

NINETEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA

NO. C-783299

DIVISION D

JACK PYBURN, JAZMIN FERGUSON, JAMIL MUTILIB, AMIYA JOYNER,
RASHAD KING, MICHAEL ELEY, ANDREW BURNETTE, WYDETT WILLIAMS,
KEENAN LANDRY, THOMAS MARSALA, PERCY DANIELS, JOSHUA "GREEDY"
WILLIAMS, DAE'QUAN WRIGHT, DERRIAN FORD, ASIA NICHOLSON, ZXAVIAN
HARRIS, CHANDLER JACKSON, PEITOK MACHAR, TJ HARDEN, BLAKE
COTTON, ETHAN JOHNSON, ANTHONY TARJAE HANKERSON, JASMINE JONES,
WEYLIN LAPUAHO, EMILEE BOYER, LUKE DRZEWIECKI, TRENT HENDRICK,
BRYLAN GREEN, AVERY STRICKLAND HURST, SAM PISSIS, JUNIOR
TUIHALAMAKA, DQ SMITH, DAN ROUZAN, JALIA LASSITER, PAYTN
MONTICELLI, TRAE TOMLINSON, JOCELYN OLLIVIERRE, RYAN STARR, TRE
THOMAS, CKELBY PHILIP GIVENS, KENNEDY BUNKER, AND PAUL MANNING

v.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, SOUTHEASTERN
CONFERENCE, AND GREG SANKEY, SOLEY IN HIS ROLE AS
COMMISSIONER OF THE SEC

**THE SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE AND COMMISSIONER GREG SANKEY'S
OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFFS' APPLICATION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

Defendants Southeastern Conference ("SEC") and Commissioner Greg Sankey
(together, the "SEC Defendants") hereby submit the following Opposition to the Application for a
Preliminary Injunction to Plaintiffs' Amended Petition ("Petition") filed in this matter.

I. INTRODUCTION

This case arises amid substantial uncertainty concerning the rules governing college
sports. But the question presented as to the SEC is significantly narrower than that broader debate.
**It is whether the SEC can enforce and require its member institutions to comply with SEC
rules.**

Louisiana law says they absolutely can.

The Louisiana Supreme Court has expressly instructed that courts should not
interfere with the internal affairs of a private association unless its proceedings have not been
conducted fairly and honestly or its conduct is fraudulent, beyond its jurisdiction, invasive of

protected property or pecuniary rights, arbitrary, capricious, or unjustly discriminatory.¹ Louisiana appellate courts have applied the same principle specifically to reasonable eligibility rules adopted and disciplinary measures undertaken by athletic associations.²

The SEC's conduct readily satisfies that deferential standard. The Conference is a voluntary association governed by the Presidents and Chancellors of its sixteen member institutions. Its Constitution expressly charges the Conference with organizing athletic competition, prescribing eligibility standards, fostering fair competition among member institutions, and maintaining intercollegiate athletic programs consistent with educational and competitive-sports standards.³ Its member institutions have long operated under SEC rules addressing professionalization and eligibility for SEC competition, including the rule that is the root of the dispute before this Court.⁴

Recent litigation concerning NCAA eligibility has created an unprecedented circumstance: athletes who completed their collegiate careers, signed professional contracts or appeared on professional rosters, and thereafter seek additional eligibility through judicial orders to return to intercollegiate competition.

The SEC's Presidents and Chancellors are entitled—and indeed obligated as stewards of Conference competition—to determine how existing Conference Bylaws (often referred to as rules) would apply to that circumstance. Their determination is neither arbitrary nor punitive. It rests upon concrete competitive and institutional considerations.

SEC member institutions, in preparation for the 2026–27 competitive seasons, have made roster management decisions and conducted preseason practices under eligibility rules that

¹ *Jones v. National Collegiate Athletic Ass'n*, 96-2205 (La. 9/12/96), 679 So. 2d 381 (La. 1996).

² *English v. National Collegiate Athletic Ass'n*, 439 So. 2d 1218 (La. App. 4 Cir. 1983), *writ denied*, 441 So. 2d 747 (La. 1983); *State Bd. of Ed. v. Nat'l Collegiate Athletic Ass'n*, 273 So. 2d 912, 913 (La. App. 3 Cir. 1973).

³ SEC Constitution arts. 1.2, 3.0. The SEC Constitution and Bylaws are attached as **Exhibit A** to the Affidavit of Southeastern Conference Commissioner Greg Sankey ("Sankey Affidavit") attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**.

⁴ See SEC Bylaw 14.01.1.

did not contemplate an August influx of athletes returning from professional sports. Roster opportunities are finite. This means that current SEC member institutions' student-athletes have been participating in practices and official team activities with legitimate expectations about the competitive environment in which the upcoming season would be played. Incoming student-athletes made enrollment and transfer decisions based upon that same environment.

Therefore, permitting athletes to enter professional sports and then return to college sports necessarily affects those existing opportunities. The relevant equity clearly cannot and does not run in only one direction. The Court must consider not only the opportunity a returning former professional athlete may gain, but also the opportunity a current or prospective student-athlete may lose to make room for that former professional athlete on a roster.

The SEC rules also serve competitive equity among the SEC's sixteen member institutions. Without uniform rules, each member institution would face pressure to recruit professional athletes to avoid a competitive disadvantage against institutions willing to do so. The Conference exists in substantial part to solve precisely that kind of collective-action problem by establishing uniform rules of competition applicable to all sixteen member institutions.

The SEC is not attempting to determine Plaintiffs' eligibility under NCAA bylaws. The SEC is entitled to and should not be prohibited from making a separate determination that SEC member institutions are subject to SEC rules governing their own conduct.

Those are distinct questions and that distinction is very important.

As confirmed in detail in the Sankey Affidavit filed herewith, the SEC has not and will not apply (i) any NCAA or SEC Bylaws limiting student-athletes entering college in 2022 to four years of eligibility, (ii) requiring student-athletes to enter a transfer portal to be eligible to transfer and for competition, or (iii) any Professionalism rules in order to penalize any Plaintiff or declare any Plaintiff (in this or any other lawsuit naming the NCAA as a defendant, whether the SEC is a party defendant or not) ineligible for SEC or NCAA competition based on a violation of any such rules.⁵ Instead, any Conference enforcement action will operate within the contractual

⁵ Sankey Affidavit at ¶ 3(d).

and associational relationship between the SEC and its member institutions and institutional personnel. More specifically, any enforcement action by the SEC will be of SEC rules vis-à-vis SEC member institutions, not student-athletes.

Notwithstanding the above, Plaintiffs seek an injunction that would prevent the SEC from enforcing its rules against its own member institutions, who are not student-athletes or plaintiffs in this action. This extraordinary relief is unsupported by Louisiana law.

Plaintiffs cannot prevail on their claims against the SEC Defendants. The SEC is not the NCAA's agent or alter ego and did not act "in concert or participation" with the NCAA within the meaning of Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure article 3605 merely because the organizations may share views on certain eligibility questions. Plaintiffs' constitutional, tortious-interference, contract, LUTPA, and conspiracy theories likewise fail for independent reasons.

The remaining preliminary injunction factors point in the same direction. Plaintiffs cannot and have not established irreparable harm caused by the SEC. Instead, they have simply identified sanctions that may be enforced by the SEC against its member institutions for violations of NCAA and SEC bylaws. These are distinct and separate issues. Even in instances where an individual Plaintiff identifies a concrete SEC-related enforcement action, that interest cannot be considered in isolation from the interests of current student-athletes, incoming student-athletes, the sixteen member institutions, and the Conference itself.

A preliminary injunction is an extraordinary remedy. It should not be used to convert judicial relief concerning NCAA eligibility into judicial management. This Court should not be vested with the power to review, enforce, or amend a separate private association's rules governing its own members where the association has not acted fraudulently, beyond its jurisdiction, unfairly, arbitrarily, capriciously, or in an unjustly discriminatory manner.

The Application for Preliminary Injunction should therefore be denied as to the SEC and Commissioner Sankey.

II. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Plaintiffs cannot establish entitlement to preliminary injunctive relief against the SEC Defendants.

First, Louisiana law affords substantial deference to the internal governance of private voluntary associations.⁶ Judicial intervention is appropriate only where the association has acted fraudulently, beyond its jurisdiction, unfairly, arbitrarily, capriciously, or in an unjustly discriminatory manner. None of those circumstances exist here. The SEC should be permitted to apply and enforce its longstanding Bylaws that regulate its member institutions and permit imposition of penalties when an institution violates an SEC Bylaw.

Second, the SEC is legally and institutionally distinct from the NCAA. Plaintiffs cannot transform parallel interests between two separate associations into "active concert or participation" under La. Code Civ. Proc. art. 3605. Nor does the fact that SEC institutions participate in NCAA governance render the Conference an agent or alter ego of the NCAA. The SEC is merely a member of the NCAA, operating under its bylaws just like the other 31 member conferences of the NCAA.

Third, Plaintiffs' substantive claims against the SEC Defendants are legally deficient. Article I, Section 22 of the Louisiana Constitution does not create the asserted cause of action against a private association. Plaintiffs cannot satisfy the demanding requirements for tortious interference with business relations or contractual relations. They have not identified a contract creating a stipulation pour autrui in their favor. Their LUTPA allegations principally concern the NCAA and, in any event, do not allege the narrow category of egregious conduct required by Louisiana law. And their civil-conspiracy theory fails in the absence of an underlying actionable tort and an agreement to commit such a tort.

Fourth, Plaintiffs cannot establish irreparable injury caused by the SEC Defendants. The SEC does not purport to determine Plaintiffs' NCAA eligibility. Any SEC enforcement action would be directed to its member institutions and institutional personnel under the Conference's own bylaws. Claims for lost NIL or other economic compensation are, by their nature, monetary. And the circumstances of the named Plaintiffs vary dramatically, with only a small number alleging any concrete intention to participate at an SEC institution. Only three of the 43 named

⁶ See *Jones*, 679 So. 2d 381; *English*, 439 So. 2d 1218; *Louisiana State Board of Education*, 273 So.2d 912.

Plaintiffs (Jack Pyburn, Dae'Quan Wright, and Zxavian Harris) are known to have agreed to a contract with an NFL team and confirmed that they plan to attend an SEC member institution.

Finally, the balance of equities and public interest weigh against an injunction. Plaintiffs' interests are important, but they are not the only interests before the Court. An injunction would alter the competitive expectations under which thousands of eligible SEC student-athletes and the sixteen SEC member institutions prepared for the season. It would interfere with the governance of a private association and potentially require Conference members to compete under materially different roster conditions from those under which their teams were constructed.

Louisiana law does not require that result.

III. RELEVANT BACKGROUND

On August 19, 2026, Plaintiffs instituted this action, naming the NCAA as the sole defendant in response to the original Petition. The original Petition alleges that the NCAA's new age-based eligibility model should be applied in a manner that permits Plaintiffs to compete during the 2026–27 academic year. Under the NCAA's prior Five-Year Rule, codified in NCAA Bylaw 12.6, Plaintiffs exhausted their eligibility.

Plaintiff Jack Pyburn alleged in the original Petition that he had signed a non-guaranteed contract with an NFL team. In fact, he was on an NFL roster and participated in NFL training camp, and alleges that he intends to return to Louisiana State University, where he previously competed, if afforded eligibility.⁷ Dae'Quan Wright, who competed for the University of Mississippi, likewise asserted that he had signed a non-guaranteed contract with an NFL team; media reports later confirmed that he plans to commit to LSU if granted eligibility.⁸ Plaintiff Zxavian Harris does not assert in the Petition that he signed an NFL contract but is known to have

⁷ Petition at ¶ 14.

⁸ Petition at ¶ 26; Koki Riley, *Ex-NFL tight end trying to play at LSU explains why he, others want to return to college football*, NOLA.COM (Aug. 26, 2026) https://www.nola.com/sports/lsu/daequan-wright-lsu-football-nfl-ole-miss-cleveland-browns/article_52bc0b9c-5967-4f66-9531-8e8a39a88667.html.

participated in an NFL training camp and reportedly plans to attend LSU if eligible in the 2026-27 season.⁹

NCAA Bylaw 12.2.4 (Contracts and Compensation) provides that a student-athlete "shall not enter into any kind of agreement to compete in professional athletics, either orally or in writing, regardless of the legal enforceability of that agreement."¹⁰ This Bylaw is incorporated by reference and is also effective as an SEC Bylaw pursuant to SEC Bylaw 14.01.1 ("Professionalism Rules").¹¹ These rules have been in effect for decades.

Out of specific concerns regarding a potential violation of the Professionalism Rules and recognizing their importance, the SEC Presidents and Chancellors convened a meeting on August 25, 2026.¹² On the same date, the Presidents and Chancellors unanimously instructed Commissioner Sankey and the Conference to issue the following public statement:¹³

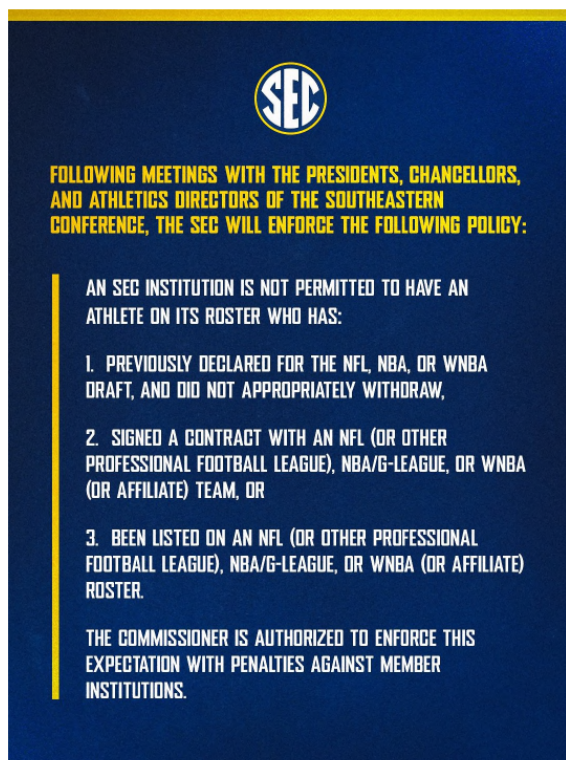
⁹ Austin Nivison, *LSU expected to add ex-Ole Miss star DT Zxavian Harris after NFL stint in late boost for Lane Kiffin*, CBS SPORTS (Aug. 24, 2026), <https://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/lsu-zxavian-harris-transfer-lane-kiffin-ole-miss-nfl/>.

¹⁰ Sankey Affidavit at ¶ 16 (citing 2025-26 NCAA Manual, § 12.2.4).

¹¹ SEC Bylaw 14.01.1.

¹² Sankey Affidavit ¶ 23.

¹³ *Id.*; August 25, 2026 Statement, attached to Sankey Affidavit as **Exhibit B**.



A day later, on August 26, 2026, Commissioner Sankey (acting pursuant to direction from the Presidents and Chancellors) issued two memoranda to SEC member institutions.¹⁴ These memoranda do not and did not create new SEC Bylaws or rules. The memoranda simply provided guidance from the SEC office concerning the enforcement of the pre-existing SEC Bylaws (including the Professionalism Rules) and imposition of penalties and sanctions against SEC member institutions, Presidents and Chancellors, coaches, and other SEC athletics personnel. The memoranda further reflect the SEC will not take enforcement action against Plaintiffs in this action (or in any similar action, including declaring any plaintiff ineligible). Any enforcement action will be taken against SEC member institutions, Presidents and Chancellors, coaches, and other SEC athletics personnel.¹⁵ In issuing the statements and making

¹⁴ Sankey Affidavit at ¶ 26; August 26, 2026 memoranda, attached as **Exhibits C and D** to the Sankey Affidavit.

¹⁵ Sankey Affidavit at ¶ 26.

the decisions described above, the SEC acted independently and not in coordination or communication with the NCAA or any other NCAA member conference.¹⁶

Despite the SEC's public avowal that it would impose any sanctions only on institutions and institutional personnel, Plaintiffs filed their First Amended Verified Petition for Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction, Declaratory Relief, and Permanent Injunction on August 27, 2026. The pleading adds Plaintiffs and names the SEC and Commissioner Sankey, in his official capacity, as defendants.¹⁷ In addition to rearguing their challenge of the NCAA's eligibility rules, Plaintiffs separately challenge SEC institutional rules concerning transfers and professionalization.

The TRO enjoins enforcement of NCAA Bylaw 12.6 and "any other NCAA or SEC bylaw or rule"; restrains enforcement of SEC transfer rules and SEC rules or proposed penalties; reaches SEC members and persons acting in concert or participation with the defendants; and directs that, if the SEC believes it has another basis to declare a Plaintiff ineligible, it must first seek leave of Court.

The TRO states that Plaintiffs must furnish a "nominal bond," but the copy presently available to the SEC leaves the amount blank. The record presently available to the SEC therefore does not establish that the Court fixed the amount of security or that Plaintiffs furnished the security necessary for issuance of the TRO.

The SEC Constitution and Bylaws identify the Conference as both a competitive and legislative body.¹⁸ Its stated mission is educational and includes organizing intercollegiate athletic competitions, prescribing eligibility rules, assisting member institutions in maintaining programs compatible with educational and competitive-sports standards, and fostering strong competition among members.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Id.* at ¶ 28.

¹⁷ Plaintiffs filed a Second Supplemental and Amending Petition on August 31, 2026, for the sole purpose of adding Plaintiff Nathan Cox. The SEC's understanding is that Mr. Cox has not previously entered a professional contract.

¹⁸ SEC Constitution art. 3.0.

¹⁹ SEC Constitution art. 1.2.

The Professionalism Rules address professionalization and eligibility for SEC competition. The Conference's August 2026 action addressed the application and enforcement of that principle in the unprecedented circumstance of athletes seeking to return to collegiate competition after entering professional sports. The Conference identified competitive equity, finite roster opportunities, and preservation of a meaningful boundary between collegiate and professional competition as legitimate institutional concerns.²⁰

The SEC's transfer bylaw separately governs transfers between SEC member institutions. SEC Bylaw 14.5.5.1 requires written notification during the applicable regular NCAA transfer window. The SEC Bylaws also establish defined procedures for enforcement decisions and appeals.²¹

IV. LAW AND ARGUMENT

A. Applicable Standards on Application for Preliminary Injunction

A preliminary injunction is an interlocutory order issued in summary proceedings incidental to the main demand for permanent injunctive relief.²² Plaintiffs seeking issuance of a preliminary injunction "bear the burden of establishing, by a preponderance of the evidence, a prima facie showing that they will prevail on the merits and that irreparable injury or loss will result without the preliminary injunction."²³

The Court must additionally consider the competing interests implicated by the requested injunction. Those interests extend beyond the immediate interests of the parties seeking relief where an injunction would alter an established system of private governance and affect third parties who have relied upon existing rules.

²⁰ See Sankey Affidavit at ¶ 17-22.

²¹ See SEC Bylaw art. 19.

²² *Byron E. Talbot Contractor, Inc. v. Lafourche Parish School Board*, 2021-181, p. 3 (La. App. 1 Cir. 11/1/21), 332 So.3d 699, 702.

²³ *Stevens v. St. Tammany Par. Gov't*, 2016-0197 (La. App. 1 Cir. 1/18/17), 212 So. 3d 562, 565 (citing La. C.C.P. art. 3601; *Hill v. Jindal*, 14-1757 (La.App. 1 Cir. 6/17/15), 175 So.3d 988, 1002).

