

13.7.1 Limitations on Unofficial Visits.

13.7.1.6 Swimming and Diving. In swimming and diving, an unofficial visit with athletics department involvement (e.g., contact with athletics department staff, athletics-specific tour, complimentary admission) shall not occur with an individual (or the individual's family members) before August 1 of the prospective student-athlete's senior year in high school.

**5. Annual Limit on Number of Official Visits:**

13.6.2.3 Number of Official Visits -- Institutional Limitations.

13.6.2.3.6 Swimming and Diving. In swimming and diving, an institution may provide 24 official visits on an annual basis (August 1 through May 31). A national service academy may provide 31 official visits, 25 of which may be provided prior to the initial signing date of the National Letter of Intent. The institution must maintain a written record of the visits provided.

**6. Recruiting Calendar:**

13.17.10 Swimming and Diving. The following periods of recruiting activities shall apply to swimming and diving:

(a) August 1 through December 24 [except for (1) below]: Contact Period

(1) Monday through Thursday of the week that includes the initial signing date of the National Letter of Intent: Dead Period

(b) December 24 through the second Monday in January: Shut Down Period

(c) The second Tuesday in January through May 31 [except for (1) below]: Contact Period

(1) Starting 12:01 am on the Monday immediately following the Men's NCAA Championship meet through 12:01 am on the following Monday: Dead Period