USOPC College Sports Sustainability Think Tank

Sport Sustainability Recommendation: Men's Gymnastics Recruiting/Access Flexibility

June 25, 2021

BACKGROUND AND CHARGE: The USOPC Think Tank charged the sport sustainability group to develop legislative proposals to help Olympic and Paralympic sports be more efficient and effective within their own sport-specific landscapes to ensure sports survive and thrive.

RECOMMENDATION: The USOPC Think Tank recommends collegiate recruiting flexibility in men's gymnastics, including relaxed access and opportunities to collaborate across community, youth, college and USA Gymnastics programs to help sustain the sport. The following describes the type of sport policy customization that could enhance the men's gymnastics sport pathway and ultimately grow the sport.

Amend NCAA recruiting rules to permit customized men's gymnastics policies impacting: (1) sport camp/clinics, (2) tryouts (local sports clubs/private lessons) and (3) national team access.	
INTENT	Given its significantly low sport sponsorship, men's gymnastics seeks recruiting flexibility to increase engagement, promotion and cooperation across community/youth programs, college varsity teams and the national team. Proposed recruiting amendments include: ● **Tryout exceptions:** (a) remove the 50-mile radius limitation for local sports clubs and permit a school/booster group to sponsor and support local sports club regardless if the club includes prospects and permits coaching involvement; (b) permit men's gymnasts staff/athletes to provide private lessons to earn revenue to offset their program's operational costs. ● **Sport camps and clinics exception:** Permit men's gymnastics to have customized engagement levels and remove attendance restrictions for prospective student-athletes to participate in camps/clinics . ● **National team exceptions:** Permit youth, college and national team engagement; relax opportunities for national team athletes to train/engage with college teams. *NOTE: USA Gymnastics is exploring a collegiate regional development concept to aid varsity programs in supporting youth/elite development, coaching expertise and national team engagement (training/events).*
RATIONALE	Current NCAA recruiting/engagement rules are widely applied to all Olympic sports to maintain competitive equity across the sport landscape. The USOPC, USA Gymnastics, Collegiate Gymnastics Association and University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, partnered to conduct a men's gymnastics financial assessment to test the impact of expenditures on sport performance. The study found a statistically moderate (0.40) impact of recruiting expenses on team performance in men's gymnastics. The study found many varsity programs leverage their club/camp structures to support operational costs. Thus, the CGA and school administrators believe more flexibility for men's gymnastics is needed to ensure lasting viability, which could be achieved through further deregulation of tryout/local sports clubs, sport camps/clinics

	and national team engagement bylaws. These changes may allow for programs to be more self-sufficient and may help the sport grow by allowing youth to directly see the men's gymnastics sport pathway.
IMPACT	● **Estimated budget impact:** The fiscal impact of these efforts will vary given the disparity of camp/clinic and local sports club operations across schools (camp revenues range from $0-$279,000; clubs revenue ranges from $0-$266,760); however, deregulation can help men's gymnastics coaches/administrators operate within their campus structures and construct meaningful partnerships within their communities **[UCCS Financial Study].** ● **Impact on student-athletes:** These proposed changes would enhance the student-athlete experience by easing and elevating engagement between youth and elite athletes for the sake of saving and advancing the sport. More interaction may increase the fan base and elevate exposure of the sport. ● **Impact on prospective student-athletes:** Prospective student-athletes would have more opportunities to advance their skills by training alongside college and/or elite athletes. Additionally, they would gain exposure to college programs and may remain in the sport for longer by understanding the development pathway.

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PROPOSED NCAA DIVISION I LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

BYLAW 13& 14: RECRUITING AND ELGIBILITY

13.11. Tryouts.

13.11.2 Permissible Activities.

13.11.2.4 **Local Sports Clubs.** In sports other than basketball and football, an institution's coach may be involved in any capacity (e.g., as a participant, administrator or in instructional or coaching activities) in the same sport for a local sports club or organization located in the institution's home community, provided all prospective student-athletes participating in said activities are legal residents of the area (within a 50-mile radius of the institution). In all sports, an institution's coach may be involved in any capacity (e.g., as a participant, administrator or in instructional or coaching activities) in a sport other than the coach's sport for a local sports club or organization located in the institution's home community, provided all prospective student-athletes participating in said activities are legal residents of the area (within a 50-mile radius of the institution). Further, in clubs or organizations involving multiple teams or multiple sports, the 50-mile radius is applicable only to the team with which the institution's coach is involved; however, it is not permissible for the coach to assign a prospective student-athlete who lives outside the 50-mile area to another coach of the club. A coach also may be involved in activities with individuals who are not of a prospective student-athlete age, regardless of where such individuals reside. (In women's volleyball and women's beach volleyball, see Bylaws 13.1.7.9 and 13.1.7.10, respectively, for regulations relating to a coach's involvement with a local sports club and the permissible number of evaluation days.) **[D]**
(Revised: 1/10/90, 1/16/93, 9/6/00, 4/25/02 effective 8/1/02, 5/11/05, 7/31/15, 5/1/19)