B. Plaintiffs are unlikely to succeed on the merits of their claims against the SEC and Commissioner Sankey.²⁴

1. Louisiana law strongly disfavors judicial interference with the reasonable internal rules of a private voluntary association.

This principle is central to the claims against the SEC.

In *Jones v. NCAA*, the Louisiana Supreme Court stated:

Courts should not interfere with the internal affairs of a private association except in cases when the affairs and proceedings have not been conducted fairly and honestly, or in the cases of fraud, lack of jurisdiction, the invasion of property or pecuniary rights, or when the action complained of is capricious, arbitrary, or unjustly discriminatory.²⁵

Appellate courts have applied the same standard to an athletic association's eligibility rules and right to hold disciplinary hearings concerning its members.²⁶

Those decisions are particularly instructive here. The SEC is a voluntary association of sixteen educational institutions. Its Presidents and Chancellors possess plenary authority over Conference affairs under the SEC Constitution and Bylaws.²⁷ Those institutions voluntarily agree to common competitive rules because meaningful intercollegiate competition requires participants to know and abide by uniform standards.

The challenged rule readily satisfies the deferential standard articulated in *Jones* and *English*. The Conference has legitimate reasons for determining that an athlete's voluntary transition into professional sports constitutes an endpoint for SEC competition.

First, roster opportunities are finite. Allowing athletes to return from professional sports necessarily changes the competitive opportunities available to athletes who have remained within the collegiate system.

²⁴ As a threshold procedural matter, as the SEC Defendants argue in their Dilatory Exception of Improper Cumulation of Actions, Plaintiffs have cumulated materially different actions into a single proceeding in a manner that prejudices the SEC Defendants. Accordingly, under Article 464, any claims against the SEC Defendants should proceed, if at all, only as to Plaintiffs alleging a concrete SEC-specific controversy. The SEC Defendants' Dilatory Exception seeks that relief.

²⁵ 679 So. 2d at 382.

²⁶ See *English*, 439 So. 2d at 1223; *Louisiana State Board of Education*, 273 So.2d 912.

²⁷ SEC Constitution art. 4.1.2.

Second, current and incoming athletes have substantial reliance interests. They enrolled, transferred, remained at institutions, participated in offseason programs, and prepared for competition under rules that did not contemplate athletes returning to college immediately after participating in professional football or basketball.

Third, uniformity protects competitive equity. Without a Conference-wide rule, each institution would have an incentive to recruit athletes released from professional organizations simply because competing institutions might do so. An educational institution could therefore be competitively compelled to engage in conduct it otherwise believed inconsistent with college competition.

Fourth, a discernible transition between collegiate and professional competition is itself a legitimate organizing principle. Modern college athletes may receive substantial compensation through NIL arrangements and other permissible benefits. The SEC's position does not depend upon the proposition that college athletes must be uncompensated amateurs. Compensation and competitive status are different questions. College athletes may receive compensation while still participating in a system that reasonably establishes when collegiate competition ends and professional competition begins.

The SEC's rule therefore represents reasonable line drawing in response to a novel circumstance—not arbitrary discrimination. Louisiana law does not authorize a court to substitute its preferred policy judgment for that of a voluntary association merely because another policy might also be reasonable.

2. The SEC is not "acting in concert or participation" with the NCAA within the meaning of Article 3605.

Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 3605 provides that a restraining or injunctive order "shall be effective against the parties restrained, their officers, agents, employees, and counsel, and those persons in active concert or participation with them, from the time they receive actual knowledge of the order." Because Article 3605 substantially tracks Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d), federal jurisprudence interpreting the corresponding language is

instructive.²⁸ The relevant authorities require substantially more than "parallel interests" or agreement on a policy question for parties to be "acting in concert."²⁹ The nonparty must stand in the type of relationship—agency, control, privity, representation, or actual cooperative conduct concerning the prohibited act—that justifies extending the injunction beyond the named party.³⁰

That showing is absent here. The SEC is a separate association governed by its sixteen member institutions. It is not controlled by the NCAA. Commissioner Sankey is not an officer or employee of the NCAA. The SEC did not adopt the challenged institutional enforcement policy at the NCAA's direction.

Plaintiffs' reliance upon Commissioner Sankey's participation in declarations or NCAA governance concerning the separate development of a five-year eligibility model does not establish active concert concerning the Conference's professionalization rule.³¹

The Supreme Court's decision in *NCAA v. Alston*³² further recognizes the distinction between NCAA-wide regulation and conference-level decision-making. The injunction reviewed there preserved meaningful room for conferences and individual institutions to adopt rules independently within the governing legal framework.³³ *Alston* therefore reinforces—not eliminates—the legal distinction between NCAA regulation and independent conference action. The SEC may share certain policy interests with the NCAA without becoming its agent.

Accordingly, an injunction against the NCAA does not automatically bind the SEC concerning independent enforcement of SEC rules.

²⁸ See *City of Baton Rouge/Par. of E. Baton Rouge v. Lee*, 2005-2497 (La. App. 1 Cir. 11/3/06); 950 So. 2d 831, 832 n. 2.

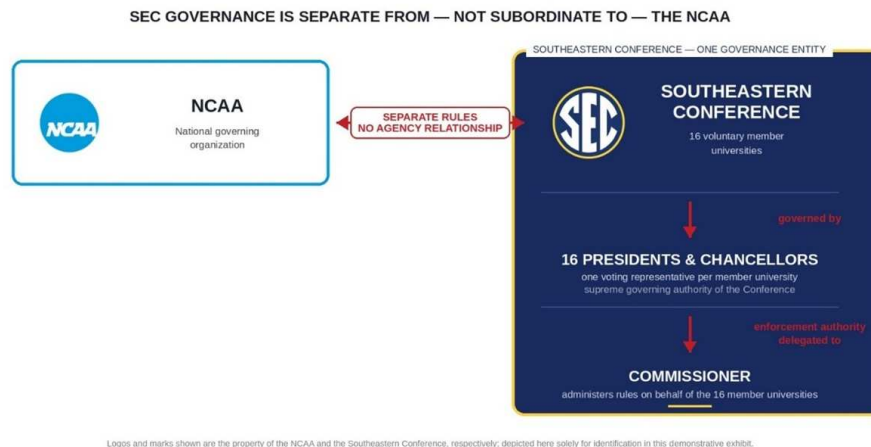
²⁹ See *Texas v. Dep't of Lab.*, 929 F.3d 205, 211 (5th Cir. 2019); *Travelhost, Inc. v. Blandford*, 68 F.3d 958, 961 (5th Cir. 1995).

³⁰ See *Texas v. Dep't of Lab.*, 929 at 211; *Blandford*, 68 F.3d at 96; see also 61 A.L.R. Fed. 482 (originally published in 1983) ("[T]he nonparty is in effect an extension, cat's-paw, or alter ego of the party to the suit, this specific kind of relationship between the nonparty and the party defendant, as the principal actor, being a requisite condition of establishing the nonparty as one in active concert or participation.").

³¹ See Petition at ¶ 116.

³² 594 U.S. 69 (2021).

³³ *Id.* at 103–06.



3. Article I, Section 22 of the Louisiana Constitution creates no cause of action against the SEC under these circumstances.

Plaintiffs contend that potential SEC sanctions against institutions or institutional personnel would violate Louisiana public policy and Article I, Section 22 of the Louisiana Constitution by impairing the practical value of judicial relief.³⁴ Plaintiffs' contention fails to state any claim against the SEC Defendants.

Article I, Section 22 provides that Louisiana courts shall be open and that every person shall have an adequate remedy by due process of law for injury to person, property, reputation, or other rights.³⁵ This provision guarantees open access to courts. It does not transform a private athletic association into a state actor, nor does it require a private association to suspend otherwise lawful rules governing its members merely because a litigant has obtained judicial relief against a separate entity.

While Plaintiffs remain free to invoke Louisiana courts, as They have done here, nothing in Article I, Section 22 requires the SEC to abandon independent Conference rules whenever an athlete obtains relief concerning NCAA eligibility.

Plaintiffs' constitutional theory therefore fails as a matter of law and provides no basis for preliminary injunctive relief against the SEC defendants.

³⁴ See Petition at ¶ 141.

³⁵ See, e.g., *Crier v. Whitecloud*, 496 So. 2d 305, 310 (La. 1986).

4. Plaintiffs cannot establish tortious interference with prospective business relations.

Under Louisiana law, tortious interference with business relations requires more than proof that a defendant's conduct adversely affected a plaintiff's business opportunity. Plaintiffs must establish improper influence, actual malice, and conduct that actually prevented the plaintiff from dealing with a third party.³⁶

The SEC's enforcement of reasonable rules governing its voluntary members is neither malicious nor improper. Nor should the Court accept the proposition that the SEC's policy exists to retaliate against Plaintiffs for seeking judicial relief. The policy serves independent Conference interests in competitive equity, roster stability, uniform application of eligibility standards, and protection of finite opportunities.

Plaintiffs' materially different circumstances defeat any collective showing that SEC action actually prevented each of them from entering a prospective relationship with an SEC institution.

To the extent any SEC member institution declines to roster an athlete because doing so would expose the institution or its personnel to Conference sanctions, that result flows from the institution's own obligation to comply with the rules of the voluntary association it joined. It does not show that the SEC maliciously interfered with any independently protected business relationship.

The claim therefore provides no basis for preliminary injunctive relief.

5. Plaintiffs cannot establish tortious interference with contractual relations.

Louisiana recognizes a narrowly confined cause of action for interference with contract decision in *9 to 5 Fashions, Inc. v. Spurney*.³⁷ The claim requires, among other elements,

³⁶ See *Markovich v. Villere*, 2017-1739 (La. App. 1 Cir. 2/28/19), 273 So. 3d 333, 345, writ denied, 2019-0500 (La. 5/20/19), 271 So. 3d 201; *Henderson v. Bailey Bark Materials*, 116 So. 3d 30 (La. Ct. App. 2d Cir. 2013); *Junior Money Bags, Ltd. v. Segal*, 970 F.2d 1 (5th Cir. 1992); *Graham v. St. Charles St. R. Co.*, 18 So. 707 (La. 1895); *Beta Tech., Inc. v. State Indus. Prods. Corp.*, No. CIV.A. 06-735-SCR, 2008 WL 4330105, at *1 (M.D. La. Sept. 15, 2008), supplemented, No. CV 06-735-SCR, 2008 WL 11351462 (M.D. La. Sept. 24, 2008).

³⁷ 538 So.2d 228, 231 (La. 1989).

a corporate officer's intentional and unjustified inducement of the corporation to breach its contract or to render performance impossible or more burdensome.³⁸

Plaintiffs allege that the SEC and Commissioner Sankey interfered with rights allegedly arising under the NCAA Manual.³⁹ But neither the SEC nor Commissioner Sankey is a corporate officer of the NCAA. Commissioner Sankey is an officer of the SEC, a separate voluntary association. The SEC itself likewise cannot satisfy the corporate-officer element recognized in *Spurney*.

Accordingly, Plaintiffs' tortious-interference theory fails as a matter of law and provides no basis for preliminary injunctive relief against the SEC Defendants.

6. Plaintiffs' breach-of-contract/stipulation-pour-autri theory fails.

Plaintiffs' breach-of-contract theory fails at the threshold because they identify no SEC contract that clearly confers enforceable third-party rights on them, much less any breach arising from the Conference's enforcement of its own rules.

Louisiana terms a contract for the benefit of a third person a "stipulation pour autri."⁴⁰ The asserted contract must manifest a clear intention to confer a certain and nonincidental benefit upon an identifiable third party.⁴¹ Court consider three criteria for determining whether contracting parties have provided a benefit for a third party: "(1) the stipulation for a third party is manifestly clear; (2) there is certainty as to the benefit provided to the third party; and (3) the benefit is not a mere incident of the contract between the promisor and the promisee."⁴²

Plaintiffs identify no SEC contract satisfying those requirements. The SEC Constitution and Bylaws principally establish the rights and obligations of Conference members and provide the structure through which those institutions govern competition among themselves.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ See Petition at ¶¶ at 153-54.

⁴⁰ See *Joseph v. Hosp. Serv. Dist. No. 2 of Par. of St. Mary*, 2005-2364 (La. 10/15/06), 939 So. 2d 1206, 1211.

⁴¹ See *id.* at 1212.

⁴² *Id.*

As *English* held with respect to athletic associations, any benefit student-athletes derive from that structure does not, without more, establish the manifestly clear third-party contractual right required by Louisiana law.⁴³

Even assuming third-party beneficiary status existed, Plaintiffs identify no contractual provision breached by the SEC. Enforcement of the Conference's rules against Conference members cannot itself constitute bad-faith breach of those same governing instruments.

Plaintiffs therefore cannot prevail on their stipulation pour autri claim.

7. Plaintiffs have not asserted, and could not assert, a LUTPA claim against the SEC.

Count VII of the Petition focuses on alleged NCAA conduct and an antitrust theory concerning the NCAA.⁴⁴ Although Plaintiffs do not mention the SEC in the allegations supporting this claim, they nevertheless seek LUTPA relief against the SEC Defendants without pleading any SEC-specific conduct that could support such relief.

To the extent Plaintiffs intended to assert a LUTPA claim against the SEC Defendants, it fails. LUTPA prohibits an "extremely narrow" range of practices including fraud, misrepresentation, and other similar conduct.⁴⁵ Conduct that the Plaintiffs attempt to characterize as contrary to public policy does not automatically give rise to a LUTPA violation.⁴⁶ The SEC-specific conduct at issue—maintaining and enforcing reasonable rules governing competition among voluntary members—does not approach the category of conduct actionable under LUTPA.

8. Plaintiffs' civil-conspiracy theory fails.

Louisiana Civil Code article 2324 does not create an independent tort of conspiracy. The actionable element is the underlying tort that the alleged conspirators agreed to commit.⁴⁷ A

⁴³ See *English*, 439 So. 2d at 1223.

⁴⁴ Petition at ¶¶ 168-185.

⁴⁵ See *Quality Env't Processes, Inc. v. I.P. Petroleum Co.*, 2013-1582 (La. 5/7/14), 144 So. 3d 1011, 1025.

⁴⁶ See *id.*

⁴⁷ See *Butz v. Lynch*, 97-2166, p. 6 (La.App. 1st Cir. 4/8/98), 710 So.2d 1171, 1174.

conspiracy theory therefore fails when the underlying tort fails, or even more simply put when no tort exists.⁴⁸

Plaintiffs cannot establish any underlying tort claims asserted against the SEC Defendants. They identify no evidence that the SEC and NCAA entered an agreement to commit any unlawful act. Parallel policy views, participation in broader collegiate-governance discussions, or shared concern about eligibility rules do not establish an agreement to commit a tort.

The conspiracy theory therefore supplies no basis for injunctive relief.

9. Commissioner Sankey cannot be held individually liable for conduct undertaken solely in his official capacity.

The Petition expressly names Commissioner Sankey solely in his capacity as Commissioner of the SEC. Plaintiffs allege no independent conduct outside the scope of his Conference responsibilities that could support personal liability.

Louisiana law does not impose personal liability on an individual merely because that person is authorized to participate in management of an unincorporated association.⁴⁹ Here, the challenged conduct consists of official acts undertaken for the association. There is no basis for separate personal liability of the Commissioner. Clearly, Commissioner Sankey should be dismissed as an individual defendant.

C. Plaintiffs Cannot Establish the Irreparable Harm Necessary for an Injunction Against the SEC Defendants.

1. Plaintiffs are required to establish irreparable injury.

Plaintiffs' asserted statutory exceptions do not eliminate their obligation to actually demonstrate irreparable injury brought upon them by any SEC defendant.

Plaintiffs invoke La. R.S. 51:129 based upon an alleged violation of the Louisiana Monopolies Act. The Petition, however, only cites this provision in the context of the LUTPA claim that is exclusively focused on alleged NCAA conduct, as noted above.⁵⁰ The SEC does not

⁴⁸ See *id.*

⁴⁹ La. R.S. 12:506; *cf. Fausse Riviere, L.L.C. v. Snyder*, 2016-0633 (La. App. 1 Cir. 2/15/17), 211 So. 3d 1188, 1192 ("Only exceptional circumstances warrant disregarding the concept of a corporation or LLC as a separate entity.") (internal citations and quotations omitted)

⁵⁰ Petition at ¶ 185.

exercise any monopoly or monopsony power over college athletics. Even if the Louisiana Monopolies Act claim did apply to the SEC Defendants, the First Circuit has held that the Monopolies Act applies only to trade or commerce within Louisiana's geographic boundaries.⁵¹ The SEC conduct challenged here consists of Conference governance undertaken by an Alabama-based association concerning its member institutions. In no way does it provide Plaintiffs with an avenue to circumvent their need to prove irreparable harm.

Plaintiffs further do not identify an enforceable "obligation not to do" owed by the SEC to them under Civil Code article 1987. Any such theory presupposes a legally enforceable obligation in Plaintiffs' favor. Plaintiffs identify none that prevent the SEC from governing its members.

The cited NIL statutes likewise do not prohibit the SEC from maintaining eligibility and competition rules governing its members. The Allen Toussaint Legacy Act, La. R.S. 51:470.1–470.6, concerns rights in an individual's identity and commercial misappropriation and has no apparent application to the conduct challenged here. Louisiana's student-athlete NIL statute permits defined NIL activity subject to specified conditions; it does not compel an athletic conference to alter otherwise applicable competition rules.

Accordingly, Plaintiffs cannot obtain preliminary injunctive relief without proving irreparable injury attributable to the SEC Defendants.

2. Plaintiffs have not demonstrated irreparable injury caused by the SEC Defendants.

Irreparable injury is injury for which an adequate remedy at law, including money damages, is unavailable.⁵² Plaintiffs cannot satisfy that burden collectively where their alleged injuries and connections to the SEC differ so materially.

⁵¹ *State v. Fournier Industrie et Sante*, 2017-1552, pp. 12–13 (La. App. 1 Cir. 8/3/18), 256 So. 3d 295, 303, writ denied, 2018-2065 (La. 4/8/19), 267 So. 3d 607.

⁵² *Historic Restoration, Inc. v. RSUI Indemnity Co.*, 2006-1178, p. 11 (La. App. 4 Cir. 3/21/07), 955 So.2d 200, 208, writ denied, 2007-840 (La. 6/22/07), 959 So.2d 497

The threshold flaw is causation: the SEC does not purport to determine whether Plaintiffs possess remaining NCAA eligibility. That question is to be and is being litigated between Plaintiffs and the NCAA. That distinction is critical.

It is of moment to note that only a small subset of Plaintiffs alleges a concrete intention to compete at an SEC institution, and an even smaller subset appear to present facts implicating the professionalization rule. The remaining Plaintiffs cannot establish imminent SEC-caused injury merely by joining litigation involving NCAA eligibility. At most, Plaintiffs allege lost NIL compensation or other economic opportunities—injuries that are monetary and generally compensable. This Court must distinguish between the loss of an established legal right and the loss of an opportunity created only created by recent judicial orders altering the eligibility landscape. Plaintiffs entered college under rules clearly outlining their competitive eligibility. Those who subsequently entered professional sports did so with a full understanding of eligibility as was understood under SEC eligibility rules. Their present claim seeks an additional competitive opportunity arising from a recent change in circumstances; it does not seek preservation of an established expectation that they could move from college to professional sports and then return to SEC competition.

That showing does not establish SEC caused irreparable injury; it belongs, if anywhere, in the balance of equities.

D. The Balance of Equities Weighs Against Preliminary Injunctive Relief.

Plaintiffs' presentation understandably focuses upon what they, as individual athletes, may lose if THEY cannot compete during the 2026–27 season. But this Court knows that equitable relief requires consideration of both sides of the equation.

