

Michigan State University Criteria for Evaluating Varsity Sport Status

Michigan State University may grant varsity status to a club sport when that sport can demonstrate sufficient interest, commitment, competitiveness and potential to warrant such status and when adequate financing and facilities are available. The Director of Athletics, in consultation with the Athletic Council, reserves the right to withdraw such status when the specified conditions are no longer met.

The sport must be one which is sanctioned by the NCAA. In addition, the participating members must be able to demonstrate that they will be able to conform to the rules, regulations and standards of eligibility of Michigan State University, the Big Ten, and the NCAA. The sport must also be able to construct a schedule with varsity programs from accredited four-year educational institutions.

One primary consideration relative to the addition, deletion, and maintenance of quality sports programs rests with available resources. Limited revenues and additional new sources of income are not commensurate with escalating costs. Prudent resource management is imperative to continue a broad-based program of quality. However, other possibilities should be considered before existing sports are eliminated for financial reasons.

A second primary consideration is compliance with state and federal laws. Decisions to elevate sports, discontinue sports or deny varsity status to those requesting such, should be justifiable under state and federal laws.

Given the decision to have an intercollegiate athletic program that is broad-based and one of quality, there must be a process in place by which the Athletic Council and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics can evaluate club sports that may be elevated to varsity status or to discontinue a sport which has intercollegiate varsity status. In planning such contingencies, the following questions/criteria were developed and placed, in no particular order of priority, into the following categories:

**Participation
Financial
Recruiting
Facilities
Quality
Scheduling
Compliance**

I. PARTICIPATION

The degree of participation in a sport must be the first criterion of consideration. Participation is an indication of the level of interest by students and the general public. Percent of participating high schools in Michigan and participating Division I institutions are deemed to be the best measures of participation rather than an absolute

number. Trends need to be identified in the growth patterns of the sport in all NCAA divisions.

- A. **Collegiate Competition (Number of Division I Schools - Varsity Status)**
 - 1. **In-State**
 - 2. **Big Ten Schools**
 - 3. **Regional - Big Ten States**
 - 4. **National**

- B. **High School Competition - Recruiting Resources**
 - 1. **In-State**
 - 2. **Regional - Big Ten States**
 - 3. **National**

- C. **Club/Varsity Status at MSU (For adding sports only)**
 - 1. **Number years club sport**
 - 2. **Average number participants per year**
 - 3. **Enrollment status of past/current participants**
 - 4. **Past three years competitive schedule**
 - 5. **Past three years coaches**
 - 6. **Past three years win/loss records**

II. FINANCIAL

Cost factors should be reflective of economic efficiency and sound financial management.

- A. **Overall program considerations**
 - 1. **Immediate and future impact on university and athletic department budget**
 - 2. **Immediate and future impact on quality of current sports program**

- B. **Expenses associated with each sport**
 - 1. **Coaching: including salary and fringe benefits**
 - 2. **Equipment and supplies**
 - 3. **Playing and practice uniforms**
 - 4. **Home game expenses (e.g., game official fees, games management)**
 - 5. **Athletic accident and travel accident insurance**
 - 6. **Recruiting**
 - 7. **Scholarships (Are they anticipated? Limits? Number? Amount?)**
 - 8. **Publicity and promotion**
 - 9. **Travel**

- C. **Support Services**
 - 1. **Academics (tutors, study hall, admissions, certification, etc.)**
 - 2. **Training/Medical supplies and staffing**
 - 3. **Sports Information**
 - 4. **Grounds and Physical Plant**
 - 5. **Strength and conditioning**

6. Other

D. Revenue Potential

1. Fund-raising
2. Gate receipts
3. Sports Camps and Clinics
4. Other

E. Compliance with Title IX

1. Scholarship allocations
2. Recruiting costs
3. Staffing requirements

III. FACILITIES

A. Practice facilities

1. Times available
2. Shared with another varsity sport

B. Competitive facility

1. Times available
2. Competition site

C. Impact on other sports

1. Practice
2. Competition

D. Costs: Practice, Competition, General Maintenance

1. Grounds
2. Physical Plant
3. Event Management
4. Other

E. Compliance with Title IX

1. Locker rooms
2. Facilities
3. Offices

IV. COMPETITIVE QUALITY FACTORS

The sport should offer significant enhancement to the overall sports program at Michigan State University.