13.11.2.4.1 Exception. The 50-mile radius restriction shall not apply to a prospective student-athlete who resides outside a 50-mile radius of the institution, provided the institution documents that the local sports club is the closest opportunity for the prospective student-athlete to participate in the sport. (Adopted: 1/9/06 effective 8/1/06)

13.11.2.4.2 Legal Resident. A prospective student-athlete who relocates to an area within a 50-mile radius of the institution on a temporary basis (e.g., to participate on a club team or attend an institution while maintaining a permanent residence outside the 50-mile radius) is not a legal resident of the area regardless of whether the prospective

student-athlete meets legal standards of state or local residency for governmental purposes. (Adopted: 9/18/07)

13.11.2.4.3 Men's Gymnastics Exception. The 50-mile radius restriction shall not apply to a prospective student-athlete participating in men's gymnastics, provided the institution documents the prospective student-athlete's participation in the club.

13.11.2.4.3 Institutional Sponsorship of Local Sports Club. Neither an institution's athletics department nor an institution's athletics booster group may sponsor a local sports club that includes prospective student-athletes. It is permissible for a department of the institution that operates independent of the athletics department (e.g., physical education department, recreation department) to sponsor a local sports club that includes prospective student-athletes, provided no athletics department staff member is involved with the club team. [D] (Adopted: 1/16/93, Revised: 1/11/94)

13.11.2.4.3.1 Exception -- Permissible Recruiting Expenses. An institution may provide expenses to a coach related to permissible recruiting activities on behalf of the institution that occur while the coach is also acting in a permissible capacity for a local sports

club. (Adopted: 5/1/19)

13.11.2.4.3 Men's Gymnastics Exception. An institution's athletics department and an institution's athletics booster group may sponsor a local sports club connected with their varsity men's gymnastics program that includes prospective men's gymnastics student-athletes. It is also permissible for a department of the institution that operates independent of the athletics department (e.g., physical education department, recreation department) to sponsor a local sports club that includes prospective men's gymnastics student-athletes and athletics department staff members are permitted to be involved with the club team.

13.11.3.1 Open Events. Participation by a prospective student-athlete in open events conducted by or held on an institution's campus shall not be considered tryouts. Competition shall be considered open if the competitive event itself is not classified by age group or level of educational institution represented, and the selection of participants is not limited except by number, by geographical area or on the basis of some objective standard of performance (see Bylaws 13.11.1.8 and 13.11.1.9). **[D]**

13.11.3.1.1 Men's Gymnastics exception. An institution may conduct an event involving prospective student-athletes and it is not considered a tryout provided the selection of participants is based on an objective standard including sport discipline specialty, region, number, age, grade level and/or gender.

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13.11.3.2 Activities Not Involving Institution's Staff. The use of a member institution's facilities for physical activities by a group that includes prospective student-athletes shall not be considered a tryout, provided the institution's athletics department staff members or representatives of its athletics interests are not involved in the conduct, promotion or administration of the activity (other than activities incidental to supervising the use of the facilities) and are subject to all applicable NCAA recruiting legislation. This exception does not apply to activities and events that are prohibited per

Bylaws 13.11.1.8, 13.11.1.9, 13.11.1.10 and 13.11.1.14. **[D]** *(Revised: 1/9/06 effective 8/1/06, 8/12/10, 5/22/13)*

13.11.3.2.1 Men's Gymnastics exception. An institution may conduct activities involving prospective student-athletes provided the activities are recognized as part of the USA Gymnastics regional development program.