The Plaintiffs before the Court are not the only student-athletes whose interests will be affected by the requested injunction. SEC institutions operate under finite roster limits and finite competitive opportunities. Those rosters were constructed before this litigation. Athletes made enrollment, transfer, and retention decisions. Coaches made recruiting and roster-allocation decisions. Current student-athletes participated in months of offseason preparation. Incoming

athletes accepted opportunities at SEC institutions with an understanding of the eligibility framework governing the coming season.

An injunction altering that framework immediately before competition begins necessarily affects those reliance interests. The practical consequence is straightforward: an additional roster opportunity cannot always be created without affecting an existing one.

The equitable inquiry cannot stop with the opportunity Plaintiffs seek; it must account for the opportunity another athlete may lose if that request is granted. Plaintiffs ask the Court to create opportunity for themselves by taking it from someone else.

That concern is especially significant where the athlete seeking to return has already completed the collegiate-to-professional transition. The SEC does not contend that athletes should be prohibited from receiving NIL compensation or other lawful economic benefits while participating in college athletics. The Conference's rule rests instead on a different and narrower principle: a competitive system may reasonably establish a point at which collegiate participation ends and professional participation begins. That transition serves legitimate reliance interests throughout the system.

An injunction would also impose substantial institutional harm on the Conference. Uniform rules are indispensable to fair conference competition. If one member may roster athletes returning from professional sports, while another has constructed its team with the understanding that such athletes are unavailable, the competitive conditions change after roster construction and preparation are substantially complete.

The problem compounds itself because competitive incentives operate rapidly. If one institution recruits an athlete immediately following release from a professional organization, competing institutions face pressure to do the same—not necessarily because they believe the practice desirable, but because declining to participate could create a competitive disadvantage. The resulting collective-action problem is precisely the type of problem conference rules exist to prevent and the clear harm an injunction would have on the Conference.

The SEC's member institutions have interests clearly distinct from the NCAA and distinct from Plaintiffs: maintaining common rules, predictable roster conditions, and fair

competition among sixteen institutions. Plaintiffs' requested injunction would impair those interests while simultaneously affecting current and prospective student-athletes who are not parties to this litigation and have no opportunity to be heard. Equity does not require that result.

E. The Public Interest Weighs Against Judicial Displacement of Reasonable Conference Governance.

The public interest likewise favors denial of preliminary injunctive relief. Louisiana has a well-established public policy of respecting the internal governance of private voluntary associations absent arbitrary, capricious, fraudulent, unfair, or unlawfully discriminatory conduct.⁵³

That principle is especially important in organized athletic competition, which cannot function without common eligibility and competition rules.

The public unquestionably has an interest in ensuring that student-athletes are treated fairly. The SEC shares that interest. But fairness encompasses more than the interests of athletes seeking an additional season of competition. It also encompasses current student-athletes who relied upon established roster conditions; incoming student-athletes seeking their first collegiate opportunities; institutions that constructed rosters under common rules; and competitors entitled to play under uniform standards. The SEC is responsible for all those interests.

The Conference's rule reflects a reasonable judgment that college athletics may permit substantial athlete compensation while nevertheless maintaining a meaningful transition between collegiate and professional competition. Those principles are not inconsistent. Compensation may evolve without eliminating every boundary between college and professional sports.

The public interest extends far beyond the immediate interests of the parties before the Court. Student-athletes, coaches, institutions, and the public all depend upon stable, uniform, and predictable eligibility standards—not a system in which rosters, competitive opportunities, and the integrity of scheduled contests may be altered by emergency judicial orders entered on the eve of competition.

⁵³ *Jones*, 679 So. 2d 381; *English*, 439 So. 2d 1218; *Louisiana State Board of Education*, 273 So.2d 912.

Because the Court's ruling will inevitably affect institutions and student-athletes who are not parties to this litigation, the existence of broader national disputes over eligibility weighs against piecemeal judicial management of the SEC's internal affairs. It counsels restraint. A preliminary injunction here would do more than preserve any individual Plaintiff's status quo. It would affirmatively alter the competitive status quo governing sixteen institutions and thousands of athletes immediately before the season and prevent the Conference from enforcing rules its members adopted to govern their own competition. Louisiana law does not favor that result. The public interest is best served by preserving stable, reasonable private-association governance while Plaintiffs' claims are adjudicated through the ordinary judicial process—not by disrupting that governance through extraordinary preliminary relief before the merits have been resolved.

V. CONCLUSION

The narrow issue presented before the Court with respect to the SEC Defendants is whether Plaintiffs have demonstrated a legal and equitable basis for an extraordinary order preventing the SEC, a voluntary association of sixteen universities, from enforcing reasonable competition rules against its own members ..

Simply put, the Plaintiffs have not.

Louisiana law affords substantial deference to the internal affairs of private associations. The SEC's rules readily satisfy that standard because the rules rest upon legitimate considerations of competitive equity, roster stability, reliance interests, uniformity, and protection of finite opportunities for current and incoming student-athletes.

The SEC and the NCAA are separate and institutionally independent private associations, each exercising distinct authority under its own governing framework. Here, the SEC is neither determining nor purporting to determine Plaintiffs' eligibility under NCAA rules; it independently regulates the conduct and participation of its own member institutions pursuant to SEC rules. That independent exercise of Conference authority does not render the SEC an agent of the NCAA or a person acting in concert with the NCAA within the meaning of Article 3605. Plaintiffs' substantive claims against the SEC Defendants are unlikely to succeed. Their constitutional, tortious-interference, contract, LUTPA, and conspiracy theories fail under

Louisiana law, and Commissioner Sankey faces no independent basis for personal liability for actions undertaken solely in his official capacity.

The equitable factors independently foreclose the requested relief. The Court must consider not only the opportunity Plaintiffs seek to obtain, but the opportunities and settled expectations of athletes who are not before the Court. Current and incoming SEC student-athletes prepared for the 2026–27 season under an established competitive framework. Conference members constructed rosters under that framework. The requested injunction would alter those conditions immediately before competition and impair the SEC's ability to maintain uniform rules among its members. Plaintiffs' individual interests cannot be evaluated in isolation from those consequences.

A judicial determination that an athlete possesses NCAA eligibility does not answer the question of whether a voluntary athletic conference must permit its member institutions to roster that athlete in Conference competition, notwithstanding independent Conference rules. Conflating those two questions will transform relief concerning NCAA eligibility into judicial supervision of a separate private association. *Jones* and *English* counsel against precisely that kind of intervention absent arbitrary, capricious, fraudulent, unfair, or unlawfully discriminatory conduct, none of which are present before the Court.

For these reasons, Defendants Southeastern Conference and Commissioner Greg Sankey respectfully request that the Court DENY Plaintiffs' Application for Preliminary Injunction as to them, dissolve the Temporary Restraining Order insofar as it restrains the SEC and

Commissioner Sankey, grant the relief requested in the SEC Defendants' concurrently filed exception as appropriate, and award such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Date: September 2, 2026

Respectfully submitted,



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Attorneys for Southeastern Conference and Greg Sankey

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that a copy of the above and foregoing Opposition has been served upon all parties by email, facsimile, and/or United States mail, postage prepaid and properly addressed, this 2nd day of September, 2026.

/s/ Michael Q. Walshe, Jr.

NINETEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA

NO. C-783299

DIVISION D

JACK PYBURN, JAZMIN FERGUSON, JAMIL MUTTILIB, AMIYA JOYNER, RASHAD KING, MICHAEL ELEY, ANDREW BURNETTE, WYDETT WILLIAMS, KEENAN LANDRY, THOMAS MARSALA, PERCY DANIELS, JOSHUA "GREEDY" WILLIAMS, DAE'QUAN WRIGHT, DERRIAN FORD, ASIA NICHOLSON, ZXAVIAN HARRIS, CHANDLER JACKSON, PEITOK MACHAR, TJ HARDEN, BLAKE COTTON, ETHAN JOHNSON, ANTHONY TARJAE HANKERSON, JASMINE JONES, WEYLIN LAPUAHO, EMILEE BOYER, LUKE DRZEWIECKI, TRENT HENDRICK, BRYLAN GREEN, AVERY STRICKLAND HURST, SAM PISSIS, JUNIOR TUIHALAMAKA, DQ SMITH, DAN ROUZAN, JALIA LASSITER, PAYTN MONTICELLI, TRAE TOMLINSON, JOCELYN OLLIVIERRE, RYAN STARR, TRE THOMAS, CKELBY PHILIP GIVENS, KENNEDY BUNKER, AND PAUL MANNING

v.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE,
AND GREG SANKEY, SOLEY IN HIS ROLE AS
COMMISSIONER OF THE SEC

AFFIDAVIT OF SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE COMMISSIONER
GREG SANKEY

STATE OF ALABAMA

COUNTY OF JEFFERSON

BEFORE ME, the undersigned notary public, personally appeared

GREG SANKEY

a person known to me of the full age of majority who, upon being duly sworn, did depose and state:

1. I am the Commissioner of the Southeastern Conference (the “SEC” or the “Conference”). I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth below and, if called on to do so, would testify competently to the facts stated herein under oath.

2. I received my undergraduate degree from the State University of New York at Cortland and earned my Masters’ degree at Syracuse University in 1993. I began my career in athletics administration as Director of Intramural Sports at Utica College in upstate New York (1987-1989). After I left Utica College, I served as an athletics department intern (1989-90), as well as coach of the golf team at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, LA, and then served as Director of Compliance and Academic Services at Northwestern State University (1990-92). I moved to the Southland Conference (an NCAA Division I Conference located in Texas) as an Assistant Commissioner in 1992. I advanced to Associate Commissioner and was eventually named the Commissioner of the Southland Conference. In 2002, I joined the SEC as Associate Commissioner for Governance, Enforcement and Compliance, a position I held until 2012, when I became the Executive Associate Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer. I held that position until I was named Commissioner of the SEC in March 2015.

3. I have followed, at a high level, the various lawsuits that have been filed against the NCAA challenging NCAA eligibility rules and decisions. I have also reviewed the pleadings in this action. Those pleadings reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the SEC’s position and actions, as follows:

a. The SEC has not adopted any new Bylaws or rules that affect or impact any student-athlete, institution, coach, or institutional official or administrator that are relevant to the relief requested by the plaintiffs in this action. The SEC and NCAA Bylaws and rules referenced in paragraph 16 of this Affidavit that prohibit professional athletes from returning to college to

play college sports (the “Professionalism Rules”) have been in effect for decades, and the SEC has not adopted any new Professionalism Rules applicable in the 2026-27 academic year.

b. When NCAA Bylaws are amended, to the extent those Bylaws are incorporated by reference and are also SEC Bylaws, the SEC Bylaws are automatically amended. The SEC has not otherwise adopted any new eligibility, transfer, disciplinary, or other Bylaws or rules for the 2026-27 academic year.

c. The actions taken by the SEC and our public statements during the week of August 24, 2026, have not been based on any newly adopted Bylaws or rules that were not in effect prior to the week of August 24, 2026.

d. For the 2026-27 academic year, the SEC has not and will not apply any NCAA or SEC Bylaws limiting student-athletes entering college in 2022 to four years of eligibility or requiring student-athletes to enter a transfer portal to be eligible to transfer and for competition (the “Eligibility/Transfer Rules”) or any Professionalism Rules to penalize any plaintiff or declare any plaintiff (in this or any other lawsuit naming the NCAA as a defendant, whether the SEC is a party defendant or not) ineligible for SEC or NCAA competition based on any violation of any of such Rules. The SEC Presidents and Chancellors have made it clear that any penalties that may be imposed by the SEC as a result of violation of such Rules will be imposed only against SEC member institutions, SEC Presidents or Chancellors, SEC coaches, and other SEC athletics personnel, all of whom are subject to and must comply with the SEC Bylaws and rules as set forth below.

e. The SEC is not an agent or functionary of the NCAA and has not interacted with or coordinated with the NCAA in making the determinations and decisions summarized in the prior two subparagraphs. As explained below, the SEC is a separate entity and is independent

from the NCAA. The SEC makes decisions independently about adoption, implementation, and enforcement of its own Bylaws and rules.

Accordingly, to be clear, the SEC has not and has no intention of imposing any penalty against a plaintiff in this lawsuit (or any other lawsuit referenced above) or declaring any such plaintiff ineligible for competition in the SEC during the 2026-27 academic year based on violations of the Professionalism Rules or Eligibility/Transfer Rules.

4. The Conference is an Alabama unincorporated association that is tax exempt pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Conference was founded in 1933. The current Constitution and Bylaws of the SEC are attached to this Affidavit as Exhibit A.

5. The Conference has sixteen (16) member institutions, fifteen (15) of which are state universities. The Conference's members are the University of Alabama, Auburn University, University of Arkansas, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, University of Missouri, University of Oklahoma, University of South Carolina, University of Tennessee, Texas A&M University, University of Texas, and Vanderbilt University.

6. The Conference operates under the direction and control of the President or Chancellor of each of its member universities. (Some member institutions use the term "President" and some use the term "Chancellor.") Under Article 4 of the SEC Constitution, the Presidents/Chancellors serve as the "Chief Executive Officers" or "CEOs" of the Conference. The CEO nomenclature (dating back to 1933) is no longer in common use, even though it remains in the Constitution and Bylaws. Under the Constitution, the CEO role of the Presidents and Chancellors is equivalent to the role of directors serving on a board of directors of a corporation.

In addition, on a rotating basis, one of the Presidents or Chancellors serves as the “President” of the Conference (a position equivalent to the chairman of the board of a corporation).

7. I report to and serve at the pleasure of the Chief Executive Officers. The SEC Constitution specifically provides that the “Chief Executive Officers shall have plenary power and authority with respect to all affairs of the Conference of any type or nature whatsoever, subject only to any specific provisions and restrictions imposed by the Constitution and Bylaws.” Exh. A., Art. 4.1.2.

8. Article 5 of the Constitution establishes the rules for Conference governance. Unless subject to penalties or sanctions, the members of the Conference, acting through their respective Presidents or Chancellors (i.e., their CEOs), each have one vote on each matter that comes before the Conference for action. As set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws, before a Conference rule can be adopted, the proposed rule must garner at least a majority (and in some instances, as specified in the Constitution and Bylaws, a super-majority) of votes from the members of the Conference.

9. The Conference does not control its member institutions; to the contrary, the member institutions collectively control the Conference and establish all policies and procedures of the Conference. The SEC member institutions, acting through their respective President or Chancellor, as CEOs of the Conference, define the role of the Conference office and determine the manner in which the Conference will be operated, providing direction to me and the Conference staff in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities assigned to the Conference, and make all final decisions concerning all material and fundamental Conference matters.

10. The Conference and its members are also members of the NCAA, but do not control the NCAA. The NCAA governance structure is set forth in the NCAA Manual, which is available

on the internet. The Conference and its members are subject to NCAA rules and regulations, but the NCAA does not control the Conference. The Conference and the NCAA are separate and independent entities.

11. The Conference and the NCAA each establish rules delineating eligibility requirements for student-athletes to participate in Conference and NCAA competitions. The NCAA rules apply to all NCAA member institutions. The Conference rules supplement the NCAA rules and apply only to the SEC member institutions. In some instances, as reflected in Exhibit A, the Conference has chosen to adopt NCAA rules as Conference rules. In other instances, as also reflected in Exhibit A, the Conference has adopted additional rules that govern the Conference member institutions, their CEOs, athletic administrators, and coaches.

12. Article 6 of the Constitution requires each CEO to enforce the Conference Bylaws at his or her member institution. SEC Bylaw 19.8.1.2 provides that:

Each member institution must include in each contract with every athletic director, coach, senior woman administrator, and other employee of its athletic department a specific provision obligating the employee to comply with the Rules and specifying that the employee agrees to be bound by and will comply with the enforcement, penalty, and other disciplinary provisions and procedures of the NCAA and of the Conference, including but not limited to the provisions of Article 4 of the Constitution and of this Bylaw 19.8.

Exh. A, Bylaw 19.8.1.2.

13. The Constitution and Bylaws also provide that:

Coaches shall comply with and promote compliance with all rules and regulations of the Conference and the NCAA and are accountable for the highest standards of honesty and integrity in order to provide a fair and equitable opportunity for each prospective student-athlete to make an informed and properly-considered commitment to the university of his/her choice.

Exh. A, § 10.2.1.

14. The Constitution and Bylaws vest specific powers and authority in the person who is the Commissioner of the Conference, as set forth therein. The Constitution sets forth the authority, duties and responsibilities of the Commissioner, as follows, in pertinent part:\

(b) The Commissioner shall be charged with the duty of implementing, administering and enforcing the Constitution, Bylaws, and other rules, regulations, and legislation of the Conference and the NCAA, and shall be vested with broad discretionary authority to carry out the duties of the position, including the authority to assess penalties and sanctions as contemplated and authorized in the Constitution and Bylaws;

(e) The Commissioner is the official Conference interpreter of Constitution, Bylaws, Commissioner's Regulations, and other rules, regulations, legislation and policies of the Conference and the NCAA;

(l) The Commissioner shall have authority to issue such interpretations, rules, regulations, memoranda, instructions, forms and procedures as may be necessary or appropriate in the performance of these duties, and in standardizing practices of the Conference, including memoranda or guidance to provide direction and information concerning the enforcement of the Constitution, Bylaws, and rules and regulations of the Conference and of the NCAA.

Exh. A, § 4.4.2.

15. The Constitution provides that the Chief Executive Officers (as set forth in § 4.1.2) have exclusive power and authority to impose certain sanctions and penalties. The Commissioner also has authority to impose sanctions and penalties on member institutions and their athletic personnel, including coaches, under several different provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws as follows in pertinent part:

4.4.3 Penalties and Sanctions. Without limitation, the Commissioner shall have the following powers and authority with respect to penalties and sanctions:

(a) The Commissioner may impose a fine or other penalties or sanctions appropriate under the circumstances, in his or her discretion, against any member institution that violates any of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, or other rules, regulations, or legislation of the Conference or the NCAA.

(b) The Commissioner may impose a fine or other penalties or sanctions appropriate under the circumstances, in his or her discretion, against any Athletic Director, coach, or other member of the athletics department of a member

institution who violates any of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, or other rules, regulations, or legislation of the Conference or the NCAA. The penalties that the Commissioner may impose include but are not limited to, singly or in combination:

- (1) Suspension from contests or other athletically related activities;
- (2) Limiting coaching duties, including those related to recruiting; and
- (3) Public or private reprimands.

* * *

(d) The Commissioner shall impose a fine or other penalties or sanctions appropriate under the circumstances, in his or her discretion, against any staff member, sport program, or member institution who is found by the NCAA to have had impermissible recruiting contact with a student-athlete at another Conference institution.

Exh. A, §4.4.3.

16. To maintain eligibility to participate in college athletics, NCAA Bylaw 12.2.4 (Contracts and Compensation) provides that a student-athlete “shall not enter into any kind of agreement to compete in professional athletics, either orally or in writing, regardless of the legal enforceability of that agreement.” This Bylaw is incorporated by reference and is also effective as an SEC Bylaw pursuant to SEC Bylaw 14.01.1. SEC Bylaw 14.01.1 has not been amended or revised since 2011, as reflected at the end of that Bylaw. The amendment in 2011 was a wording clarification. At all times since I have been employed by the SEC, the SEC has adopted NCAA Bylaw 12.2.4 (which has not been revised in any material respect, but may have been renumbered) as an SEC Bylaw.

