

NCAA Rules..... Greyshirt

By Evans Roderick and Rob Schneiderman

The greyshirt rule postpones the start of a student's NCAA division one or two eligibility. It is a great way to increase an athletes transfer opportunities.

*A greyshirt is different from a redshirt in **one** major way. This rule only benefits students who have **never attended full time**. If a full time student or a second semester student drops down below 12 units they are not considered a greyshirt!*

Who should greyshirt?

This rule is great for student athletes who are lacking basic college skills and would like to transfer to a division 1 or 2 institution.

Students who fit this category are, students who have learning disabilities and students who have tested into the lowest levels of English, Reading, and Math. These students very rarely transfer in two years and therefore would GREATLY benefit from an extra year to improve their academic skills without impacting their eligibility.

Greyshirting also benefits students who are behind a few other good players and will not get any playing time.

Advantages

Community colleges that encourage the greyshirt for "at risk students" have a made increases in their transfer-scholarship rate.

Student's greyshirting their first year at a community college may still practice with the team and participate in all aspects of the team's training (including club games). They may not, however, participate in officially sanctioned college events.

Risks

There is a risk that a student who grayshirts may decide to attend another community college where they will play immediately. There is also the issue of medical insurance which requires students to attend full time to remain eligible for benefits.

As student service professionals, however, we firmly believe a campus is providing a disservice to students needing extensive remediation if they are not encouraged to greyshirt their first year.

Currently, greyshirting is the only way to support these kinds of students and give them the best chance of being a student first and prepare for life after sports.

Taking responsibility

It is both the coach's and the counselor's job to inform the student athlete with timely accurate information, so they can be empowered to make informed choices for themselves. We do not want these students to say, "no one told me about this."

Most coaches do not want to talk about this because they feel greyshirting is a luxury only "other" schools can afford or they want the student to play right away and help the team win. But who is winning in the long run?

What we should ask ourselves is,

"what would we want a coach or counselor to do if our son or daughter was in this situation?"

Three reasons for grayshirting

The first is appropriate course load. Students who have been told, or expect to transfer in two years will take additional courses to compensate for their non-transferable, remedial courses. This gives the student less time per course when they need more time!

The second reason is difficulty of courses. Students trying to transfer in two years feel pressure to "cut corners" and skip remedial classes. In place of remediation, students will instead take general education classes that require advanced reading, writing, and note taking skills. These are skills "at risk" students do not possess.

The final reason is expectations. Students who play their first year in college EXPECT to graduate in two years.

It is important to ask the following questions,

"Have these students been told by ALL college faculty that they likely will need more than two years to transfer"

"Have we as faculty done everything we can to encourage them to make academic decisions that will increase their likelihood of success"

Finally

We must prepare student athletes for success in college and life. We need to encourage them to get more than the minimum. They need quality preparation for career and transfer.

These students are not majoring in eligibility.

