

NCAA Council votes to extend recruiting dead period through May amid ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

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The NCAA on Wednesday extended the recruiting dead period for all sports through at least May 31, keeping in place a ban on in-person recruiting activities that was enacted last spring at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The move ensures that any in-person recruiting activities will have been off-limits for over a year, extending through the 2021 spring semester as concerns related to face-to-face contact because of the pandemic continue.

The vote by the Division I Council on Wednesday in a virtual meeting also included a commitment from the members to imminently provide clarity on plans for the transition back to recruiting calendars no later than April 15. Those plans could include the return to in-person recruiting activities with potential modifications to the calendar.

"After careful consideration of all available information, the Council agreed that an extension of the dead period through May 31 was necessary," said Council chair M. Grace Calhoun, athletics director at Pennsylvania, in a statement. "However, there is a strong commitment to use the next several weeks to outline the transition plan back to recruiting activities post June 1 and to provide those plans to prospective student-athletes, their families and the NCAA membership no later than April 15."

The Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee also supported the extension of the dead period, but added that prospective student-athletes and their families need guidance, and the safety of current student-athletes remains of the utmost importance.

"While we support the dead period extension, we also note the importance of providing prospective student-athletes immediate guidance on the future of the dead period," SAAC co-chair Justice Littrell said.

The Council also voted to approve a blanket waiver for athletes that would increase the number of hours football teams can spend on countable, athletic-related, out-of-season activities this spring to 10 hours per week from eight. Among the activities eligible for that include only non-contact functions like weight training, film review and walk-throughs. The waiver goes into place Feb. 22.

In the absence of in-person interactions, college coaches have adjusted by hosting recruits on virtual tours and managed to weave communication through FaceTime and Zoom into regular interactions as part of recruiting pitches.

"Everyone has become efficient at Zoom," [Florida coach Dan Mullen told Dennis Dodd last fall](#). "I'm great talking to the kids and all that. The coaches leaving campus, maybe you don't even go on the road recruiting anymore [in the future]. You can do it on Zoom. You can talk and have these conversations.

"[But] it's hard for me in a Zoom presentation to show what standing in the middle of The Swamp is like," he added. "You're down here in Florida, November, December, January, February, it's palm trees. The actual beauty of our campus. You don't get that in a Zoom call."

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