17. NCAA Bylaw 12.2.4, as incorporated by SEC Bylaw 14.01.1, is grounded in the principle that college athletics are reserved for current college athletes who are actively pursuing a degree while also participating in college sports and for future college athletes who seek to benefit from the unique educational, athletic, and leadership opportunities provided through college sports. These Bylaws promote competitive fairness in the context of college athletics. The Bylaws reflect the recognition that an athlete who has pursued a professional sports career, whether

domestically or internationally, will have benefitted from the structure of professional sports, which permits athletes to focus solely on sports development and competition, stepping away from the educational requirements of college sports and engaging the opportunity to mature in a new environment with the benefit of dedicated athletic resources.

18. These Bylaws reflect that permitting former professional athletes to return to competition also creates a competitive disadvantage and fundamental unfairness for current student-athletes who have not pursued a professional sports career but instead have maintained their commitment to the collegiate athletics model, fulfilling the academic standards and participating actively in an educational community while also participating in college sports. It is also unfair to college sports programs that have operated within the existing framework for college athletics and thus have not sought to add former professional athletes to their rosters.

19. These Bylaws preserve and create opportunities for high school student-athletes to access the benefits of participation in college athletics. Each roster spot filled by a former professional athlete is a roster spot that becomes unavailable to a high school student-athlete or another less-developed athlete who would benefit from the educational and athletic growth opportunities uniquely available through college sports.

20. Adoption of these Bylaws reflects the informed judgment of our SEC member institutions to protect the distinctive character of collegiate athletics and the opportunities provided for current and future college athletes. Consistent application of these Bylaws promotes fair competition, supports sound program planning and administration across institutions and conferences, and sustains the differentiated product that is college sports.

21. Inconsistent application of these Bylaws—through court rulings or otherwise—fuels disruption in college sports. Without consistent application, college athletes cannot have

confidence in the rules of the competition in which they are engaged or the real-world effects of their decision to pursue a professional sports career; college coaches do not receive clear guidance on actions they can and cannot take to build their rosters for effective and compliant competition; and entering college freshmen face unclear limitations on their opportunities to join a roster and benefit from the experience of participating in college sports.

22. Member institutions recruit student-athletes and build rosters against a common set of rules, including these Bylaws, and in doing so create expectations upon which current and prospective student-athletes rely, including expectations that the individual will be included on a roster and will likely enjoy time on the court or field of play. Allowing individuals who have entered into professional agreements to return to college, impacting these expectations and in many instances displacing student-athletes from rosters would create adverse and material impacts to other student-athletes who have reasonable expectations of participation based on the established Bylaws of the NCAA and SEC. Allowing those individuals who have entered into professional agreements to return to college also would adversely impact institutions that have relied on the applicable Bylaws to construct their rosters, adversely impact competitive balance on the court or field of play, and undermine confidence in and respect for the rules of competition.

23. Recognizing the importance of these Bylaws, the SEC Presidents and Chancellors (i.e., the “CEOs” in the terminology of the SEC Constitution) conducted an official meeting on August 25, 2025, addressed recent litigation challenges to the validity of these Bylaws and unanimously instructed the Conference office to issue the public statement attached as Exhibit B that same day. Every one of the sixteen CEOs voted for the public statement.

24. The SEC also has adopted the Bylaws and rules of the NCAA governing student-athlete eligibility and transfers of student-athletes as its own Bylaws, as reflected in Article 13 and

§14.01.1 of Exhibit A. The SEC also has adopted an SEC-specific Bylaw governing transfers of SEC student-athletes between SEC member institutions. See Exh. A, §§ 14.5.5.1 & 14.5.5.1.1. That Bylaw only applies to SEC student-athletes who are transferring from one SEC member institution to another SEC member institution. It does not apply to student-athletes leaving the SEC or joining an SEC member institution from a college or university outside the SEC.

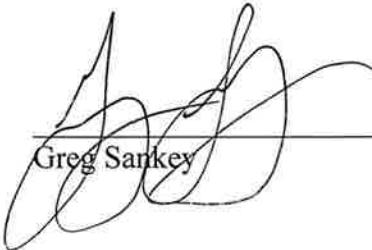
25. The SEC adopted the NCAA Bylaws governing transfers as SEC Bylaws and the SEC transfer Bylaw in Article 14, referenced above, so that all student-athletes and member institutions will have notice and adequate time to decide where to enroll for the next season of competition (for student-athletes) and to manage their rosters (for institutions). These Bylaws are designed to ensure that reasonable expectations of other student-athletes will not be subverted, and to prevent disruption of the plans of the member institution whose coaches thought an individual would be on their roster for the upcoming season.

26. Acting pursuant to direction I received on August 26, 2026, from the SEC Presidents and Chancellors in a continuation of the official meeting referenced in the prior paragraph, I issued the memoranda attached as Exhibits C and D to all SEC member institutions and coaching personnel. These memoranda do not and did not create new SEC Bylaws or rules. The memoranda simply provide guidance from the SEC office, as directed by the Presidents and Chancellors, concerning the enforcement of the Bylaws and imposition of penalties and sanctions against SEC member institutions, CEOs, coaches, and other SEC athletics personnel. No SEC President or Chancellor voted against the direction set forth in these two memoranda; the President of Louisiana State University abstained from the vote authorizing the issuance of these memoranda.

27. As reflected in paragraph 2 and in Exhibits C and D, the SEC will not take enforcement action against plaintiffs in this action (or in any similar action, including declaring any plaintiff ineligible) pursuant to the Bylaws addressed in this Affidavit. Any enforcement action will be taken, in accordance with the direction of the Presidents and Chancellors acting as CEOs of the Conference, against SEC member institutions, CEOs, coaches, and other SEC athletics personnel.

28. In making the decisions and issuing Exhibits A, B, and C, the SEC acted independently and not in coordination or communication with the NCAA. During the meetings on August 25 and 26, the SEC Presidents and Chancellors focused on compliance with and enforcement of SEC Bylaws by the SEC member institutions, CEOs, coaches, and other SEC athletics personnel.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.



Greg Sankey

Sworn to and subscribed before
me this 18 day of September, 2026

[seal]



Notary Public

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES AUGUST 22, 2027

CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 1

Name, Purposes and Fundamental Policy

1.1 Name 1

1.2 Purposes..... 1

*1.1 NAME

The name of this association shall be the Southeastern Conference.

*1.2 PURPOSES

The purpose and mission of the Southeastern Conference is educational within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Intercollegiate athletics programs provide fundamental lessons in leadership and teamwork, and about winning and losing that have an irreplaceable role in the greater world of business, government, military, and academic pursuits. In no event shall the Conference engage in any activity or take any action inconsistent with its educational purpose and mission, and nothing in this Constitution, or in the Bylaws or Regulations, shall authorize any such activity or action.

To further its educational purpose and mission, the Conference shall direct and organize interscholastic athletic competitions, conduct tournaments, and prescribe eligibility rules for contestants. The Conference shall also facilitate and assist its member institutions in maintaining intercollegiate athletic programs compatible with the highest standards of education and competitive sports. Through the orderly enactment and enforcement of legislation, the Conference aims:

- (a) To encourage sound academic practices for student-athletes;
- (b) To foster strong competition among the teams of its member institutions in a broad spectrum of amateur sports and championships;
- (c) To assure proper emphasis on the funding of athletic activities;
- (d) To stimulate good sportsmanship;
- (e) To provide leadership and a voice in the development of public attitudes toward intercollegiate sports generally; and
- (f) To address the future needs of athletics in a spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit of the member institutions and their student-athletes. *[Adopted: 6/15/06]*

CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 2

Principles for the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics

The Southeastern Conference subscribes to the principles for the conduct of intercollegiate athletics set forth in the NCAA Constitution and assists its member institutions in promoting these principles.

CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 3

SEC Membership

3.0 General Principle 3

3.1 Membership, Termination, Suspension and Dues 3

3.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLE

The Southeastern Conference is both a competitive body and a legislative body, as defined in Articles 3.02.1 and 3.02.2 of the NCAA Constitution.

3.1 MEMBERSHIP, TERMINATION, SUSPENSION

- *3.1.1 Number of Members.** The number of members of the Conference shall be set by the Chief Executive Officers. *[Revised: 5/30/91]*
- *3.1.2 Granting of Membership.** Membership may be granted by invitation of the Conference at a meeting of the Chief Executive Officers. A vote of at least three-fourths of the members is required to extend an invitation for membership. *[Revised: 5/30/91]*
[Clarified/Conformed: 6/1/11]
- *3.1.3 Suspension of Membership.** Membership may be suspended at a meeting of the Chief Executive Officers. A member may be suspended at any time by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members, either indefinitely or for a stated period, for any conduct deemed to be incompatible with membership. *[Clarified/Conformed: 6/1/11]*
- *3.1.4 Withdrawal from Membership.** A member may only withdraw from membership in the Conference after providing written notice to the President and the Commissioner of the date of its withdrawal at least two years prior to the date on which the withdrawal will be effective. The withdrawal notice must specify a withdrawal date of July 15 in the year in which the withdrawal will be effective. *[Adopted: 1/14/21]*

 - (a) A member shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the Conference if and when the member either (i) fails or refuses, or renounces its obligation, to field a team to compete in Conference football competition or basketball competition, or (ii) fails or refuses to fulfill or renounces its obligations to field teams and participate in Conference sports competitions and championships, including but not limited to its obligations under SEC Bylaws 22.1.1 or 22.1.2, as such SEC Bylaws may be renumbered or amended from time to time, or NCAA Bylaw 20.9.6, as such NCAA Bylaw may be renumbered or amended from time to time. Any determination that a deemed withdrawal has occurred shall be made by the Commissioner and shall specify the effective date of such deemed withdrawal (which date may be prior to the date of determination by the Commissioner).
 - (b) In the event that, upon request of the member deemed to have withdrawn pursuant to Section 3.1.4(a), the Commissioner determines that a failure of the member to fulfill its obligations is attributable to and caused by circumstances or events beyond the reasonable control of the member, the member shall not be deemed to have withdrawn from the Conference under Section 3.1.4(a) and the prior determination of withdrawal shall be deemed rescinded, provided that the member comes into full compliance with such obligations at such time as the Commissioner determines that the circumstances or events no longer prevent fulfillment of such obligations.
 - (c) Any member may appeal any determination of the Commissioner under this Section 3.1.4 to the Chief Executive Officers. A quorum of the Chief Executive Officers may, by a vote of a majority of all the Chief Executive Officers, reverse or modify any determination of the Commissioner. The Chief Executive Officer of a member that has failed, refused, or renounced its obligations shall be eligible to vote.
- *3.1.5 Termination of Membership.** Membership of a member may be terminated involuntarily at a meeting of the Chief Executive Officers. A vote of at least two-thirds of all the Chief Executive Officers is required to terminate membership. Any motion to terminate membership shall specify the effective date of the proposed termination. *[Revised: 1/14/21]*
- *3.1.6 Effect of Withdrawal from or Termination of Membership.** As of the effective date of the termination, withdrawal, or deemed withdrawal of a member of the Conference, such member shall not have a right to receive and will not be paid any distributions of revenue from the Conference, including but not limited to distributions pursuant to Bylaw 31. *[Adopted: 1/14/21]*

3.2 WITHDRAWAL FEE

***3.2.1 Obligation to Pay Withdrawal Fee.** A member that provides notice of withdrawal from the Conference as required by Section 3.1.4 shall pay a withdrawal fee to the Conference of \$30 million on or before the effective date of the withdrawal. *[Adopted: 1/14/21]*

***3.2.2 Additional Withdrawal Fee.** A member that withdraws from the Conference without providing notice of withdrawal as required by Section 3.1.4 shall pay a withdrawal fee of \$40 million to the Conference immediately upon providing notice of withdrawal (or if no notice is provided, as of the effective date of such withdrawal). *[Adopted: 1/14/21]*

***3.2.3 Withdrawal Fee—Member Deemed to Have Withdrawn.** A member deemed to have withdrawn from the Conference shall pay a withdrawal fee of \$45 million to the Conference immediately upon being informed that the Commissioner has determined that the member is deemed to have withdrawn. *[Adopted: 1/14/21]*

***3.2.4 Reduction of Distributions to Withdrawing Member.** The Commissioner may, at any time (including prior to the effective date of any withdrawal or deemed withdrawal), reduce any distributions otherwise payable to a member that has provided notice of withdrawal or who has been deemed to have withdrawn, including but not limited to distributions otherwise provided for in Bylaw 31, and apply such distributions to the withdrawal fee payable by the member to the Conference. *[Adopted: 1/14/21]*

CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 4

Organization

4.1 Chief Executive Officers 5

4.2 Conference Officers..... 5

4.3 Committees 6

4.4 Commissioner 6

4.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

***4.1.1 Chief Executive Officers.** The President or Chancellor of each member shall be a Chief Executive Officer of the Conference. Accordingly, there shall be one Chief Executive Officer for each member. The Chief Executive Officers shall act at the regular annual meeting of the Conference or at specially called meetings of the Conference, as set forth in Article 5. *[Clarified/Conformed/Renumbered 6/1/11]*

***4.1.2 Powers and Duties.** The Chief Executive Officers shall have plenary power and authority with respect to all affairs of the Conference of any type or nature whatsoever, subject only to any specific provisions and restrictions imposed by the Constitution and Bylaws. Without limitation, the Chief Executive Officers may: *[Revised/Clarified/Conformed/Renumbered 6/1/11]*

- (a) Take all actions specified and contemplated in Article 3, in their sole discretion.
- (b) Place on probation until the next regular annual meeting of the Conference any member that violates any provision of the Constitution, Bylaws, or other rules, regulations, legislation or policies of the Conference or of the NCAA (which probation shall be on such terms, conditions, restrictions, and pursuant to such other parameters as may be deemed appropriate under the circumstances);
- (c) Prohibit any member’s team from being recognized as Conference champion;
- (d) Prohibit any member’s team from participating in Conference sponsored games, events, meets or tournaments;
- (e) Prohibit any member’s team from participating in pre-season or post-season athletic events, including Conference championships;
- (f) Prohibit any institution from participating in the distribution of Conference funds (including funds from bowls, television or tournaments);
- (g) Impose any other penalty which they consider appropriate; and
- (h) Hear and decide appeals from decisions and actions of the Commissioner and the Executive Committee in disciplinary and enforcement matters under procedures specified in the Bylaws.

4.2 CONFERENCE OFFICERS

4.2.1 Composition. The three officers of the Conference shall be a President and a Vice-President, who shall be selected from the Chief Executive Officers, and a Secretary, who shall be a Faculty Athletics Representative. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

***4.2.2 Election/Term of Office.** The three officers shall be elected by the Chief Executive Officers at each regular annual meeting of the Conference, to take office immediately. They shall be elected to serve for a period of one year, and the President and Vice-President shall not be eligible to serve for more than two terms in succession. The Secretary shall serve unlimited terms if so elected. Each officer shall be elected from a different member institution. *[Revised: 5/30/91] [Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

4.2.3 Powers and Duties. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

4.2.3.1 President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Conference and the Executive Committee, may call a meeting of the Conference or of the Executive Committee, shall be the official representative of the Conference in all its business and other relations with persons or organizations concerning intercollegiate athletics, and, in conjunction with the Commissioner, shall take such other actions and have such other authority as shall be directed/conferred by the Conference or the Executive Committee.

4.2.3.2 Vice-President. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in the latter's absence or disability and shall assist the President in the performance of Conference business when called upon to do so.

4.2.3.3 Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Conference and the Executive Committee.

4.3 COMMITTEES

4.3.1 Executive Committee. There shall be an Executive Committee of the Conference. The members of the Executive Committee shall be the three officers of the Conference and four individuals elected at the regular annual meeting of the Conference. The four elected members shall be from different institutions and from institutions other than those of the three officers. The four elected members shall serve staggered terms of no more than three years, as determined by the Conference, with at least one member rotating off each year. One and only one of the elected members shall be a Chief Executive Officer who is not an officer of the Conference. One and only one of the elected members shall be a Director of Athletics. One and only one of the elected members shall be a Senior Woman Administrator or shall have primary responsibility for the administration of women's athletics. One and only one of the elected members shall be a Faculty Representative. *[Clarified/Conformed/Revised: 6/1/11]*

4.3.1.1 Powers and Duties. The powers and duties of the Executive Committee shall be as follows: *[Clarified/Conformed: 6/1/11]*

- (a) It shall meet at the regular annual meeting of the Conference and at other times on the call of the President or the Commissioner;
- (b) It shall fix the times and the places of the regular annual meeting of the Conference;
- (c) It shall hear and decide appeals from Adverse Actions of the Commissioner in disciplinary and enforcement matters as is provided in Bylaw 19;
- (d) Between regular annual meetings, it shall fill any vacancy which may occur in any of the three officer positions or in its own membership;
- (e) Unless the Constitution or Bylaws require action by the Chief Executive Officers, and unless a meeting of the Chief Executive Officers is called, it shall, as necessary or appropriate, approve all contracts and agreements of the Conference, authorize or ratify actions of the Commissioner and otherwise determine and direct the policy of the Conference on any matter which may arise between regular annual meetings, if such matter cannot be disposed of satisfactorily by an existing rule or precedent;
- (f) It shall approve the annual operating budget of the Conference, and shall oversee all financial and fiscal affairs of the Conference as administered by the Commissioner; and
- (g) It shall take such other actions and make such other decisions as may be specified in other provisions in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Commissioner's Regulations.

***4.3.3 Special Committees.** The Conference may create other regular or special committees from time to time. *[Clarified/Conformed/Renumbered: 6/1/11]*

***4.4 COMMISSIONER**

4.4.1 Election. The Commissioner shall be elected by a majority vote of the Chief Executive Officers at a regular or called meeting for a term not to exceed six years. *[Revised: 5/30/91] [Clarified/Conformed: 6/1/11]*

4.4.2 Authority, Duties and Responsibilities. *[Revised/Clarified/Conformed: 6/1/11]*

- (a) The Commissioner shall be responsible for and have authority for the administration and operations of the Conference;
- (b) The Commissioner shall be charged with the duty of implementing, administering and enforcing the Constitution, Bylaws, and other rules, regulations, and legislation of the Conference and the NCAA, and shall be vested with broad discretionary authority to carry out the duties of the position, including the authority to assess penalties and sanctions as contemplated and authorized in the Constitution and Bylaws;
- (c) The Commissioner shall have authority to determine whether any student-athlete is eligible for intercollegiate athletic competition, athletically-related aid, and for practice in each sport in which a member institution sponsors a varsity or junior varsity team (whether the Conference declares a Champion in that sport or not), which authority shall include the power to declare a student-athlete ineligible as a result of a violation of any of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and other

rules, regulations, and legislation of the Conference and the NCAA, as well as the power and discretion to restore the eligibility of a student-athlete;

- (d) When it comes to the attention of the Commissioner that a student-athlete may be guilty of committing a flagrant, disqualifying foul on the field of play or at a contest site, or may be guilty of any unsportsmanlike act, the Commissioner may rule the student-athlete ineligible permanently or for a fixed period, or the Commissioner may, with or without publicity, warn the student-athlete and the student-athlete's coach and member institution that, if there is a repetition of such conduct, the student-athlete could be ruled ineligible permanently;
- (e) The Commissioner is the official Conference interpreter of Constitution, Bylaws, Commissioner's Regulations, and other rules, regulations, legislation and policies of the Conference and the NCAA;
- (f) The Commissioner shall present an operating budget to the Executive Committee each year for approval and shall act as custodian of all Conference funds;
- (g) The Commissioner shall furnish each member with copies of the Constitution and Bylaws annually and shall provide to all members copies of the minutes of all meetings of the Conference and Executive Committee as soon after the meetings as may be practicable;
- (h) The Commissioner shall arrange suitable accommodations for all in-person meetings of the Conference and the Executive Committee, and attend to such other details with reference thereto as may be necessary;
- (i) With the approval of the Executive Committee, the Commissioner may appoint and employ such personnel as may be necessary to the performance of the functions of the Conference office;
- (j) The Commissioner may call meetings of the Executive Committee or, after consultation with the President, of the Conference;
- (k) The Commissioner may enter into contracts and agreements on behalf of and to bind the Conference, either in specific instances as authorized by, or pursuant to authority generally granted by, the Chief Executive Officers or the Executive Committee; and
- (l) The Commissioner shall have authority to issue such interpretations, rules, regulations, memoranda, instructions, forms and procedures as may be necessary or appropriate in the performance of these duties, and in standardizing practices of the Conference, including memoranda or guidance to provide direction and information concerning the enforcement of the Constitution, Bylaws, and rules and regulations of the Conference and of the NCAA.

