

# Multiyear scholarship rule narrowly survives override vote

By Steve Wieberg, USA TODAY

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Colleges are free to offer multiyear scholarships to athletes after a repeal effort within the NCAA narrowly fell short, by two votes, Friday.

Opponents needed 207 of 330 votes by schools and conferences - a five-eighths majority - to overturn the measure approved by the association's Division I board of directors last October. They got 205.

Twenty-five institutions and leagues weren't heard from as online balloting was conducted Monday through 5 p.m. ET Friday.

"I am pleased that student-athletes will continue to benefit from the ability of institutions to offer athletics aid for more than one year," NCAA President Mark Emmert said, "but it's clear that there are significant portions of the membership with legitimate concerns. As we continue to examine implementation of the rule, we want to work with the membership to address those concerns."

The multiyear measure was sought by Emmert, the Division I board and others as an athlete-welfare enhancement.

But it drew formal objections from enough schools to force reconsideration. They argued, among other things, that coaches were using multiyear grants as a recruiting enticement. The measure merely gives schools the option of making multiyear rather than one-year offers, and they can choose to which athletes those scholarships are given.

The Division I board stood firm, throwing the matter to a division-wide vote.

The issue had drawn the attention of the U.S. Department of Justice, whose antitrust division informed the NCAA a little less than two years ago that it was looking into the single-year restriction and whether it restrained competition among schools for top players. NCAA officials said the agency was monitoring the multiyear referendum.

Justice Department spokeswoman Gina Talamona said in October that multiyear grants "should expand opportunities and choices for student athletes." She declined further comment Friday.

By Darron Cummings, AP  
NCAA President Mark Emmert is happy multiyear scholarships survived a close vote.

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