

PROPOSAL NO. 2012-04

## ELIGIBILITY – FRESHMAN AND NOVICE ELIGIBILITY

**Intent:** To allow freshmen to race in varsity events, and ensure that only first-year collegiate competitors may compete in the freshman events; to editorially revise the IRA eligibility rules to remove the references to “novice” rowers.

**Bylaws:** Amend Article III of the Eligibility Regulations and Operating Bylaws as follows:

### Article III: ELIGIBILITY, ACADEMIC AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The IRA applies NCAA ELIGIBILITY RULES: Academic and General Requirements (Article 14), including NCAA Official interpretations related thereto, with additions/exceptions adopted by the Association that are printed below. Any changes that may be adopted by the NCAA to these rules apply unless specifically excluded by vote of the members of the Association. Standard waivers to these rules, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed in accordance with NCAA precedent through the ECAC or other NCAA affiliated conference office (Big East, Pac-10, Ivy League, etc.). Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.

#### A. ELIGIBILITY: Academic and General Requirements (NCAA Bylaw 14)

1. Freshmen Eligibility (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 14.3) **First Year Collegiate Rowers/Coxswains are eligible to compete at the varsity and sub varsity level. Only First Year Collegiate Rowers/Coxswains** Freshmen are eligible to compete as members of their institution’s freshman program, ~~only, and are restricted from competing on the varsity or sub- varsity level, except under the following circumstances:~~

~~a. During the regular season: Freshmen, and/or novice upperclassmen competing at the freshman level per paragraph C-2 of this Article III, may compete occasionally at the sub- varsity level in one or more regattas during the regular dual meet season without jeopardizing their freshman/novice upper class eligibility status in any way, provided that all competing colleges in any such regatta agree in advance to the exception. There shall be no limit on the number of freshmen/novice upperclassmen who may so participate. This exception is permissible in the particular regatta(s) only under the following conditions:~~

~~(1) Freshmen, and/or novice upperclassmen competing at the freshman level (per paragraph C-2 of this Article III, can be used only to fill out the lowest sub- varsity boat (2V, 3V, V4), but never the first varsity.~~

~~(2) No varsity rowers, at any level on the varsity squad, are being displaced from participation by the freshmen/novice upperclassmen in question.~~

~~(3) First freshmen eights are also competing in the Regatta.~~

~~(4) The freshmen/novice upperclassmen must be selected from the lower portion of the freshman squad and may not be permitted to compete at both the sub- varsity and freshman levels in the same Regatta.~~

~~b. At the IRA Championships:~~

~~(1) Freshmen, and/or novice upperclassmen competing at the freshman level (per paragraph C-2 of this Article III), may compete at the lowest sub- varsity level at the IRA Regatta without jeopardizing their freshman/novice upper class eligibility status in any way provided that approval is granted in advance by the IRA Commissioner in response~~

~~to confirmation from the Head Coach of the student's institution that conditions A-1-a (1) through A-1-a (4) above are satisfied. There shall be no limit on the number of freshmen/novice upperclassmen who may so participate.~~

B. Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse Certification (NCAA Ref: BYLAWS 1.2.1 & 14.3)

1. NCAA initial eligibility certification is not required.

C. ~~Novices~~ **First Year Collegiate Rower/Coxswain**

1. A "novice" **First Year Collegiate Rower/Coxswain** is defined as an undergraduate student who is participating in rowing for the very first time. **has never participated in intercollegiate rowing competition (as defined by NCAA rules) as an oarsman or a coxswain.**

a. A student's previous rowing experience (prior to and/or during college enrollment) which has been limited exclusively to that of a "coxswain" **If a student previously has participated in intercollegiate competition exclusively as a coxswain, such competition** shall not disqualify the student from **competing as an oarsman in the freshman event.** being classified as a "novice oarsman", provided however that each academic year of such student's previous college participation as an upper-class coxswain shall be counted as one of the student's three seasons of varsity eligibility.

b. A novice **First Year Collegiate Rower/Coxswain who is an** upper-class undergraduate student may compete as a member of the freshman crew at any level (First or Second Freshman) or as a member of the varsity crew at any level (e.g. Varsity Eight, Second Varsity Eight, Varsity Four, etc.). If such competition occurs at the freshman level, including occasional competition that is granted under the provisions of Section A-1-a and b of this Article III, it shall be counted as the student's freshman year of eligibility in the sport of crew, and the student, if otherwise eligible, shall subsequently be entitled to not more than three additional years of competition at the varsity level. If such competition occurs solely at the varsity/sub-varsity level, it shall be counted as one of the student's three varsity years of eligibility in the sport of crew, and the student's freshman year of eligibility in crew shall be forfeited.

~~c. There may be a maximum of two upper-class undergraduate novices (coxswain and/or oarsmen) in the first freshman eight~~

D. Transfer Students (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 14.5)

1. Competition at the First Varsity Level: Standard Waivers regarding transfer students, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, are applicable, and may be processed through the ECAC or other NCAA affiliated conference office (Big East, Pac-10, Ivy League, etc.). Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner. Any such competition that occurs under the benefit of such waiver must be counted as one of the student's **four** ~~three varsity~~ years of eligibility in the sport of crew.

a. A student transferring from a collegiate "club crew" program shall also be subject to these provisions.