4.4.3 Penalties and Sanctions. Without limitation, the Commissioner shall have the following powers and authority with respect to penalties and sanctions: *[Revised/Clarified/Conformed: 6/1/11]*

- (a) The Commissioner may impose a fine or other penalties or sanctions appropriate under the circumstances, in his or her discretion, against any member institution that violates any of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, or other rules, regulations, or legislation of the Conference or the NCAA.
- (b) The Commissioner may impose a fine or other penalties or sanctions appropriate under the circumstances, in his or her discretion, against any Athletic Director, coach, or other member of the athletics department of a member institution who violates any of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, or other rules, regulations, or legislation of the Conference or the NCAA. The penalties that the Commissioner may impose include but are not limited to, singly or in combination:
 - (1) Suspension from contests or other athletically related activities;
 - (2) Limiting coaching duties, including those related to recruiting; and
 - (3) Public or private reprimands.
- (c) The Commissioner may declare ineligible, either permanently or for such shorter period as the Commissioner in his or her discretion may determine to be appropriate, any student-athlete or prospective student-athlete who violates (or who was actively involved in a violation of) any of the provisions of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, or other rules, regulations, or legislation of the Conference or the NCAA.
- (d) The Commissioner shall impose a fine or other penalties or sanctions appropriate under the circumstances, in his or her discretion, against any staff member, sport program, or member institution who is found by the NCAA to have had impermissible recruiting contact with a student-athlete at another Conference institution. *[Adopted: 6/3/21]*
- (e) The Commissioner shall not impose the penalties/sanctions or take the actions contemplated or specified in Article 3 or in Article 4.1.2 (b) – (e), with respect to which authority is specifically reserved to the Chief Executive Officers.

CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 5

Legislative Authority and Process

5.0 General Principles..... 8

5.1 Meetings of the Conference..... 8

5.2 Meetings of the Executive Committee..... 9

5.3 Amendment and Suspension..... 9

*5.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 5.01.1 Governance.** The Conference shall be governed by the Constitution, Bylaws, and other rules, regulations, and legislation of the Conference and the NCAA.
- 5.01.2 Legislative Authority.** All sports sponsored by members of the Conference shall be subject to the applicable academic provisions of the Conference’s Constitution and Bylaws, including those sports in which the Conference does not sponsor a championship. *[Revised: 5/30/03 effective for student-athletes first entering a member institution on or after August 1, 2003]*

5.1 MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE *[Article 5.1 -- Revised/Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

- 5.1.1 Voting.** Each member of the Conference shall be entitled to one vote at meetings of the Conference; provided, however, that a member may not vote if the member is not in good standing. A vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a duly convened meeting at which a quorum is present shall constitute action of the Conference unless a supermajority vote is otherwise required by the Constitution or Bylaws. A member shall not be in good standing if the member has been suspended from membership or if a vote has been taken at which its membership has been terminated. The vote of each member shall be cast by the Chief Executive Officer who is the President or Chancellor of the member; provided, however, that a Chief Executive Officer may designate another representative of the member to attend or participate in meetings of the Conference and vote on behalf of the member. References in the Constitution and Bylaws to action or a vote of the “Conference” indicates that an action or vote of the Chief Executive Officers, or their designees, is contemplated and required. References in the Constitution and Bylaws to action being taken by the Conference indicate that action has been or shall be taken by the Chief Executive Officers, or their designees.
- 5.1.2 Regular Annual Meeting.** The Conference shall hold one regular annual meeting each calendar year. This meeting shall be held in conjunction with the spring meeting of the Directors of Athletics. The exact time and place shall be determined by the Executive Committee.
- 5.1.3 Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Conference may be held from time to time, as necessary or appropriate. Special meetings may be conducted/attended in person, by telephone/conference call, or by use of video-conferencing services if such services are arranged by the Commissioner.
- 5.1.4 Authority to Call Special Meetings.** The President or the Commissioner (acting in consultation with the President) may call a special meeting of the Conference. In addition, upon the request of the Executive Committee or upon written request of at least a majority of the Chief Executive Officers of the Conference, the Commissioner shall call a special meeting of the Conference.
- 5.1.5 Notice of Special Meetings.** The President or Commissioner, as the case may be, shall provide notice of each special meeting that is reasonable under the circumstances giving rise to the meeting. The notice shall, to the extent practicable, specify the nature of the matters to be considered at the meeting.
- 5.1.6 Quorum.** A majority of the members entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Conference.
- 5.1.7 Parliamentary Procedure.** Upon request, the parliamentary procedure of the Conference shall be governed by Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
- 5.1.8 Order of Business.** The usual order of business at regular annual meetings of the Conference shall be determined by the President in consultation with the Commissioner.
- 5.1.9 Nature of all Meetings.** All meetings of the Conference shall be transacted in executive session.

5.2 MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE *[Clarified/Conformed/Renumbered 6/1/11]*

5.2.1 Meetings of the Executive Committee. The President or the Commissioner may call a meeting of the Executive Committee. Any member of the Committee employed by a member directly interested in any matter submitted to the Committee or under consideration by it shall be disqualified to participate in consideration of or vote with respect to the matter, and it shall be the duty of the presiding officer to appoint a disinterested representative to act in place of the party disqualified.

5.2.2 Nature of Meetings of the Executive Committee. Open meetings of the Executive Committee may be held with the approval of a majority of the members of the Executive Committee, but all business of the Executive Committee shall be transacted in executive session.

5.2.3 Quorum. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of not less than four members, provided that one of the members must be a Chief Executive Officer. Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to one vote. The Executive Committee shall act in accordance with votes of a majority of its members unless a greater vote is otherwise required by the Constitution or Bylaws.

5.2.4 Notice of Meetings of the Executive Committee. The President or Commissioner, as the case may be, shall provide notice of each Executive Committee meeting that is reasonable under the circumstances giving rise to the meeting. The notice shall, to the extent practicable, specify the nature of the matters to be considered at the meeting.

5.3 AMENDMENT AND SUSPENSION [*Clarified/Conformed/Renumbered/Revised: 6/1/11*]

5.3.1 Amendment Process.

***5.3.1.1 Amendment.** The provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws may be amended only at a meeting of the Conference. All proposed amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws must be submitted to all members in writing by the Commissioner not less than 21 calendar days prior to the meeting.

***5.3.1.2 Amendment to Amendment.** A proposed amendment to a provision of the Constitution or Bylaws may be amended at any meeting.

***5.3.1.3 Voting Requirements.** An amendment (or amendment to amendment) of a dominant provision (denoted by an asterisk in the margin of the provision) requires a two-thirds vote of all of the members of the Conference in good standing, whether all of the members of the Conference are present at or participating in the meeting or not. All other amendments require a vote of a majority of all the members of the Conference in good standing, whether all the members of the Conference are present at or participating in the meeting or not.

***5.3.1.4 Effective Date.** All amendments shall become effective immediately unless a different date is specified.

Institutional Control and Responsibility

6.1 Institutional Responsibility 10

***6.1 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Chief Executive Officer of each member of the Conference is charged with full responsibility for enforcing the Constitution, Bylaws, and other rules, regulations, and legislation of the Conference and the NCAA at his or her respective member institution.

BYLAW, ARTICLE 10

Ethical Conduct

10.1 Statement of Purpose 11

10.2 Recruiting 11

10.3 Academic Integrity 11

10.4 Game Management..... 12

10.5 Sportsmanship 12

The Southeastern Conference embraces the principles of ethical conduct stated in the NCAA Manual.

10.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The members of the Southeastern Conference subscribe to the principle that intercollegiate athletics is a legitimate and important part of higher education, is regarded as a significant part of the university culture, and shall be administered and conducted in a manner consistent with the institution’s educational policies. It is the function of the Conference to encourage intercollegiate athletics on an amateur basis with effective institutional control and to establish and promote standards of personal conduct for all those who administer and participate in Conference events.

Therefore, the Conference sets forth this code to maintain intercollegiate athletics in harmony with the essential educational purposes of the institution. A spirit of mutual trust and cooperation is fundamental to the successful application of the rules of the Conference and this code of ethical behavior.

10.2 RECRUITING

- 10.2.1 Coaches shall comply with and promote compliance with all rules and regulations of the Conference and the NCAA and are accountable for the highest standards of honesty and integrity in order to provide a fair and equitable opportunity for each prospective student-athlete to make an informed and properly-considered commitment to the university of his/her choice. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*
- 10.2.2 The right of a prospective student-athlete to obtain accurate information to aid in the decision process must be respected. Thus, no coach shall provide false or misleading information, or offer inducements that are violations of the rules or regulations of their member institution, the Conference, or the NCAA. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*
- 10.2.3 Coaches and other member personnel shall advocate the positive advantages and attributes of their university and its intercollegiate athletics program and shall avoid making any derogatory statements concerning another member institution’s athletics program, facilities or educational opportunities.
- 10.2.4 Coaches shall strictly adhere to all applicable rules related to the involvement of alumni and boosters in the recruiting of prospective student-athletes.
- 10.2.5 A request by a prospective student-athlete to be subjected to no further recruitment shall be respected.

10.3 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- 10.3.1 Coaches shall only recruit prospective student-athletes who have the necessary academic background to succeed as students at his/her member institution. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*
- 10.3.2 In determining a prospective student-athlete’s initial eligibility status, each member institution shall be responsible for making every effort to assure that credentials utilized to determine eligibility are accurate and authentic. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*
- 10.3.3 Each member institution shall provide student-athletes access to sufficient academic support services and counseling to meet their academic needs. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*
- 10.3.4 Each member institution shall ensure that its coaches provide student-athletes the necessary time and resources to succeed academically in a meaningful degree program. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

10.3.5 Each coach, in conjunction with the appropriate academic authorities, shall monitor each student-athlete's academic performance to ensure satisfactory progress and timely graduation with a meaningful college degree. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

10.4 GAME MANAGEMENT

10.4.1 Each contest shall be played and administered according to the prescribed rules set forth by the Conference and the NCAA.

10.4.2 The host member institution shall ensure that the visiting team has an equal opportunity to compete successfully. The host member institution is solely responsible for providing adequate and appropriate crowd control, bench safety, access for communication and locker room security. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

10.5 SPORTSMANSHIP

10.5.1 All institutional staff members and student-athletes of a member institution, shall conduct themselves with honesty and good sportsmanship. Their behavior shall at all times reflect the standards of honor and dignity that characterize participation in the collegiate setting. For intercollegiate athletics to promote the character development of participants, to enhance the integrity of higher education and to promote civility in society, coaches, student-athletes and all others associated with these athletics programs and events should adhere to such fundamental values as honor, respect, fairness, civility, honesty and responsibility. These values should be manifest not only in athletics participation but also in the broad spectrum of activities affecting the athletics program.

It is the responsibility of each member institution to establish policies for sportsmanship and ethical conduct in intercollegiate athletics consistent with the educational mission and goals of the institution. Furthermore, member institutions are responsible for educating all constituencies about these policies on a continuing basis. *[Adopted: 6/4/0; effective 8/1/04, Revised: 6/1/18]*

10.5.2 Coaches and administrators shall refrain from public criticism of other member institutions, their staffs or players. Coaches and administrators shall also refrain from making public statements and accusations with regard to infractions concerning member institutions and their personnel. In response to questions by the media, it is appropriate to state that infractions are reported, investigated and addressed in accordance with established Conference and NCAA procedures. *[Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

10.5.3 Coaches, players and support personnel shall refrain from all public criticism of officials, which shall include making public any specific communications with the Conference office and/or officiating coordinators related to officiating. *[Revised: 6/1/07]*

10.5.4 Coaches and support personnel shall provide favorable examples in appearance, conduct, language, and sportsmanship and shall refrain from personal conduct that may incite spectators. *[Revised: 6/2/94]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 12

Amateurism

12.3 Interaction with Sports Agents 13

12.3 INTERACTION WITH SPORTS AGENTS

12.3.1 Limitation on Access. A member institution shall not issue to a sports agent regular season or postseason game credentials in any sport that provide the individual with access to the sideline, locker rooms, or any area where contact with student-athletes may be possible. *[Adopted: 6/4/04; effective 8/1/04]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 13

Recruiting

13.6 Official Visits 14

13.7 Unofficial Visits 14

13.9 Letter of Intent Programs, Financial Aid Agreements 14

13.11 Tryouts..... 14

In general, the Conference rules and regulations governing recruiting shall be the rules and regulations of the NCAA as set forth in the NCAA Manual and official interpretations thereof.

13.01 ETHICAL CONDUCT IN RECRUITING [See SEC Bylaw 10.2]

13.1 REQUIREMENTS TO RECRUIT

13.1 Requirements to Recruit – Rules Education. An institutional staff member shall not engage in on or off-campus recruiting activities until the staff member has received rules education covering applicable NCAA and SEC legislation relating to the recruitment and eligibility of prospective student-athletes. Continuing rules education must occur on an annual basis. *[Adopted: 6/3/22]*

13.6 OFFICIAL VISITS

13.6.7.5 Student Host. An individual used to host a prospective student-athlete during an official visit must be a full-time institutional staff member, a graduate assistant coach, or a current student-athlete in the prospective student-athlete’s sport. *[Adopted: 10/8/18; effective 8/1/19]*

13.6.7.5.1 Exception – Football. A student designated in a manner consistent with the institution's policy for providing campus visits or tours to prospective students in general may be used to host a football prospective student-athlete at an institution’s football stadium immediately prior to, during, and immediately following an institution’s football contest. *[Adopted: 5/31/19; effective 8/1/19]*

13.7 UNOFFICIAL VISITS

13.7.3.1.8 Student Host. An individual used to host a prospective student-athlete during an unofficial visit arranged by or involving the athletics department (e.g., contact with athletics department staff, athletics-specific tour, complimentary admission) must be a full-time institutional staff member, a graduate assistant coach, or a current student-athlete in the prospective student-athlete’s sport. *[Adopted: 10/8/18; effective 8/1/19]*

13.7.3.1.8.1 Exception – Football. A student designated in a manner consistent with the institution's policy for providing campus visits or tours to prospective students in general may be used to host a football prospective student-athlete at an institution’s football stadium immediately prior to, during, and immediately following an institution’s football contest. *[Adopted: 5/31/19; effective 8/1/19]*

13.11 TRYOUTS

13.11.1.8 Non-Scholastic Football Events. A member institution may not host, sponsor, or conduct non-scholastic football events (e.g., 7-on-7 football events) at any location, on or off campus. *[Adopted: 6/3/11; effective 8/1/11]*

Eligibility: Academic and General Requirements

14.01	General Principles.....	15
14.1	General Eligibility Requirements	15
14.2	Seasons of Competition: Five-Year Rule	17
14.3	Freshman Academic Requirements	17
14.5	Transfer Regulations.....	17

14.01 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

14.01.1 Compliance With Other NCAA and Conference Legislation. Each student-athlete of each member institution who competes in, or is on the roster of a team that competes in, intercollegiate varsity or junior varsity athletic competition must comply with the Constitution, Bylaws, and other rules, regulations, and legislation of the Conference and the NCAA applicable to his/her sport in order to be eligible for athletically-related aid, practice, or competition. *[Renumbered/Clarified/Conformed 6/1/11]*

14.1 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

14.1.1 Regular-Season and Postseason Competition. Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, regular-season and postseason eligibility rules for the Southeastern Conference are the same as the eligibility rules for NCAA championships.

14.1.2.2 Validity of Academic Credentials. Each member institution bears primary responsibility for reviewing and ensuring the validity of the NCAA Eligibility Center certification of initial eligibility and the institution’s certification of transfer eligibility for each prospective student-athlete (“PSA”) who will participate in intercollegiate competition at the institution. *[Revised: 6/5/99; Revised: 6/2/06; Revised 6/1/2007; Revised 5/31/2013; effective August 1, 2013; for student-athletes initially enrolling full-time at a collegiate institution on or after August 1, 2013; Revised 6/3/16; Revised 6/2/17; effective 8/1/17; Revised: 6/2/23]*

- (a) Each member institution must review and ensure that all academic credentials (herein the “Credentials”) supplied by a PSA to the NCAA Eligibility Center for initial eligibility certification, or to the institution for transfer eligibility certification are valid, accurate, and fairly reflect the academic abilities and qualifications of the PSA, whether the NCAA Eligibility Center challenges or specially reviews those Credentials or not. *[Revised: 6/1/11; Revised: 6/2/17 effective 8/1/17]*
- (b) Each member institution shall establish and maintain its own written policies for the review of Credentials required by subsection (a) of this Bylaw 14.1.2.2.
- (c) For PSAs who enroll at a member institution as an entering freshman with no previous full-time collegiate enrollment, even if a member institution has admitted a PSA and determined in accordance with its own process that the NCAA Eligibility Center certification of eligibility is based upon valid and accurate Credentials that fairly reflect the academic abilities and qualifications of the PSA, the member institution shall develop a special written report (the “Special Report”) in accordance with subsections (d) and (e), if: *[Revised: 6/2/17 effective 8/1/17, Revised: 6/1/18]*
 - (1) The PSA transfers or withdraws from high school in his or her senior year;
 - (2) Core courses have been taken out of sequence by the PSA;
 - (3) Revisions (other than to correct clerical errors) are made to the PSA’s transcript that raise the PSA’s grade in one or more core courses; or
 - (4) The PSA has completed more than one core course through nontraditional means (e.g., virtual high school or a correspondence course) after his or her junior year of high school. *[Revised: 6/1/18]*

- (i) An institution is not required to develop a Special Report due to Bylaw 14.1.2.2 (c)(4) if the PSA is an Early Academic Qualifier, pursuant to NCAA legislation or NCAA Eligibility Center policies.
- (d) Each Special Report shall:
 - (1) Specify which of the numbered subparagraphs of subsection (c) of this Bylaw 14.1.2.2 triggered the requirement for a Special Report;
 - (2) Attach complete and correct copies of all of the PSA's Credentials supplied to the NCAA Eligibility Center and to the SEC member institution;
 - (3) Set forth in detail the review made by the member institution to determine whether the Credentials are valid, accurate, and fairly reflect the academic abilities and qualifications of the PSA;
 - (4) Include such supporting material as is reasonably necessary and appropriate under the circumstances to establish that the PSA's Credentials are valid, accurate, and fairly reflect the academic abilities and qualifications of the PSA;
 - (5) Be created and maintained on file by the certifying institution prior to the PSA's initial participation in intercollegiate competition.
- (e) The supporting material required by subparagraph (4) of subsection (d) of this Bylaw 14.1.2.2 shall include the following, to the extent applicable:
 - (1) If the requirement for a Special Report is triggered by subparagraph 14.1.2.2(c)(1), the Special Report shall include a complete explanation of the circumstances and cause for the withdrawal or transfer, and verification that the transfer was not for the purpose of avoiding inadequate grades in core course(s) or for the purpose of securing adequate grades in core course(s) without actually meeting the academic requirements of such course(s); and
 - (2) If the requirement for a Special Report is triggered by subparagraphs 14.1.2.2(c)(2)-(4), the Special Report shall include verification that the PSA in fact properly completed and satisfied the academic requirements of all core courses and that the PSA's grades in those courses are valid, accurate, and fairly reflect the academic abilities and qualifications of the PSA.

