

Division I SAAC Athletic Time Commitments Study

What is the Division I SAAC Athletic Time Commitments Survey?

In October 2015, the Division I national SAAC worked with NCAA Research to design an athletic time commitments study aimed at exploring possible changes to countable athletically related activity (CARA) limits, practice legislation and competition schedules. This survey did not replicate the time demands questions included in the NCAA GOALS study. SAAC intends to look at the results of both surveys at the 2016 NCAA Convention prior to their meeting on Thursday, January 17 with the Board of Directors and Presidential Forum. Based on the data and discussion at the NCAA Convention, SAAC will develop concepts to bring to the Council for its February meeting.

Survey

The online survey was designed to take just a few minutes and could be accessed by a student's phone, tablet or computer. The survey covered the following general topics:

- Possible changes to daily and weekly CARA limits
- Desired time off in-season and post-season
- Possible limits on competition scheduling
- Accuracy of time demands information shared by coaches during the recruitment process
- Support for time demands educational interventions

Survey distribution

A snowball sampling technique was used. National SAAC representatives forwarded the link through conference and campus SAACs to student-athletes. ADs, SWAs, FARs, and coaches were made aware of the survey and asked to encourage student-athletes to participate. However, the survey link was only distributed peer-to-peer via SAAC members. The survey was open from November 2-24, 2015.

Response

Responses were received from 28,004 Division I student-athletes. Women responded to the survey at higher rates (25%) than men (12%). Freshmen responded at higher rates than other student-athletes, but all classes were adequately represented. Response rates varied by sport and conference. Football had one of the lower response rates (7%), but that still equates to over 2,000 survey participants in the sport.

Results

Countable Athletically Related Activities (CARA) Limits

- There are a few sports (e.g., men's golf) where a majority of student-athletes support increasing the daily or weekly CARA cap.
- Just under half of football and men's basketball players support daily CARA caps being lifted, but only 13% support moving above 20 hours/week of CARA.
- Most women in Division I do not support increasing the 20 hour/week CARA limit.
- While competition days are currently counted as 3 hours across sport, student-athletes in each sport reported spending 4-9 hours on athletics during a typical day of competition.

Time Away from Athletics

In-season

- Most SAs support requiring at least one day away from practice and competition per week. More than 40% of M/W basketball and football players would prefer two off-days per week.
- There is a strong preference by SAs in most sports that an off-day be free from team travel.

Post-season

- A majority of SAs support a mandatory break from their sport (prohibiting organized team activities) when the competition season ends.
- In most sports, a two-week break is preferred.

Limits on Competition

- There is varied support by sport for eliminating non-conference mid-week games. About 40% of football players and 30% of M/W basketball players support eliminating them. Highest support was in women's volleyball (57%).

Time Demands Discussions During Recruitment

- Most recruited student-athletes feel that they were honestly informed about time demands by their coach during the recruiting process.
- FBS football (43%) had the highest % of participants who said time demands are more than what they were told during the recruiting process.
- Many SAs support requiring coaches to discuss time demands during recruiting and requiring incoming SAs to attend an orientation or training session on managing time demands.