2. Competition at the Sub-Varsity Level: A transfer student (oarsman or coxswain) may compete in IRA regular season or the IRA Championship Regatta involving Second-Varsity or Third Varsity Eights, Varsity Fours, or Varsity Pairs, where the institution is also competing on the First Varsity Eight Level. Any such competition must be counted as one of the student's **four** ~~three varsity~~ years of eligibility in the sport of crew.

a. A student transferring from a collegiate “club crew” program shall also be subject to these provisions.

E. Participation on Outside Team (NCAA Ref. BYLAW 17.15.9)

1. IRA student-athletes may not participate during the academic year as a member of any outside team in any non-collegiate competition.

2. It is permissible for rowers of IRA intercollegiate teams to participate as members of a rowing club which is sponsored by their own university without violating the NCAA outside competition rule under the following circumstances:

a. The rowing club is recognized and sponsored by the same university that sponsors the intercollegiate team. Such sponsorship need not necessarily be under the jurisdiction of the university’s athletic department, but it must be a legitimate department of the same university.

3. Participation on a particular crew (e.g. eight, four, etc.) of the club on which the intercollegiate varsity/freshman rowers are involved is limited only to such rowers who are eligible to compete as members of the intercollegiate crew team of the same university. Accordingly for example, this would permit a Varsity 8, 2V 8, or Fr 8, in their entirety, to participate in non-collegiate, amateur competition under the name of the university’s rowing club. Other rowers who may be at the university, but whose names are not included on the institutional squad lists as eligible to compete as members of the university’s intercollegiate crew that year, may not participate on the same crew of the university’s rowing club.

a. The competition in question is “countable” as a date of competition for both the institution and for each of the involved student-athletes.

F. Five Year Rule (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 14.2.1)

1. A student-athlete shall complete his seasons of competition within 5 calendar years from the beginning of the semester or quarter in which the student-athlete first registered for a minimum full time program of studies in a collegiate institution regardless of whether or not the student participated in rowing at the collegiate varsity or club level since the date of the first such registration.

a. Exception for Military Service and Church Mission Work: Time spent by a student in the armed services, on official church missions or with recognized foreign aid services of the U. S. Government is excepted from the application of the five-year rule. For a foreign student, service in the armed forces or on an official church mission of the student’s home country shall be considered equivalent to such service in the United States

b. Waivers: Standard waivers regarding the 5-year rule, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed through the ECAC or other NCAA affiliated conference office (Ivy League, Pac-10, Big East, etc.). Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.

G. Seasons of Competitions (NCAA Ref BYLAW 14.2)

1. An IRA student-athlete shall not engage in more than one season of intercollegiate competition at the freshman level, and not more than three seasons of intercollegiate competition at the varsity (or sub-varsity) level.

a. The freshman year of enrollment at any collegiate institution shall be counted as the student’s one season of intercollegiate competition at the freshman level regardless of whether or not a student engages in competition during the freshman year. However, for those upper-class

~~undergraduate students who qualify as novices, their years of eligibility shall be counted in accordance with the provisions of Section C-2 of this Article III~~

~~b. a.~~ Participation by a student in rowing competition at the collegiate club level, during the freshman year or subsequently during any upper-class year, at any collegiate institution, shall be counted the same as a season of competition at the intercollegiate freshman/varsity level.

~~e. b.~~ Standard waivers regarding seasons of competition, as permitted under NCAA Regulations, may be processed through the ECAC or other NCAA affiliated conference office (Ivy League, Pac-10, Big East, etc.). Notice of any such waiver that is granted must be reported to the IRA Commissioner.

~~(1) A true freshman **First Time Collegiate Rower/Coxswain** who qualifies for a medical hardship waiver shall have the option of returning the following year to participate on the freshman crew. with a maximum of three (3) seasons of varsity competition remaining, provided that the student's competition during the hardship season continues at the freshman level, which may include competition that is granted under the provisions of Section A-1 (a) and (b) of this Article III.~~

H. Betting of Shirts. (NCAA Ref: BYLAW 10.3 & 1997 Official Interpretation). In accordance with NCAA Bylaw 10.3, bets cannot be placed on the outcome of an intercollegiate rowing race or regatta with one limited exception: losing crews may give shirts to winning crews after races – a long-standing tradition in college rowing.

**Effective Date:** June 5, 2012

**Rationale:**

The purpose of this rule is to make the IRA a true National Championship by bringing varsity eligibility rules in line with those followed by the majority of the IRA member ship and all other college sports. These changes give coaches the discretion to put together the fastest Varsity Eights, while preserving the freshman event as a developmental category for rowers and coxswains in their first year of collegiate competition. This change also enhances the automatic qualifying system for the regatta by ensuring that all of the boats that automatically qualify will be permitted to race at the IRA.

In the interest of clarity, the terms “freshman” and “novice” have been replaced with the term “First Year Collegiate Rower.” Once freshman are permitted to row at the varsity level, differentiating between freshman and novices becomes unnecessary. The term “First Year Collegiate Rower” encompasses everyone who is eligible to race in the Freshman Eights Race at the IRA.

**Estimated Budget Impact:** None.

**Impact on Student Athlete's Time (Academic and/or Athletics):** None.