14.1.16 Class Attendance Policies. Conference athletics departments shall establish class attendance policies for student-athletes. Each athletics department has discretion as to the nature and scope of the policy. Each athletics department shall be responsible for the supervision and enforcement of its policy, including any sanctions when the policy is violated. *[Adopted: 6/1/2007 effective 8/1/2007, Revised: 5/30/24]*

14.1.17 Disciplinary Standards. Each member institution bears primary responsibility for monitoring the behavior of its current and prospective student-athletes and for establishing appropriate disciplinary standards in accordance with this bylaw. *[Adopted: 5/29/2015]*

- (a) Each member institution shall establish and maintain policies and procedures for monitoring student conduct issues.
- (b) Each member institution shall establish and maintain appropriate disciplinary standards for current student-athletes involved in student conduct issues.

14.1.18 Serious Misconduct. A prospective student-athlete, including a transfer, who has been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to a felony involving serious misconduct, or has been subject to official school disciplinary action at any time during enrollment at any previous educational institution (excluding limited discipline applied by a sports team or temporary disciplinary action during an investigation) due to serious misconduct (as defined herein) shall not be eligible for athletically-related financial aid, practice or competition at a member institution. An institution shall conduct an appropriate inquiry into a prospective student-athlete's background that at least satisfies the Conference's minimum due diligence expectations (see Appendix B) prior to providing the prospective student-athlete athletically-related financial aid or allowing him/her to participate or compete. Incidents of serious misconduct involving an enrolled student-athlete shall not be subject to these provisions. For purposes of this provision, "serious misconduct" is defined as sexual assault, domestic violence, other forms of sexual violence, dating violence or stalking; or conduct of a nature that creates serious concerns about the safety of others. *[Adopted: 5/29/2015, Revised: 6/3/16, Revised: 6/1/18 effective 10/15/18]*

14.1.18.1 Exception – Reinstatement at Previous Institution. A transfer student-athlete who has been subject to official school disciplinary action for serious misconduct at a previous collegiate institution may be eligible for athletically-related financial aid, practice and competition at a member institution provided the individual has been reinstated without condition and has completed a minimum of one academic year since reinstatement at the previous institution. *[Adopted: 6/2/23]*

14.2 SEASONS OF COMPETITION: FIVE-YEAR RULE

14.2.4 Hardship Waiver. In accordance with NCAA Bylaw 12.8.4, upon application to the Commissioner by a member institution, a student-athlete may be granted an additional year of varsity competition in accordance with the NCAA hardship rule. An application for hardship must be endorsed by the team physician, trainer and the Director of Athletics (or by a person acting for the Director of Athletics as his or her designee).

14.3 FRESHMAN ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

14.3.2 Eligibility for Financial Aid, Practice and Competition.

14.3.2.1 Non-Qualifiers *[Revised: 6/1/96 effective June 1, 1997 for those student-athletes first entering a member institution on or after Fall semester/quarter, 1997; Revised: 6/1/08; effective 8/1/2008; Revised: 6/1/95; Revised: 6/1/2008; effective 8/1/2008; Revised: 6/2/23, Revised: 5/29/25]*

- (a) A limited number (see limits in subsection 14.3.2.1(b) below) of student-athletes who enroll at a member institution as freshmen as a non-qualifier (as defined by NCAA Bylaw 14.3.2.1) may become eligible for athletically-related financial aid, practice, and competition after their freshman year, provided the student-athlete presents an average high school GPA of at least 2.0 (as confirmed and certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center) in at least twelve core courses.
- (c) There shall be an annual limit on the number of student-athletes who are non-qualifiers and who may become eligible after their freshman year for athletically-related financial aid, practice, and competition at a member institution. The limits, which are applied on an annual basis with no carry-over of unused numbers to following years, are set forth as follows: *[Adopted: 6/5/99; Revised: 5/30/03; Revised: 6/1/08; effective 8/1/2008]*
 - 1. For men's sports a total of four non-qualifiers enrolled in a particular academic year may become eligible to receive athletically-related financial aid, or for practice or competition. Of these four, no more than two are permitted to become eligible in football, and no more than one may become eligible in any other sport.
 - 2. For women's sports, a total of four non-qualifiers enrolled in a particular academic year may become eligible to receive athletically-related financial aid, or for practice or competition. Of these four, no more than one may become eligible in any one sport. *[Revised: 5/30/03 effective 8/1/2003]*

14.5 TRANSFER REGULATIONS

14.5.4 Two-Year College Transfers.

14.5.4.2 Non-qualifiers. A non-qualifier, who initially enrolls at a two-year college and transfers to a member institution, shall not be eligible for competition during the individual's initial academic year in residence unless each of the following requirements have been met: *[Revised: 6/3/93; Revised: 6/1/08; Revised: 6/1/12, Revised: 6/3/21]*

- (a) Attended the two-year college that granted the Associate or equivalent degree as a full-time student for the last three semesters or four quarters immediately prior to graduation from the institution granting the two-year degree (excluding summer terms); *[Revised: 6/1/02]*
- (b) Correspondence, extension and distance learning courses used to fulfill the transferable English, Math and/or Science (when applicable) requirements of NCAA Bylaw 14.5.4.2, may only be completed at a two-year college where the individual is enrolled as a full-time student in pursuit of an Associate or equivalent degree.

14.5.5 Four-Year College Transfers.

14.5.5.1 Transferring within the Southeastern Conference. A transfer student, including a graduate transfer, from a member institution may be eligible for intercollegiate competition during the individual's initial academic year in residence at another member institution provided the student provides written notification of transfer to the institution within their sport's regular NCAA transfer window immediately following the sport's championship segment (see, NCAA Bylaw 13.1.1.3.1) *[Revised: 6/2/00; effective 8/1/2001; Revised: 6/1/08; Revised 6/3/21, effective 10/1/21, Revised: 6/2/23, effective 10/1/23]*

14.5.5.1.1 Exception - Head Coach Departure. A student-athlete may initiate notification of transfer during a 30 consecutive-day period beginning the day after the head coach of the student-athlete's team departs or announces departure from the institution. *[Adopted: 6/2/23, effective 10/1/23]*

14.5.7 Waivers. Prospective student-athletes with education impacting disabilities are subject to and must satisfy the eligibility standards set forth in this Bylaw 14.5; provided, however, that (i) in satisfying such standards, such students may take advantage of any applicable NCAA or SEC Bylaws that have the purpose or effect of providing reasonable accommodation to individuals with education impacting disabilities, and (ii) the Commissioner may waive or modify the standards in this Bylaw 14.5, in his or her sole discretion, if and as necessary or appropriate to comply with applicable laws or regulations. [*Adopted: 6/1/08; effective 8/1/2008*] [*Renumbered 6/1/11*]

Financial Aid

15.01 General Principles..... 19

15.01 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

15.01.1 Institutional Financial Aid Permitted. Any scholarship or financial aid to a student-athlete must be awarded in accordance with all NCAA and Conference regulations. Full records detailing the source and distribution of all financial aid awarded to student-athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics shall be kept for a minimum of seven years.

15.01.2 Eligibility of Student-Athletes for Institutional Financial Aid. Each member institution must have student-athletes receiving athletic aid execute either the official Conference Financial Aid Agreement, as provided by the Conference office, or an institutional financial aid form that provides full and complete disclosure of the terms pursuant to which the aid shall be awarded to ensure each student-athlete is fully and properly informed of the terms of the grant-in-aid. A student-athlete who has signed an SEC Financial Aid Agreement with a member institution and is eligible to receive the athletic scholarship on the institution’s first day of classes of the academic year specified on the financial aid agreement, but who does not enter that institution or who does enter and withdraws from that institution before fully completing-his/her first semester or quarter (except when the recipient of an athletic scholarship award enters military service before enrolling in the awarding institution and remains in military service for a period of eighteen months or more), shall not be eligible to receive an athletics grant-in-aid during the student-athlete’s first two years in residence at the second Conference institution. *[Revised: 6/2/06; effective 8/1/2006]*

15.01.2.1 Release from SEC Financial Aid Agreement. An individual who has requested and received a release from a signed SEC Financial Aid Agreement as approved by the Director of Athletics at the signing Conference institution shall no longer be subject to the terms of Bylaw 15.01.2 or the SEC Financial Aid Agreement. *[Adopted: 6/1/18]*

Awards, Benefits, and Expenses for Enrolled Student-Athletes

16.2 Complimentary Admissions and Ticket Benefits 20

16.2 COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSIONS AND TICKET BENEFITS

16.2.1 Permissible Procedures.

16.2.1.1 Institutional Events in the Student-Athlete’s Sport.

16.2.1.1.2 Exceptions – SEC Championships, NCAA Championships and Bowl Games. Complimentary admissions for an SEC Championship, NCAA Championship or Bowl Game shall be provided only through a pass list for individuals designated by the student-athlete. Member institutions may provide six complimentary admissions to each individual listed as a member of the official traveling squad for an SEC Championship, NCAA Championship or Bowl Game. No more than two admissions may be provided to non-traveling members of the squad. [*Revised: 5/30/03; effective August 1, 2003; Revised: 6/4/2010; effective 8/1/2010*]

Playing and Practice Seasons

17.1	General Playing-Season Regulations.....	21
17.2	Roster Limits	21

17.1 GENERAL PLAYING-SEASON REGULATIONS

17.1.9 Southeastern Conference Limitation on Practice, Playing Season, Number of Contests and Squad Sizes. Practice, playing seasons, number of contests and squad sizes are governed by the following: [*Revised: 5/31/2013; effective 8/1/2013*]

- (a) In sports regulated by the Conference, limitations on practice, playing seasons, maximum contests, championships and tournaments, and squad sizes (home and travel) shall be governed by the Commissioner’s Regulations and any modifications to such limitations shall be reported at the next regular meeting of the Chief Executive Officers; [*Revised: 5/29/15*]
- (b) An institution shall not schedule contests of any kind during a period beginning with the first scheduled final exam through the last scheduled final exam. This bylaw does not apply to games scheduled by the Conference; [*Adopted: 6/4/04*]
- (c) In the sport of football, all practices, including intra-squad games, must be held on campus, or in the immediate campus community, except that this restriction does not apply to: (1) practices held in conjunction with postseason games or regular in-season games to be played away from home; or (2) spring practices and spring games held in a facility used at least twice during the applicable academic year for regular season home competition.

17.2 ROSTER LIMITS

17.2.1 Roster Limits. An institution shall annually be limited to a total roster number in each sport as prescribed below. Any sport not referenced shall be subject to the established national roster limit: [*Adopted: 7/17/25*]

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| (a) Men’s Cross Country | 10 |
| (b) Men’s Golf | 8 |
| (c) Men’s Gymnastics | 17 |
| (d) Men’s Soccer | 26 |
| (e) Men’s Swimming | 22 |
| (f) Men’s Tennis | 9 |
| (g) Men’s Track & Field (Indoor) | 35 |
| (h) Men’s Track & Field (Outdoor) | 35 |

17.2.1.1 Application and Exceptions. Unless expressly stated otherwise, Conference roster limits shall be applied in accordance with corresponding NCAA rules on roster limits (see NCAA Bylaw 17.2)

17.2.1.2 Roster Changes. An institution may not add an athlete to its designated roster (including by replacement) from the team’s first contest or date of competition of the championship segment through the end of the team’s championship season. [*Adopted: 4/2/26*]

17.2.1.2.1 Exception – Previously Enrolled Student. An institution may add an athlete to its roster during an ongoing playing season provided the institution has not reached the roster limit in the applicable sport and the athlete was enrolled in a minimum full-time program of studies at the certifying institution as of the team’s first contest date. [*Adopted: 4/2/26*]

Championships and Tournaments

18.8 Southeastern Conference Championships and Tournaments..... 22

18.8 SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS AND TOURNAMENTS

- 18.8.1 General Regulations.** Conference championships and tournaments are subject to the following:
- (a) Unless otherwise specified in the sections dealing with individual sports, Conference championships and tournaments shall be held in accordance with the Commissioner’s Regulations for each sport;
 - (b) Institutions participating shall assume full financial responsibilities;
 - (c) It shall be the duty of the Conference member or members to which championships or tournaments are awarded to make all local arrangements for conducting the championships or tournaments. The host institution shall keep a complete record of the contest and report to the Conference office;
 - (d) All Conference championships and tournaments shall be open to only Conference teams;
 - (e) In the sports of football, baseball, men’s and women’s basketball, gymnastics and soccer, a detailed financial report shall be made to the Conference office. In all other championships and tournaments that are administered by a member institution, the host institution will assume full financial responsibilities and file a financial report with the Conference office; *[Revised: 6/3/93]*
 - (f) The Conference office will provide trophies and awards for all sports in accordance with the Commissioner’s Regulations governing each sport;
 - (g) All Conference championships shall be scheduled during a time period that does not conflict with the final examination periods of any member institution. A waiver of this bylaw shall be granted only upon the majority approval of the Executive Committee; and *[Revised: 6/1/96]*
 - (h) All rules regarding selection of participants and seeding for the Conference championships shall be included in the Commissioner’s Regulations for each sport. *[Adopted: 6/1/02] [Clarified 6/1/11]*

Compliance and Enforcement

19.8	Southeastern Conference Compliance Program	23
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19.8 SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

19.8.1 General Provisions

19.8.1.1 General Principles. The primary objective of the Conference compliance program is to help member institutions achieve compliance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and other rules, regulations, and legislation of the Conference and the NCAA (referred to collectively in this Article 19 as the “Rules”) primarily through the exercise of educational programs and monitoring procedures. Although a compliance program provides no guarantees of avoiding violations, it can help to ensure that problems that arise remain limited in scope and place the member institution in a better position to take appropriate self-corrective measures.

It is the goal of the Conference compliance program to eradicate willful violations of the Rules and to reduce, as much as possible, inadvertent violations of the Rules. To achieve that end, the Conference will provide support services as appropriate to assist institutional staff members at member institutions in achieving a working knowledge of the Rules. The Conference will also define standards of expected conduct and consequences for failure to comply with the Rules. It should be emphasized that the provision of technical support and other resources by the Conference office does not relieve the member institutions from responsibility for Rules enforcement and compliance. It is the obligation of each member institution to enforce and comply with the Rules.

Absent Conference approval to make a submission directly to the NCAA, member institutions shall submit all requests for interpretations of NCAA rules and regulations to the NCAA through the Commissioner’s office.

19.8.1.2 Hiring Practices. Member institutions shall exercise best efforts to hire individuals committed to rules compliance. In connection with this requirement, member institutions shall thoroughly evaluate an individual’s record of rules compliance prior to employing an individual in any coaching or noncoaching position with sport-specific responsibilities. Where a member institution considers hiring an individual who has engaged in unethical conduct as defined under NCAA Bylaws or who has participated in activity that resulted, or may result, in a Level I, Level II or major infraction, the President or Chancellor of that member institution shall be notified by the athletics department prior to the individual being employed by the institution.

Each member institution must include in each contract with every athletic director, coach, senior woman administrator, and other employee of its athletic department a specific provision obligating the employee to comply with the Rules and specifying that the employee agrees to be bound by and will comply with the enforcement, penalty, and other disciplinary provisions and procedures of the NCAA and of the Conference, including but not limited to the provisions of Article 4 of the Constitution and of this Bylaw 19.8. *[Revised: 6/2/17, Revised 5/30/24]*

19.8.2 Enforcement and Compliance Procedures

19.8.2.1 Reports of Alleged Violations.

- (a) Each member institution, and all employees of the member institution, shall comply with procedures developed and published by the Commissioner, with approval of the Chief Executive Officers, as such procedures shall be revised from time to time, concerning reporting violations and alleged violations of the Rules to the Conference. In compliance with and if required to do so by such procedures, a member institution associated with any violation or alleged violation of the Rules must furnish report(s), including a full and complete final report, concerning such violation or alleged violation (and of any required investigation relating thereto) to the Commissioner.
- (b) Each member institution shall comply with procedures developed and published by the Commissioner, with approval of the Chief Executive Officers, as such procedures shall be revised from time to time, concerning reporting violations and alleged violations of the Rules to the NCAA.
- (c) The Conference office shall not conduct its own investigations but may recommend, among other options, outside resources to work with a member institution in developing necessary information.

19.8.2.2 Action by the Commissioner.

- (a) Upon receipt of the final report required by Bylaw 19.8.2.1(a), the Commissioner shall determine:
 - (1) If the member institution conducted a thorough investigation;
 - (2) If the determination made by the member institution is consistent with the information developed in its review of the allegations;
 - (3) If the information substantiates that a violation of the Rules has occurred; and,
 - (4) What, if any, penalties or sanctions should be imposed by the Conference, and whether any student-athlete should be suspended or ruled ineligible.
- (b) If the Commissioner determines that penalties or sanctions should be imposed or that a student-athlete should be suspended or ruled ineligible, the Commissioner shall proceed to impose the penalties or sanctions, or issue notice that the student-athlete is suspended or ineligible, as authorized by and provided in Article 4 of the Constitution.
- (c) The Commissioner, in his or her discretion, may postpone or decline to take action pending or subsequent to completion of an NCAA investigation and/or pending a decision by the NCAA concerning imposition of penalties or sanctions or determination of eligibility.

19.8.2.3 Reinstatement of Eligibility.

- (a) A student-athlete, or the member at which a student-athlete is enrolled, may petition the Commissioner to reinstate the student-athlete's eligibility.
- (b) The Commissioner may, in his or her discretion, restore a student-athlete's eligibility if, under all the facts and circumstances, the Commissioner concludes that reinstatement is appropriate.

19.8.2.4 Appeals.

19.8.2.4.1 Unless the Commissioner in his or her discretion stays or delays the effective date, all penalties, sanctions, eligibility determinations, and other enforcement or eligibility decisions or actions of the Commissioner shall become effective immediately upon notification to (i) the Athletic Director and the Chief Executive Officer of the member institution involved, and (ii) any student-athlete, coach, or other athletic department representative or employee affected thereby.

19.8.2.4.2 A member institution and any student-athlete, coach, or other athletic department representative or employee affected by a penalty, sanction, adverse eligibility determination, reinstatement determination, or other adverse enforcement or eligibility decision or action (all referred to collectively in the Constitution and Bylaws as an "Adverse Action") has the right to appeal the decision of the Commissioner to the Executive Committee and to further appeal any decision of the Executive Committee to the Conference (*i.e.*, to the Chief Executive Officers).

19.8.2.4.3 To appeal from an Adverse Action of the Commissioner as provided in Bylaw 19.8.2.4.2, the member institution or individual pursuing the appeal must:

- (a) Submit a written notice of intent to appeal to the Commissioner within five calendar days after the date on which the Commissioner notifies the appellant of the Adverse Action; and
- (b) Submit to the Commissioner (for distribution to the Executive Committee), within ten calendar days after submission of the written notice of intent to appeal, any written statements, documents, or other evidence or materials that the appellant wants the Executive Committee to consider.