13.11.3.3 State, Regional, National or International Training Programs. Participation by an institution's athletics department staff member in recognized state, regional, national or international training programs or competition organized and administered by the applicable governing body shall not be considered tryouts, provided the athletics department staff member is selected by the applicable governing body and the participants are selected by an authority or a committee of the applicable governing body that is not limited to athletics department staff members affiliated with one institution. A member institution's coaching staff member may not participate only in noncoaching activities (e.g., consultant, on-site coordinator, participant selection), except as provided in

Bylaws 13.11.3.3.1, 13.11.3.3.2 and 13.11.3.3.3. **[D]** *(Revised: 1/9/96, 11/10/97, 4/28/11 effective 8/1/11)*

13.11.3.4 **High School, Preparatory School and Two-Year College Contests.** High school, preparatory school and two-year-college athletics contests or matches, conducted by an institution or sponsored jointly with an outside organization and held on the institution's campus, shall not be considered tryouts, provided the following conditions are met [see Bylaw 13.2.3-(c) for restrictions related to the provision of awards at such contests]: **[D]** *(Revised: 1/15/11)*

(a) Team Sports.

(1) The opportunity to participate in the event is not limited to specific educational institutions and all educational institutions in a specific geographical area are eligible to compete (limited only by number, by institutional classification or on the basis of some objective standard of performance);

(2) Each participant represents an educational institution in the event (no nonscholastic team representation); and

(3) No financial compensation (e.g., transportation, expenses, guarantee, percentage of income) from the event may be provided to the educational institutions;

(b) Individual Sports.

(1) The opportunity to participate in the event is not limited to specific prospective student-athletes or educational institutions and all individual prospective student-athletes or educational institutions in a specific geographical area are eligible to compete (limited only by number, by institutional classification or on the basis of some objective standard of performance);

(2) A participant may compete as an individual or may represent an educational institution or a nonscholastic team; and

(3) No financial compensation (e.g., transportation expenses, guarantee, percentage of income) from the event may be provided to an individual, educational institution or nonscholastic team; or

(4) In men's gymnastics, an institution may conduct activities involving prospective student-athletes provided the activities are recognized as part of the USA Gymnastics regional development program.

13.11.3.6 **Private Lessons – Men's Gymnastics, Women's Golf and Equestrian Exception.** An institution's men's gymnastics, women's golf and equestrian coaches may teach private lessons to a prospective student- athlete in their respective sports, provided the following conditions are met: **[D]** *(Revised: 4/28/05 effective 8/1/05, 4/25/18, 1/23/19)*

(a) The golf and equestrian prospective student-athletes resides within a 50-mile radius of the institution's main campus;

(b) The coach makes lessons available to the general public;

(c) In women's golf, lessons are only provided to female prospective student-athletes and the coach is a teaching professional certified pursuant to the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and/or Professional Golf Association (PGA) certification program;

(d) Fees charged to the prospective student-athlete are at a rate commensurate with fees charged to all individuals; and

(e) Fees charged to the prospective student-athlete are not paid by individuals or entities other than the prospective student-athlete or the prospective student-athlete's family members.

13.12 Sports Camps and Clinics.

13.12.1 Institution's Sports Camps and Clinics.

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13.12.1.3 Attendance Restriction. A member institution's sports camp or clinic shall be open to any and all entrants (limited only by number, age, grade level and/or gender). (See Bylaw 13.4.3.2.2.) (Revised: 1/11/89, 1/10/91, 1/11/94, 12/12/06, 9/24/09)

13.12.1.3.1 Men's Gymnastics Exception. A member institution's sports camp or clinic for the sport of men's gymnastics may manage participants by sport discipline specialty, region, number, age, grade level and/or gender. (See Bylaw 13.4.3.2.2.)

13.12.2.3.8 Noninstitutional Privately Owned Camps/Clinics -- Sports Other Than Baseball, Basketball, Football, Softball and Women's Volleyball. In sports other than baseball, basketball, football, softball and women's volleyball, an institution's athletics department personnel may serve in any capacity (e.g., counselor, guest lecturer, consultant) in a noninstitutional, privately owned camp or clinic, provided the camp or clinic is operated in accordance with restrictions applicable to institutional camps (e.g., open to any and all entrants, no free or reduced admission to or employment of athletics award winners) or in accordance with bylaw 13.12.1.3.1. [D] (Revised: 8/15/04, 4/28/05 effective 8/1/05, 5/26/06, 1/16/10 effective 8/1/10, 4/28/16 effective 8/1/16, 4/26/17 effective 8/1/17)

