April 12, 2016

To: Colby Faculty
From: Athletics Advisory Committee
RE: Proposed Update to Colby Athletics Practice Rule

Background

On May 8, 2013, Colby faculty approved a motion brought forward by the Athletics Advisory Committee. This motion established a 3-3-16 rule regarding athletic practices. The 3-3-16 rule (which appears below) limits athletic practice time to no more than 16 hours/week for “athletically-related activities” as defined by the NCAA Division III Manual. This rule further imposes a daily limit of 3 hours for athletically-related activities. Finally, the rule clarifies that each day of athletic competition counts as three hours toward both the weekly and daily limit.

The Athletics Advisory Committee has undertaken a review of the implementation of the 3-3-16 policy. In the judgment of the committee, the 16-hour weekly limit is working well; however, the 3-hour daily limit is impeding the flexibility intended by the policy. In several cases, coaches and athletes would benefit from the flexibility to deploy the 16 hours over the course of the week in manner that would be most efficient and effective. As an example, some team sports have multiple units that benefit from being able to practice as a unit. It would be a more efficient use of the student-athletes’ time to have this unit practice occur at the end of the full team practice. Additionally, some teams benefit from the opportunity to view film together before a practice on a select day during the week.

Points of information: Colby is the only school in the NESCAC athletic conference that has any rules restricting practice time for athletic teams. Also, to our knowledge, Colby is the only team in the conference that has a standing committee that reviews athletic competition schedules.

Proposed Motion

The Athletics Practice Rule will be amended to remove the 3-hour/day limitation. The rest of the Athletics Practice Rule (including the 16-hour weekly limit and the 3-hour competition rule) will be retained.

Original motion creating the current Athletics Practice Rule:

March 2013

To: Colby Faculty
From: Athletics Advisory Committee
RE: Proposed Change in Colby Athletics Practice Rule

Proposed Motion

Intercollegiate athletic teams will practice no more than 16 hours per week and no more than 3 hours per day when classes are in session. Each day of competition will now count as three hours toward these limits. All required “athletically-related activities” as defined in the NCAA Division III Manual will now count toward the daily and weekly limits. Practices will not interfere with students’ academic obligations. [NOTE: Colby rules continue to require a day off
from practice or competition every seven days.]

The table at the end of this document illustrates the implications of the proposed policy. This proposed rule change will take effect during the 2013-2014 academic year and will be reviewed by the Athletics Advisory Committee in September 2014.

**Background**

Colby has had a rule in place for our intercollegiate athletic teams referred to as the “two-hour practice rule” since 1989. Colby is currently the only NESCAC school to have an athletics practice policy. The current rule (listed below) restricts teams to no more than two hours of practice per day with limited exceptions. However, these limited exceptions are not defined.

**Current Rule**

*As a general guideline, demands upon any team or team member shall not exceed two hours of actual practice per day. Limited exceptions may be allowed only when the practices will not interfere with the student’s academic obligations. In this definition, practices are meant to include such things as film viewing and weight lifting or other conditioning.* [Adopted by the Faculty in October 1989.]

**Rationale for Proposed Motion**

The Athletics Advisory Committee has discussed Colby’s current policy over the past two years. We believe that the above proposal provides a number of benefits over current policy.

First, the proposed policy is clearer and more transparent than current policy. For example, it now provides information about what represents required athletically-related activities. Additionally, the proposed policy eliminates all exceptions.

Second, the proposed policy will explicitly take into account competition days when calculating the number of hours each week.

Third, the proposed policy will provide coaching faculty with more flexibility to adapt hours and teaching methods to the particular needs of each sport; this is especially important for the endurance sports during certain periods of their training cycle.

Fourth, allowing teams to practice, for example, 2.5 hours one day and 1.5 hours the next day provides flexibility depending on that week’s contest schedule, the needs of the students, and students’ class schedules.

And finally, the additional flexibility will provide coaching faculty with a greater opportunity to use “practice” time for meetings with each team’s faculty liaison and to discuss non-athletic issues with their students (e.g. leadership initiatives, time management, the impact of alcohol use on academic performance, .. etc.).

The committee believes the current two-hour rule to be outdated and limiting. The proposed policy provides greater flexibility in teaching, captures the entire athletic experience (i.e., explicitly takes into account athletic contests), and gives coaching faculty a greater opportunity for non-athletic discussions with the students.