Unless good cause exists for denying or limiting an extension, the Commissioner, upon request, may extend, for no more than twenty calendar days, the time for submission of any written statements, documents, or other evidence or materials that the appellant wants the Executive Committee to consider.

19.8.2.4.4 To appeal from a decision of the Executive Committee as provided in Bylaw 19.8.2.4.2, the member institution or individual pursuing the appeal must:

- (a) Submit a written notice of intent to appeal to the Commissioner within five calendar days after the date on which the appellant receives the decision of the Executive Committee; and
- (b) Submit to the Commissioner (for distribution to the Chief Executive Officers), within ten calendar days after submission of the written notice of intent to appeal the decision of the Executive Committee, any written statements, documents, or other evidence or materials that the appellant wants the Chief Executive Officers to consider.

Unless good cause exists for denying or limiting an extension, the Commissioner, upon request, may extend, for no more than twenty calendar days, the time for submission of any written statements, documents, or other evidence or materials that the appellant wants the Executive Committee to consider.

19.8.2.4.5 The Executive Committee and the Chief Executive Officers shall resolve appeals after considering the submissions of the appellant and after considering any submissions or information provided by the Commissioner, either upon his or her own initiative or upon request.

19.8.2.4.6 Unless the Commissioner in his or her discretion stays or delays the effective date after receiving notice of an appeal, any penalty, sanction, adverse eligibility determination, or other adverse enforcement or eligibility decision or action shall continue in effect pending appeals.

19.8.2.5 Compliance Reviews and Legislative Services.

- (a) The Conference office may conduct compliance reviews of member institutions. Each member institution must file a written response with the Conference office following receipt and review of a compliance review report. This written response shall address the issues identified in the report and will be required for submission to the Commissioner within 90 calendar days of receiving the report.
- (b) The Conference office will provide legislative services, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Rules interpretations;
 - (2) Distribution of written legislative interpretation updates as well as other rules education materials;
 - (3) On-campus educational presentations to coaches and administrators; and
 - (4) Education seminars and programs, as necessary.

Member institutions should be aware that Conference office interpretations of the NCAA's Bylaws, and other rules, regulations, and legislation of the NCAA, are not binding upon the NCAA.

[Article 19 was substantially revised on 6/1/11 to conform to practices and procedures previously adopted by the Conference.]

Committees, Meetings, Events

21.8	Coaches’ Meetings and Other Events	26
21.9	Sports Committees.....	26

21.8 COACHES’ MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS

21.8.1 Attendance. Each head coach in the Southeastern Conference is required to attend the following to the extent applicable to their sport:

- (a) Annual Coaches’ Meeting;
- (b) Winter Meeting of Head Football Coaches;
- (c) Press Conferences at Conference Championships;
- (d) Coaches Luncheon at SEC Football Championship; and
- (e) Conference Media Day Event.

21.8.2 Penalty. Should a coach not attend any of the events listed above, without the prior approval of the Commissioner, his or her member institution shall pay a \$10,000 fine to the Conference. *[Adopted: 6/4/04; Revised: 5/29/09; effective 8/1/2009; Renumbered, Relocated and Clarified 6/1/11]*

21.9 SPORTS COMMITTEES

21.9.20 Southeastern Conference Sports Committees. Men’s and women’s sports committees are subject to the following:

- (a) There shall be a sports committee for each men’s and each women’s sport sponsored by the Conference. The committee shall be composed of the head coaches of each institution sponsoring the sport. The chair of the committee will be selected pursuant to the policies outlined in the Commissioner’s Regulations for each sport. *[Revised: 6/1/95]*
- (b) The sports committees make recommendations to the Athletic Directors and/or Senior Woman Administrators on all aspects of their sport; and
- (c) The format and site of all coaches’ meetings are to be determined by the Conference office, and each institution shall be represented by only the head coach. No alternative representation shall be permitted absent prior approval of the Commissioner. In track where there are two coaches, one representing men’s teams and one representing women’s teams, each institution shall be represented by at least one head coach. Additionally, in swimming, the diving coach of the host institution for the subsequent year’s championship may attend the meeting. *[Revised: 6/5/99]*

Media and Related Agreements

22.1 Media and Related Agreements..... 27

22.1 MEDIA AND RELATED AGREEMENTS

- *22.1.1 Conference Agreements Govern.** Each member shall include provisions in each of its television, media, internet and digital rights agreements specifying that the member’s agreements are subject and subordinate to all past, present, and future television, media, internet and digital rights agreements to which the Conference is or becomes a party, and further specifying that if any provision in the member’s agreement is inconsistent or conflicts with any Conference agreement, the Conference agreement shall supersede the provision in the member’s agreement, such that the superseded provision shall be of no effect to the extent of any such inconsistency or conflict. [*Clarified 6/1/11, Revised; 1/14/21*]
- *22.1.2 Games and Telecasts.** Each member must fully conform to and comply with all current broadcast guidelines and broadcast agreements of the Conference. [*Moved and Clarified 6/1/11, Revised; 1/14/21*]
- *22.1.3 Football Video.** No member of the Conference shall make video recordings of football teams of other members except in games in which the member’s team is participating. [*Moved and Clarified 6/1/11, Revised; 1/14/21*]

People, Culture, and Community Initiatives

23.1 People, Culture, and Community Initiatives..... 28

23.1 PEOPLE, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

23.1.1 Athletics Leadership Roles at Member Institutions. It is the expectation of the Conference that its member institutions shall work proactively to support initiatives, practices, and training that enhance individual campus environments and the Conference as a whole and employ thoughtful hiring practices for leadership positions within their athletics departments. Member institutions must employ intentional efforts to identify and consider the most qualified individuals for leadership roles to recruit and retain the best candidates for such roles. Such candidates may be from historically underrepresented groups who may be outside the professional, social, and societal networks of those frequently making hiring decisions on behalf of member institutions. *[Adopted: 6/3/21; Revised: 3/13/25]*

23.1.2 Consultation with Commissioner. Although employment decisions for member institutions will not be and should not be made by the Conference office, in order to further and ensure appropriate attention to the policies and goals set forth explicitly and implicitly in this Bylaw Article 23, prior to commencing a search for the positions of athletics director, head coach, and SWA, each member institution shall contact the Commissioner (or, if the Commissioner so directs, a specified Associate Commissioner with respect to head coach positions) to discuss and address the efforts employed to identify the best talent for the position. *[Adopted: 6/3/21; Revised: 3/13/25]*

23.1.3 Annual Training and Education. The Commissioner shall develop and implement an annual training and education program for the athletics directors and senior staff of member institutions concerning and addressing people, culture, and community in athletics, such as best practices for improving hiring and retention of talent. The Commissioner shall, as appropriate, identify and retain consultants to provide guidance concerning such program and to provide training and education and shall provide updates to the Chief Executive Officers concerning the consultants retained and the implementation of the training and education program. *[Adopted: 6/3/21; Revised: 3/13/25]*

23.1.4 Leadership Development Program. The Commissioner shall develop and implement a leadership development program specifically focused on providing participants with networking and mentoring opportunities, and other developmental opportunities to facilitate the creation of a larger pool of candidates to strengthen the pipeline for future leadership roles in the athletics department at member institutions. *[Adopted: 6/3/21; Revised: 3/13/25]*

23.1.5 Other Initiatives. The Commissioner may implement other initiatives and measures to promote people, culture, and community in athletics and across all sports at Conference member institutions under the direction of the Chief Executive Officers. *[Adopted: 6/3/21]*

Administrative Regulations

30.20	Officiating.....	29
30.22	Provisions and Standards for Conference Sports.....	29

30.20 OFFICIATING

30.20.1 Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball and Volleyball Officiating.

30.20.1.1 Compensation of Officials for Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball and Volleyball. The Athletic Directors will set the travel expenses and the maximum fees for officials for Conference varsity baseball, basketball, soccer, and softball and volleyball games and for regular-season football games. *[Revised: 6/1/01]*

30.20.1.2 Approval, Evaluation and Assignment of Officials. The retention and assignment of baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball and volleyball officials shall be under the control of the Commissioner. The official records, assignments, and all reports on officiating and officials shall be kept in the Conference office. The coordinators of baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball and volleyball officials shall be appointed by and under the direction of the Commissioner. The coordinators shall provide information concerning rule interpretations and mechanics of officiating; and approve, assign and evaluate officials for these sports. *[Revised: 6/1/01]*

30.20.1.3 Commissioner’s Regulations for Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball and Volleyball Officiating. The Commissioner shall publish and keep current the Commissioner’s Regulations for baseball, men’s and women’s basketball, football, soccer, softball and volleyball officiating in the Southeastern Conference. After approval by the Athletic Directors, these regulations shall establish the procedures for officiating the aforementioned sports. Recommendations for revisions shall be received by the Commissioner from the officials, the coaches and other institutional representatives. No substantive revisions, however, shall become effective until approved by the Athletic Directors. *[Revised: 6/1/01]*

30.20.2 Officiating for Sports Other than Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball and Volleyball.

30.20.2.1 Regular-Season Competition. The approval and assignment of officials for regular-season competition of all sports, other than baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball and volleyball shall be the responsibility of the host institution. *[Revised: 6/1/01]*

30.20.2.2 Conference Championships. The approval and assignment of officials for Conference championships and tournaments shall be coordinated between the responsible coaches’ committee and the host institution. Final approval for the assignment and selection of the officials for these championships and tournaments must be received from the Commissioner’s office.

30.22 PROVISIONS AND STANDARDS FOR CONFERENCE SPORTS

30.22.1 General Information.

30.22.1.1 Regulated Sports. At least one-fourth (25%) of the member institutions of the Conference must sponsor teams in a sport for that sport to be regulated by the Conference and for a Conference champion to be declared. The sports currently regulated by the Conference are: Men’s sports--baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, indoor track, outdoor track, swimming and tennis; Women’s sports--basketball, cross country, equestrian, golf, gymnastics, rowing, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, indoor track, outdoor track, and volleyball. *[Revised: 6/1/12]*

30.22.1.2 Varsity and Junior-Varsity Sports. Varsity and junior-varsity sports must satisfy the following:

- (a) Varsity and junior-varsity teams in all sports may be composed of freshmen and/or upper-classmen;
- (b) A student-athlete who participates on a team of one classification may not participate on a team of a different classification on the same day; and
- (c) An institution shall organize no more than one freshman or junior varsity team in any given sport.

30.22.1.3 Conference Championships. Conference championships are subject to the following:

- (a) A Conference champion shall be determined annually in each of the sports listed in Bylaw 30.22.1.1. The method of determining the Conference champion for each of these sports shall be provided for in the Commissioner’s Regulations of

each sport. When two institutions tie for a championship and no championship play-off is held, these institutions shall be declared co-champions; and

- (b) A member institution's team or teams, prohibited by the Conference or the NCAA from participating in postseason competition in a given sport, shall not be eligible for a Conference championship and participation in a Conference season-ending event (e.g., game, tournament, meet) in that sport for the duration of this prohibition. *[Revised: 6/1/12]*

30.22.1.4 Athletes-of-the-Year, Scholar-Athletes-of-the-Year and Community Service Leaders of the Year.

- (a) **Male and Female, Roy F. Kramer Athlete-of-the-Year Awards.** There shall be an award for the SEC Male and Female Athlete-of-the-Year. Each institution's Athletic Director will submit one nomination for each award. Each Athletic Director will receive one ballot for the male and one ballot for the female athlete-of-the-year. Each institution will cast one ballot for the male and one ballot for the female and will not be allowed to vote for its own nominee. The Conference shall pay travel expenses for each Roy F. Kramer Athlete-of-the-Year award recipient and two members of each award recipient's family to attend the award presentation held in conjunction with the SEC Football Championship. *[Revised: 6/3/05]*
- (b) **Male and Female, H. Boyd McWhorter Scholar Athlete-of-the-Year.** There shall be a postgraduate scholarship award for the SEC Male and Female Scholar-Athlete-of-the-Year. Each institution shall nominate one male and one female student-athlete for the award, with the ultimate selection of the two winners being made by the Faculty Athletics Representative Selection Committee. Thirty additional awards, entitled SEC Postgraduate Scholarship Awards, shall be given each academic year to the institutional nominees not selected as the SEC Male and Female Scholar-Athlete-of-the-Year. The SEC Male and Female Scholar-Athlete-of-the-Year shall each be awarded a \$20,000 scholarship. The SEC Postgraduate Scholarship Award recipients shall each receive a \$10,000 scholarship. The Conference shall pay travel expenses for each H. Boyd McWhorter Scholar Athlete-of-the-Year award recipient and two members of each award recipient's family to attend the award presentation held in conjunction with the Conference annual meetings. *[Revised: 6/3/05; Revised: 5/29/98 effective June 1, 1998; Revised 6/2/17]*
- (c) **Male and Female, Brad Davis Community Service Leaders of the Year.** There shall be a postgraduate scholarship award for the SEC Male and Female Community Service Leaders of the Year who demonstrate the most outstanding and meritorious community service achievements during their entire college careers. Each institution shall nominate one male and one female student-athlete for the award, with the ultimate selection of the two winners being made by the Faculty Athletics Representatives Selection Committee. Thirty additional awards shall be given each academic year to the institutional nominees not selected as the SEC Brad Davis Community Service Leaders of the Year. The Male and Female SEC Brad Davis Community Service Leaders of the Year shall each receive a \$15,000 scholarship. The Community Service Scholarship recipients shall each receive a \$7,500 scholarship. The Conference shall pay travel expenses for each Brad Davis Community Service Leader of the Year award recipient and two members of each award recipient's family to attend the award presentation held in conjunction with the Conference annual meetings. *[Revised: 6/1/01; Revised: 6/3/05; Revised: 6/3/11; effective 8/1/11; Revised: 6/3/22]*
- (d) **Michael L. Slive Distinguished Service Award.** Awarded on special occasions when an outstanding candidate(s) emerges, the Michael L. Slive Distinguished Service Award will be recognized as one of the Conference's most prestigious honors. The recipient, a former student-athlete, coach, graduate or administrator of a member institution or the Conference office, must be a person of exemplary character and outstanding accomplishment who has maintained a lifetime of interest in college athletics and who, over a significant period of time, has exhibited superior leadership qualities and made a significant impact to the betterment of the mission of the Southeastern Conference. Administrative groups associated with the Conference, such as Presidents and Chancellors, Faculty Athletics Representatives, Athletics Directors, and Senior Woman Administrators, as well as individuals, such as former recipients, coaches, administrators, and other campus leaders may provide nominations to the Commissioner. Selection of the recipient shall be made by unanimous approval of a special five-member committee appointed by the Commissioner. The award shall be presented to deserving candidates at the Conference annual meetings. *[Revised: 12/13/16]*

30.22.1.5 Playing Conditions. Playing conditions at Conference contests are governed by the SEC Game Management Manual and by the following:

- (a) The host institution is charged with the responsibility of providing satisfactory playing conditions, providing the best possible protection for the public and officials, and using its facilities for producing an atmosphere of good sportsmanship. The Commissioner will periodically distribute information regarding crowd-control procedures;
- (b) Contests televised under Conference television contracts shall have game times established in accordance with those contracts. For all other contests, except as noted in the Commissioner's Regulations, the host institution shall set the starting times of contests and so notify the visiting team well in advance;

- (c) At football games, artificial noise makers shall not be brought into or used in any sports venue during games between member institutions, other than contests played on the campus of an institution with a traditional institutional noise maker. Each institution should have statements printed on tickets and notices to the effect that such noisemakers will not be permitted inside its competition areas. Penalties for violations of this provision are set forth in the Commissioner's Regulations; *[Revised: 6/1/02; Revised: 6/4/2010; Effective 6/4/2010; Revised: 6/1/12; Revised: 5/29/15]*
- (d) At football games the use of amplifiers, microphones, and megaphones shall be restricted to the cheerleaders of the institutions participating, directed only toward the stands and shall not be used from the time the offensive center puts a hand on the football until the football has been snapped. Additionally, the use of institutionally controlled computerized sound systems (including music), institutionally controlled artificial noisemakers and any traditional institutional noise maker shall not play from the time the offensive center puts a hand on the football until the officials whistle the play dead. Bands shall not play from the time the offensive center puts a hand on the football until the football has been snapped. In no case may music be played which may be construed to be derogatory toward the visiting team or the game officials. Physical distractions (e.g., artificial noisemakers, portable amplifiers or the main stadium public address) shall not be used by cheerleaders while either team is on the field (warm-ups or competition). An institution shall submit to the Commissioner an annual use plan explaining how traditional institutional noise makers shall be governed to ensure compliance with SEC Bylaw 30.22.1.5 (d). Penalties for use of traditional institutional noise makers in violation of this provision or failure to adhere to the institution's management plan for traditional institutional noise makers shall be set forth in the Commissioner's Regulations governing the sport of football; and *[Revised: 6/4/2010 effective 6/4/2010, Revised: 6/1/12, Revised: 5/30/14 effective 8/1/14, Revised: 6/1/18]*
- (e) In sports other than football, the use of artificial noisemakers shall be governed by the Commissioner's Regulations for each sport. Penalties for violations of this provision are also set forth in the Commissioner's Regulations for each sport. *[Revised: 5/29/15]*

ADMINISTRATIVE BYLAW, ARTICLE 31

Executive Regulations

31.10 Payment of Debt Service 32

31.20 Revenue Distribution - Basketball..... 32

31.21 Revenue Distribution - Football 32

31.22 Revenue Distribution - Baseball..... 34

31.23 Revenue Distribution - All Other Sports 34

31.24 Distribution of NCAA Sport Sponsorship and Grants-in-Aid Funds 34

31.25 Distribution of NCAA Academic Values-Based Revenue Funds 34

31.26 Automatic Restriction against Participation in Distribution of Conference Funds..... 35

31.3 Distribution of Funds..... 35

The Southeastern Conference Executive Committee has issued the following policy statement relative to these revenues: All basketball and football revenues received by the member institutions which are to be sent to the Conference office for further distribution should be received in the Conference office within 40 calendar days of receipt by the institution or by April 1 whichever is earlier. Any such revenue received after April 1 shall be remitted within 10 calendar days after receipt by the institution.

*31.10 PAYMENT OF DEBT SERVICE

31.10.1 Payment of Debt Service. Before any revenues of the Conference are allocated and distributed as otherwise provided in this Bylaw, the Commissioner shall make provision for payment of principal, interest, fees and any other amounts payable with respect to any outstanding indebtedness of the Conference when and as such amounts become due. The Conference shall make provision for such debt service amounts first from the revenues received by the Conference under its media agreements (allocated among the media agreements and sports as determined by the Commissioner), and if the revenues from the media agreements are not sufficient, from other revenues of the Conference as determined by the Commissioner. *[Adopted: 1/14/21]*

31.20 REVENUE DISTRIBUTION - BASKETBALL

31.20.1 Distribution of Revenue Generated by Basketball. The following basketball revenue received by the Conference office for distribution each year shall be divided into equal shares with one share being retained by the Conference office and one share being distributed to each member institution.