13.12.2.3.10 Noninstitutional Fundamental Skills Camp/Clinic. An institution's athletics department personnel may serve in any capacity at a noninstitutional camp or clinic conducted under the following conditions: [D] (Adopted: 1/13/03, Revised: 8/5/04)

(a) The camp or clinic is designed to develop fundamental skills in a sport (rather than refine the abilities of skilled participants in the sport);

(b) The camp or clinic is open to the general public (except for restrictions in age or number of participants);

(c) The camp or clinic is conducted primarily for educational purposes and does not include material benefits for the participants (e.g., awards, prizes, merchandise, gifts);

(d) Participants do not receive a recruiting presentation; and

(e) All participants reside in the state in which the camp/clinic is located or within 100 miles of the camp/clinic.

13.12.2.3.10.1 Men's Gymnastics exception. An institutions men's gymnastics staff may serve in any capacity at a noninstitutional camp or clinic conducted provided the camp complies with bylaw 13.12.1.3.1.

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14.2.1.8 Exception -- U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee/National Governing Body -- Practice. A student with eligibility remaining who is not enrolled or who is enrolled in less than a minimum full-time program of studies, or a former student-athlete may participate on a regular basis in organized practice sessions, provided the following conditions are met: (Adopted: 4/26/17, Revised: 10/17/19, 1/22/20)

(a) The practice sessions take place at the institution the individual previously attended as an undergraduate or currently attends or previously attended as a graduate student, except that a former student-athlete who has graduated and has no eligibility remaining may participate in practice sessions at an institution other than the one he or she previously attended;

(b) In the case of a former student-athlete, the practice sessions involve an individual sport or women's rowing;

(c) In the case of a current student-athlete with eligibility remaining, the practice sessions involve an individual or team sport;

(d) The institution receives confirmation that the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee or national governing body in the sport has recommended the individual's participation;

(e) The individual does not participate in any coaching activities unless the institution designates the individual in the appropriate coaching limits; except for members of the men's gymnastics national team whom are permitted to train and aid in coaching activities.

(f) In the case of a student-athlete with NCAA eligibility remaining in the sport, such participation occurs only during the academic year immediately preceding the Olympic or Paralympic Games; and

(g) In the case of a former student-athlete, such participation shall be limited to the number of years that allows the individual to practice with the institution's team in preparation for two consecutive Olympic or Paralympic Games following exhaustion of eligibility or completion of degree, whichever occurs earlier. A former student-athlete who has not graduated must be enrolled (full or part time) and making progress toward a degree.

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ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO 13.11 DEREGULATION

13.11. Tryouts.

13.11.2 Permissible Activities.

13.11.2.4 **Local Sports Clubs – Sports other than Basketball, Football, and Men's Gymnastics.** In sports other than basketball and football, and men's gymnastics, an institution's coach may be involved in any capacity (e.g., as a participant, administrator or in instructional or coaching activities) in the same sport for a local sports club or organization located in the institution's home community, provided all prospective student-athletes participating in said activities are legal residents of the area (within a 50- mile radius of the institution). In all sports, an institution's coach may be involved in any capacity (e.g., as a participant, administrator or in instructional or coaching activities) in a sport other than the coach's sport for a local sports club or organization located in the institution's home community, provided all prospective student-athletes participating in said activities are legal residents of the area (within a 50- mile radius of the institution). Further, in clubs or organizations involving multiple teams or multiple sports, the 50-mile radius is applicable only to the team with which the institution's coach is involved; however, it is not permissible for the coach to assign a prospective student-athlete who lives outside the 50-mile area to another coach of the club. A coach also may be involved in activities with individuals who are not of a prospective student-athlete age, regardless of where such individuals reside. (In women's volleyball and women's beach volleyball, see Bylaws 13.1.7.9 and 13.1.7.10, respectively, for regulations relating to a coach's involvement with a local sports club and the permissible number of evaluation days.) **[D]** *(Revised: 1/10/90, 1/16/93, 9/6/00, 4/25/02 effective 8/1/02, 5/11/05, 7/31/15, 5/1/19)*

13.11.2.5 Local Sports Clubs – Men's Gymnastics. In men's gymnastics, an institutional staff member may be involved in any capacity (e.g., as a participant, administrator or in instructional or coaching activities) with a local sports club or organization located in the institution's home community, provided the institution documents the participation of all prospective student-athletes participating in the activity. An institution's athletics department, department that operates independent of the athletics