- A. Does the climate and/or geographic location have any impact on the ability to develop a competitive team or attract quality student-athletes?
- B. Potential for media exposure - local, regional, national

- C. **Spectator support (fans/boosters)**
- D. **Length of season (playing/practice)**
- E. **Availability of coaches**
- F. **Is there a Big Ten Championship in this sport**
- G. **Ability to remain in compliance with Title IX**

V. SCHEDULING

The schedule should reflect a Division I program philosophy and competition.

- A. **Two year past schedule**
- B. **Two year future schedule**
- C. **Delineate club/Division I, II, III for opposing teams**
- D. **Geographic location of competition**
- E. **Compliance with Title IX**
 - 1. **Fair and equitable practice times**
 - 2. **Number of competitive events**
 - 3. **Pre and post season opportunities**

VI. COMPLIANCE

Decisions to elevate sports, discontinue sports or to deny varsity status to those requesting such, should be justifiable under applicable state and federal laws and other rules and regulations which may be applicable.

- A. **Compliance with Title IX**
 - 1. **Accommodation of Interests and Abilities (one of three tests)**
 - **Participation rate**
 - **History of continued expansion of opportunity for the under-represented sex.**
 - **Fully and effectively accommodated the interests and abilities of the under-represented sex**
 - 2. **Athletic Scholarships**
 - 3. **Recruiting**
 - 4. **Facilities**
- A. **State and Federal Laws Applicable to Athletics**
- B. **NCAA Rules and Regulations Applicable to Athletics**
- C. **Big Ten Conference Rules and Regulations Applicable to Athletics**

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

Other factors that play an important role in the evaluation of the sport.

PROCEDURES

Procedures for the establishment or discontinuance of an intercollegiate sport:

1. Request

Establishment: A student or advisor from the club sport initiates communication with the Director of Athletics to begin the process for the establishment of a sport.

Discontinuance: After The Director of Athletics consults with the Athletic Council on his or her recommendation of discontinuance of a sport, then the Director of Athletics communicates at the appropriate time with the current head coach.

2. Criteria and Documentation

Establishment: The Director of Athletics will provide to the student or advisor a copy of the Michigan State University Criteria for Evaluating Varsity Status. The student or advisor must then submit a written request for varsity status describing how the requested sport complies with these criteria. The Chairperson of the Athletic Council will determine whether or not an appearance is to be made by the student or advisor before the Athletic Council or subcommittee. If the student or advisor is requested to appear before the Athletic Council or subcommittee then (s)he must submit any requested supporting documentation and be prepared to answer questions from a subcommittee or the Council as a whole.

Discontinuance: The Director of Athletics, in consultation with the Athletic Council, will make a final recommendation of discontinuance of a sport to the Director of Athletics' supervisor. The Director of Athletics recommendation will be in writing, and will include a rationale for the sport's discontinuance, as well as an analysis of the sport's compliance with these criteria. Prior to the Director of Athletics recommendation, a subcommittee, comprised of both Athletic Council members and Athletic Department staff, will review the documentation of the criteria.

3. Decision

Establishment or discontinuance: The Director of Athletics, in consultation with the Athletic Council, will make a final recommendation. This recommendation, together with Athletic Council comments or actions related thereto, will be forwarded to the Director of Athletics' supervisor who will either accept or deny the recommendation.

4. Communication: Time Frame

Establishment: The Director of Athletics, in consultation with the Athletic Council, will determine when the sport will gain intercollegiate status. The Director of Athletics will determine all other support.

Discontinuance: The Director of Athletics, in consultation with the Athletic Council, will determine when the sport will be discontinued. The Director of Athletics will communicate to the coach and other affected parties the decision before it is officially announced.