- (a) Basketball Television - All revenue derived from national network and national cable basketball telecasts shall be divided into equal shares, with one share being distributed to each member institution and one share being distributed to the Conference. *[Revised: 6/1/995; Revised: 5/29/09; effective 8/1/2009]*
- (b) NCAA Basketball Tournament (Men’s and Women’s) - Each member institution shall receive \$45 per mile one-way from its campus to the competition site for each round of the tournament in which they travel and participate. In addition, each member institution shall receive one payment of \$100,000 for appearing in the Preliminary, First, and/or Second Round, an additional one payment of \$125,000 for appearing in the Regional Semifinals and/or Regional Finals, and an additional one payment of \$300,000 for appearing in the Final Four. Funds from the participation pool of the NCAA Basketball Tournament shall be used to provide these payments. All remaining revenue from the NCAA Basketball Tournament from the participation pool, shall be divided into equal shares with one share to each member institution and one share to the Conference office. *[Revised: 5/29/98 effective June 1, 1998; Revised 6/2/00, 5/30/03, 6/1/11, 10/3/14, 6/3/16, 6/2/17, 5/29/25]*
- (c) Southeastern Conference Basketball Tournament (Men’s and Women’s). Revenues received by the Conference office each year from the Tournament shall, following remittance of expenses as outlined in the Commissioner’s Regulations, be divided into equal shares, with one share to each member institution and one share to the Conference. *[Revised: 5/29/98; effective 6/1/1998; Revised: 5/29/25]*

31.21 REVENUE DISTRIBUTION - FOOTBALL

31.21.1 Distribution of Post Season Game Receipts. Distribution of revenue (after allowable deductions) generated from member institutions participating in bowl games shall be reviewed on an annual basis and determined as follows: *[Revised: 6/1/95; Revised: 6/2/06; effective 8/1/2006; Revised: 5/31/2013; effective 8/1/2013; Revised: 6/2/17, Revised: 5/30/24]*

- (a) For bowl games providing receipts which result in a balance of less than \$2,000,000, the participating institution shall retain \$1,100,000, plus a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. The remainder shall be remitted to the Commissioner and shall be divided into equal shares with one share to the Conference and one share to each member institution. *[Revised: 6/1/02; Revised: 6/2/06; effective 8/1/2006; Revised: 5/29/09; effective 8/1/2009; Revised: 5/31/2013; effective 8/1/2013; Revised: 5/30/14; effective 8/1/2014; Revised: 6/3/16; effective 8/1/2016, Revised: 6/1/18, Revised: 5/30/24]*
- (b) For bowl games providing receipts which result in a balance between \$2,000,000 and \$3,999,999, the participating institution shall retain \$2,100,000, plus a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. The remainder shall be remitted to the Commissioner and shall be divided into equal shares, with one share to the Conference and one share to each member institution. *[Revised: 6/1/02; Revised: 6/2/06; effective 8/1/2006; Revised: 5/29/09; effective 8/1/2009; Revised: 5/31/2013; effective 8/1/2013; Revised: 5/30/2014; effective 8/1/2014; Revised: 6/3/16; effective 8/1/2016, Revised: 6/1/18, Revised: 5/30/24]*
- (c) For bowl games providing receipts which result in a balance between \$4,000,000 and \$5,999,999, the participating institution shall retain \$2,400,000, plus a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. The remainder shall be remitted to the Commissioner and shall be divided into equal shares, with one share to the Conference and one share to each member institution. *[Revised: 6/1/02; Revised: 6/2/06; effective 8/1/2006; Revised: 5/29/09; effective 8/1/2009; Revised: 5/31/2013; effective 8/1/2013; Revised: 5/30/2014; effective 8/1/2014; Revised: 6/3/16; effective 8/1/2016, Revised: 6/1/18, Revised: 5/30/24]*
- (d) For bowl games providing receipts which result in a balance of \$6,000,000 or more, the participating institution shall receive \$3,000,000 plus a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. The remainder shall be remitted to the Commissioner and shall be divided into equal shares, with one share to the Conference and one share to each member institution. *[Revised: 6/1/02; Revised: 6/2/06; effective 8/1/2006; Revised: 5/29/09; effective 8/1/2009; Revised: 5/31/2013; effective 8/1/2013; Revised: 5/30/2014; effective 8/1/2014; Revised: 6/3/16; effective 8/1/2016, Revised: 6/1/18, Revised: 5/30/24]*
- (e) For College Football Playoff (“CFP”) first round games, a participating team (home or away) shall each receive \$3,000,000. A participating visiting team shall also receive a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. For CFP second round games (quarterfinals), a participating team shall receive \$3,500,000, plus a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. For CFP third round games (semifinals), a participating team shall receive \$3,750,000, plus a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. For the CFP National Championship, a participating team shall receive \$4,000,000, plus a travel allowance as determined by the SEC Executive Committee. Institutions participating in a College Football Playoff game may also request additional travel expenses, which may be granted at the Commissioner’s discretion. The remainder of all CFP proceeds shall be remitted to the Commissioner and shall be divided into equal shares, with one share to the Conference and one share to each member institution. *[Adopted: 5/30/24]*
- (f) Bowl Revenue Protection Insurance shall be deducted prior to Conference distribution. *[Adopted: 6/1/02; Revised: and Effective 6/4/2010; Revised: 5/31/2013; effective 8/1/2013; Revised: 5/30/2014; effective 8/1/2014; Revised: 6/3/16; effective 8/1/2016]*
- (g) The cost of unused tickets up to the contractually guaranteed ticket purchase number shall be deducted prior to Conference distribution for all bowl games providing receipts of \$6 million or more. For bowl games providing receipts of less than \$6 million, the participating institution shall be fully responsible for the contractually guaranteed ticket purchase number. *[Adopted: 6/2/17; Revised: 5/28/20]*
- (h) For bowl games in which a member institution participates as an “alternate” (e.g., 5-7 team) under NCAA Postseason Bowl Game requirements, the participating institution shall retain all revenue distributed by the bowl. The participating institution shall not receive a base retainage or travel allowance as set forth in subsections (a) through (d) above. The participating institution shall also be fully responsible for the contractually guaranteed ticket purchase number and any other expenses associated with participation in the bowl. *[Adopted: 6/2/17]*

31.21.2 Distribution of Football Television Receipts. Distribution of revenue generated from football television shall be as follows: *[Revised: 6/1/96]*

- (a) A member institution appearing in a non-conference home game or a conference vs. conference game played on a non-traditional playing date to meet contractual commitments or to accommodate a request by the Conference office shall receive an appearance fee of \$300,000 as the home team; and *[Revised: 6/4/04; Revised: 6/1/2007; Revised: 5/29/09; effective 8/1/2009; Revised: 6/3/11; effective 8/1/11]*
- (b) All remaining revenue shall be divided into equal shares with one share being distributed to each member institution and one share being distributed to the Conference.

31.21.3 Football Championship Game Revenue. All revenue remaining from the championship game after expenses of planning and conducting the event have been deducted shall be divided as follows: *[Revised: 6/3/93]*

- (a) Each participating institution shall be reimbursed for the actual cost of transporting an official party of 150 (including student-athletes, coaches, administrators, cheerleaders, bands, etc.) to the site (air or bus travel from campus to the site; local transportation is not included). This amount shall be approved in advance by the Conference office and must be supported by actual invoices. In addition, each participating institution shall receive \$275,000 to cover all costs associated with institutional lodging, meals, local transportation and all other expenses related to the championship. Each participating institution will be financially responsible for payment for 150 rooms for two nights at the designated team headquarters hotel; *[Revised: 6/1/95; Revised: 6/1/96; Revised: 6/3/05; Revised: 6/1/12]*
- (b) Each participating institution shall receive a band/cheerleader travel allowance of \$50 per mile, one-way from its campus to the site (according to Rand-McNally Mileage Chart). Each institution shall be financially responsible for 100 rooms for two nights at its designated band hotel; *[Revised: 6/1/95; Revised: 6/1/96; Revised: 6/1/07]*
- (c) Each participating institution shall be reimbursed for the actual cost of all player/guest admissions actually used by student-athletes (up to six per student-athlete) listed on the institution's official Championship traveling squad; *[Adopted: 6/3/16; effective 8/1/16]*
- (d) All remaining revenue shall be divided into equal shares, with one share distributed to each member institution and one share to the Conference office; and
- (e) Institutions may petition to the Executive Committee prior to the game for an increase in the travel allowance only in the event actual expenses exceed the designated amount.

31.22 REVENUE DISTRIBUTION - BASEBALL

31.22.1 Distribution of Revenue Generated by Baseball. Revenues received by the Conference office each year for baseball shall be divided as follows:

SEC Baseball Tournament - All guaranteed revenues shall be divided as follows:

- (a) Each participating institution will be provided a per diem of \$75 per day for up to 30 individuals for each day the institution plays a game. The per diem revenue will be paid on a percentage basis of available funds;
- (b) Each participating institution shall receive a travel allowance of \$30 per mile one-way. The travel allowance will be paid on a percentage basis of available funds; and
- (c) Any revenue above full expenses of the participating teams shall be divided into equal shares, with one share to each member institution and one share to the Conference.

31.23 REVENUE DISTRIBUTION - ALL OTHER SPORTS

31.23.1 Distribution of Revenue Generated by Other Sports. Revenues received by the Conference office each year for all other sports shall be divided as follows: Net Revenues from SEC championships (other than football, men's and women's basketball, and baseball) either bid, or held at a neutral or off-campus site, shall be divided as follows: one share to the Conference office, remaining revenue shall be divided evenly among institutions which sponsor teams in that particular sport.

31.24 DISTRIBUTION OF NCAA SPORT SPONSORSHIP AND GRANTS-IN-AID FUNDS

31.24.1 Distribution of NCAA Sport Sponsorship and Grants-in-Aid Funds. NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Grants-in-Aid funds shall be sent by the NCAA to the Conference office. The funds shall then be divided into equal shares with one share to each member institution and one share to the Conference office. *[Adopted: 6/3/16; effective 8/1/16]*

31.25 DISTRIBUTION OF NCAA ACADEMIC VALUES-BASED REVENUE FUNDS

31.25.1 Distribution of NCAA Academic Values-Based Revenue Funds. NCAA Academic-Values Based Revenue funds shall be sent by the NCAA to the Conference office. The funds shall then be divided into equal shares with one share to each member institution and one share to the Conference office. *[Adopted: 5/31/19]*

31.26 AUTOMATIC RESTRICTION AGAINST PARTICIPATION IN DISTRIBUTION OF CONFERENCE FUNDS

31.26.1 Restriction Against Participating in Distribution of Conference Funds due to Postseason Ban. If, in football or men's basketball, a member institution is prohibited by the NCAA or Conference from participating in postseason games and events that generate revenues for the Conference (a "Postseason Ban"), the institution's share of revenue from the Conference derived from such sources shall be reduced as follows:

31.26.1.1 Postseason Ban. For each fiscal year in which an institution is subject to a Postseason Ban in football or men's basketball, the institution's distribution shall be reduced by an amount equal to 50% of the postseason media and competition/events revenues generated by the Conference in the fiscal year attributable to the respective sport. The withheld 50% of revenues that would have otherwise been distributable to the institution shall be distributed equally to all other member institutions in the Conference that are not subject to a Postseason Ban in football or men's basketball. [6/1/96; Revised: 6/3/05, 6/3/21]

31.26.2 Repeat Violations. If a member institution receives another Postseason Ban from the NCAA or Conference in either football or men's basketball during the five fiscal years immediately following the fiscal year in which the institution's revenue was first reduced by application of Bylaw 31.26.1, the institution's distributions attributable to postseason revenues in the respective sport shall be reduced as set forth in Bylaw 31.26.1, but the percentage of withholding shall be 100% instead of 50%. [6/1/96; Revised: 6/3/05, 6/3/21]

31.26.3 Determination of Postseason Revenues. Postseason revenues generated in a fiscal year by the Conference attributable to football and men's basketball shall be determined by the Commissioner based on the consistent application of the accounting and revenue recognition practices generally followed by the Conference for purposes of reporting and distributing revenues to its member institutions, subject to adjustments in such practices from year-to-year unrelated and not attributable to the application of this Bylaw 31.26 and to any amendments to this Article 31; provided that (i) the amount by which any revenue distribution is reduced shall be calculated after allocation of gross Conference revenues to any payment of debt service pursuant to Bylaw 31.10 (and after allocation of gross Conference revenues to any other extraordinary payments by the Conference) and (ii) a member institution's surplus distribution (from the Conference's share of various revenues as provided in this Article 31) shall not be reduced by application of this Bylaw 31.26. The Commissioner's determination of Postseason revenues generated in a fiscal year by the Conference shall be final and dispositive. [Revised: 6/3/21]

31.3 DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

31.3.1 Distribution to Institution's Designated Agent. A member institution may request that a portion of the revenues owed to the institution under Article 31 be distributed from the Conference to a designated third-party agent. The amount of such separate allocation shall be limited to the value of the House v. NCAA settlement benefits pool in that year. An institution electing to exercise this option shall notify the Conference and provide all necessary information to complete the transaction at least seven business days prior to the scheduled distribution. The requesting institution and the designated third-party agent shall be liable for any misconduct or inappropriate use of the funds, and the third-party agent shall fully comply with all pertinent policies and any enforcement and accountability measures established by the Conference or respective national governing body (e.g. College Sports Commission). The requesting institution shall also be responsible for any tax (federal or state) penalties or liabilities that may arise from the distribution of such funds to the third-party. [Adopted: 8/12/25]

ADMINISTRATIVE BYLAW, ARTICLE 32

Enforcement Policies and Procedures

The Southeastern Conference adheres to the enforcement policies and procedures specified in this bylaw of the NCAA Manual.



FOLLOWING MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENTS, CHANCELLORS, AND ATHLETICS DIRECTORS OF THE SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE, THE SEC WILL ENFORCE THE FOLLOWING POLICY:

AN SEC INSTITUTION IS NOT PERMITTED TO HAVE AN ATHLETE ON ITS ROSTER WHO HAS:

- 1. PREVIOUSLY DECLARED FOR THE NFL, NBA, OR WNBA DRAFT, AND DID NOT APPROPRIATELY WITHDRAW,**
- 2. SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH AN NFL (OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE), NBA/G-LEAGUE, OR WNBA (OR AFFILIATE) TEAM, OR**
- 3. BEEN LISTED ON AN NFL (OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE), NBA/G-LEAGUE, OR WNBA (OR AFFILIATE) ROSTER.**

THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO ENFORCE THIS EXPECTATION WITH PENALTIES AGAINST MEMBER INSTITUTIONS.



MEMORANDUM

August 26, 2026

TO: SEC Presidents & Chancellors

FR: Greg Sankey, Commissioner

Re: Application of Existing SEC Bylaws on Intraconference Transfers

On August 26, 2026, SEC Presidents & Chancellors and Athletics Directors reaffirmed the Conference's commitment to maintaining existing SEC bylaws regarding intraconference transfers.

As a reminder, existing SEC intraconference transfer bylaws were adopted with unanimous approval by the SEC membership in June 2023. Under Bylaw 14.5.5.1, an athlete seeking to transfer from one SEC member institution to another who does not provide written notification of transfer within their sport's regular transfer window is required to serve an academic year in residence before participating in intercollegiate competition. An athlete who does not satisfy this requirement may continue transfer and enroll, practice, and receive benefits including revenue-share payments, during their initial year of enrollment at the transferring institution.

Uniform compliance with and consistent application of Conference eligibility bylaws such as the intraconference transfer policy are critical to the Conference's mission of "maintaining intercollegiate athletic programs compatible with the highest standards of education and competitive sports," including through the "orderly enactment and enforcement of legislation" (see, SEC Constitution Article 1.2). Further, such policies promote roster stability and certainty, including for athletes who have already established a place on a roster and would be detrimentally impacted by subsequent additions to a roster outside the established transfer portal sequencing.

Institutions and coaching staff members who permit an individual to participate in contravention of these policies engage in conduct that is detrimental to the Conference's core purpose and mission.

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

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EXHIBIT C



Consistent with SEC Bylaw 4.4.3(a), the Commissioner is authorized to impose penalties on a member institution that violates SEC Bylaws or other rules and regulations. Accordingly, if a member institution violates SEC rules by permitting an individual who does not satisfy existing intraconference policies to participate during their initial year in residence, the Commissioner shall impose the following penalties:

- The head coach in the sport in which the violation occurred shall be suspended from all coaching, recruiting, and administrative duties for 50% of the respective sport's playing season (e.g. six games/weeks of a 12-game season in football);
- A fine of equal to 50% of the respective sport's annual budget;
- Removal of voting privileges on items of Conference business for the member institution; and,
- Any other penalty as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the Commissioner or the SEC Presidents & Chancellors.

Finally, please note that in reaffirming the Conference's commitment to maintaining the existing policy, SEC Presidents & Chancellors clarified that waiver requests of the policy will not be considered in the interest of maintaining consistency and uniformity in application of the existing legislation.

Please feel free to reach out directly to Conference staff or me with questions.

GS/mb



MEMORANDUM

August 26, 2026

TO: SEC Presidents & Chancellors

FR: Greg Sankey, Commissioner

Re: Application of Existing SEC Bylaws to Athletes who Have Professionalized

On August 24, 2026, SEC Presidents & Chancellors affirmed that individuals who choose to leave college athletics, sign professional playing contracts, and compete professionally should not subsequently be permitted to return to college competition. Allowing such individuals to return to college competition will blur the line between college and professional sports, create significant competitive equity concerns, and reduce opportunities for high school and current college athletes.

Permitting professional athletes to return to college sports would also be contrary to the Conference's mission and purpose which is to sponsor intercollegiate athletics with competition by student-athletes who are not professionals. Each member institution has an affirmative obligation under the Conference Constitution and Bylaws to comply with Conference rules, establish and maintain effective institutional control, conduct its athletics program in harmony with the essential educational purposes of the Conference's member institutions, and foster strong but fair competition among the teams of the Conference's member institutions in a broad spectrum of sports and championships for the benefits of student-athletes.

Institutions and coaching staff members who promote, pursue, or engage in the recruitment or rostering of former professional athletes on a college team engage in conduct that is detrimental to the Southeastern Conference and contrary to the Conference's core purpose and mission.

In recognition of that fact, an institution that includes an athlete on its roster who has taken steps to become a professional athlete in a manner inconsistent with existing SEC Bylaws (see, SEC Bylaw 14.01.1), shall be subject to penalties as determined by the Commissioner as

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

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EXHIBIT D



established under SEC Bylaw 4.4.3.

Consistent with existing Conference eligibility standards, an individual is considered to have become a professional, and thereby may not be included on a member institution's roster, if the individual:

1. Previously declared for the NFL, NBA, or WNBA Draft and did not appropriately withdraw;
2. Signed a contract with an NFL (or other professional football league), NBA/G-League, or WNBA (or affiliate) team; or,
3. Has been listed on an NFL (or other professional football league), NBA/G-League, or WNBA (or affiliate) roster.

The Commissioner, consistent with his role and obligation to interpret the SEC Bylaws, will provide guidance concerning professionalization standards as applied to other sports and leagues in the near future. In the meantime, member institutions are expected to promptly notify the Conference office of any specific circumstances in which the institution seeks to recruit or roster an individual whose status as a professional athlete may be in question.

Consistent with SEC Bylaw 4.4.3(a), the Commissioner is authorized to impose appropriate penalties on a member institution that violates SEC Bylaws or other rules and regulations. Accordingly, if a member institution violates SEC rules by adding an individual who has become professional to its designated roster, the Commissioner shall impose the following penalties:

- The head coach in the sport in which the violation occurred shall be suspended from all coaching, recruiting, and administrative duties for 50% of the respective sport's playing season (e.g. six games/weeks of a 12-game season in football);
- A fine of equal to 50% of the respective sport's annual budget;
- Removal of voting privileges on items of Conference business for the member institution; and,
- Any other penalty as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the Commissioner or the SEC Presidents & Chancellors.

Please feel free to reach out directly to Conference staff or me with questions.

GS/mb