

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

**THE SOUTHEASTERN
CONFERENCE,**
an Alabama unincorporated association,

Plaintiff,

v.

**LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY;
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
AND AGRICULTURAL AND
MECHANICAL COLLEGE; WADE
ROUSSE,** in his official capacity as
President of Louisiana State University;
VERGE AUSBERRY, in his official
capacity as Vice President and Director
of Athletics of Louisiana State
University; and **LANE KIFFIN,** in his
official capacity as Head Football Coach
of Louisiana State University,

Defendants.

Case No.:

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff the Southeastern Conference (“SEC” or the “Conference”) brings this action seeking declaratory and injunctive relief against Defendants Louisiana State University (“LSU”), the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Wade Rousse, in his official capacity as

President of LSU, Verge Ausberry, in his official capacity as Vice President and Director of Athletics of LSU, and Lane Kiffin, in his official capacity as Head Football Coach of LSU.

INTRODUCTION

1. For more than ninety years, the Southeastern Conference has stood at the intersection of higher education and elite athletic competition. Founded in 1933 by university presidents who believed that athletics should promote and serve educational values, the SEC is now the nation's premier intercollegiate athletic conference.

2. Today, the SEC is a sixteen-member association. The Presidents and Chancellors of the SEC's member institutions have governed together across generations, operating under a set of shared rules that have shaped the athletic and educational paths of thousands of student-athletes and provided the competitive integrity and fair competition necessary for the SEC to thrive. Those rules are not fine print. They are the governing framework that keeps college sports unique, protects opportunities for high school and college student-athletes, and preserves competitive equity and fair competition.

3. The SEC has endured and thrived for nearly a century because its members have adhered to that common set of rules, which each member institution, and every coach at those institutions, has agreed to follow.

4. Among the most fundamental of those rules are the longstanding provisions that prohibit individuals who have entered a professional draft, signed professional contracts, or been rostered on a professional athletics team from returning to compete in college athletics (the “Professionalism Rules”). These rules are built upon an essential principle: college athletics is reserved for students who are actively pursuing an education while competing for their universities. The Professionalism Rules preserve competitive fairness, protect opportunities for high school students and current college athletes, and maintain the distinction between college and professional sports. That distinction is critical to the SEC’s member institutions, their Presidents and Chancellors, and their fans.

5. This case arises from Defendants’ violation of the SEC’s First Amendment right of expressive association.

6. Specifically, Defendants waged a deliberate and coordinated campaign to recruit professional athletes to play football for LSU during the 2026-27 season, including players who had signed NFL contracts with the Cleveland Browns, New Orleans Saints, and Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Numerous reports have shown that at least two of these professional athletes are on campus and actively practicing with LSU’s football team. Defendants have also expressed their unequivocal intent to place those athletes on LSU’s official football roster and allow them to participate in football games during the upcoming season.

7. Every SEC member institution—including LSU—has affirmed that individuals who choose to leave college athletics, sign professional playing contracts, and compete professionally should not then be permitted to return to college competition. Just days ago, on August 25, 2026, LSU (through Defendant Rouse) voted in favor of the SEC issuing a policy statement clarifying that its longstanding rules prohibit an SEC institution from having a professional athlete on its roster.

8. Nevertheless, Defendants have continued their campaign to engage in willful efforts to recruit and soon roster professional athletes in direct defiance of the Professionalism Rules. This conduct is detrimental to the Conference and contrary to its core purpose. Defendants' conduct has already harmed the Conference and threatens to cause further substantial harm if not curbed. Through their actions, Defendants have compelled the SEC and each of its member institutions to associate with conduct that every member institution—including, until recently, LSU—has expressly and unanimously repudiated. As a result, Defendants have violated the SEC's expressive association rights under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

9. The SEC brings this action to vindicate its First Amendment right of expressive association, *i.e.* its right not to be forced to associate its competitions, brand, and championships with conduct that it has expressly condemned since the

SEC's founding. The SEC also seeks declaratory and injunctive relief to vindicate the SEC's right to disassociate from conduct that directly undermines the SEC's organizational purpose and core values.

10. The SEC does not bring this action to declare any student-athlete ineligible or to prevent any student-athlete from participating in any athletic competition. This action is directed solely at the member institution and athletic department personnel that have violated the SEC's rights under the First Amendment.

PARTIES

11. Plaintiff the Southeastern Conference is the nation's premier intercollegiate athletic conference. Founded in 1933, it is an unincorporated nonprofit association organized under Alabama law and headquartered at 2201 Richard Arrington Jr. Boulevard North, Birmingham, Alabama 35203.

12. The SEC has sixteen member institutions, fifteen of which are state universities: the University of Alabama, Auburn University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, the University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, the University of Missouri, the University of Oklahoma, the University of South Carolina, the University of Tennessee, Texas A&M University, the University of Texas, and Vanderbilt University (the only private institution).

13. Defendant Louisiana State University is a public university located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and organized under the laws of the State of Louisiana. LSU has been a member of the SEC since the Conference's founding in 1933 and is bound by the Conference's Constitution and Bylaws.

14. Defendant Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College is a public university system board responsible for supervising and managing the institutions within the system, including LSU.

15. Defendant Wade Rousse is the President of Louisiana State University. He is named only in his official capacity.

16. Defendant Verge Ausberry is the Vice President and Director of Athletics of Louisiana State University. He is responsible for the development, management, and supervision of LSU's athletics program. He is sued only in his official capacity.

17. Defendant Lane Kiffin is the head football coach at Louisiana State University. He is sued only in his official capacity.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

18. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, this Court has subject-matter jurisdiction over the SEC's claims under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution,

enforceable through 42 U.S.C. § 1983, and over its claim for declaratory relief, which is authorized by 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

19. Because each Defendant is a state actor and the SEC seeks redress for the deprivation of its constitutional rights under color of state law, the SEC's claims are cognizable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. *Lindke v. Freed*, 601 U.S. 187, 195 (2024); *see also Ex parte Young*, 209 U.S. 123, 159 (1908).

20. Venue is proper in the Northern District of Alabama, Southern Division, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the SEC's claims occurred in this District. The SEC is headquartered within this district, in Birmingham, Alabama. The SEC's governance deliberations, the actions taken by the Conference's Presidents and Chancellors (including Defendant Rouse) and Commissioner as described further below, and the issuance of the memoranda described herein all occurred in or were directed from this District. The injuries to the SEC's expressive association rights were suffered at the SEC's headquarters in this District.

21. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant LSU because of LSU's continuous and systematic membership and governance activities within the SEC. These continuous and systematic activities in Alabama arise out of LSU's membership in and management of the Conference. Since 1933, LSU has been a voluntary member of the SEC, which is headquartered in this District. LSU agreed

to the SEC's Constitution and Bylaws, which are administered from this District. LSU regularly participates in Conference governance meetings held in this District, sends athletic teams to this District for intercollegiate competitions and SEC events located in Alabama (including football games against the University of Alabama and the SEC Baseball Tournament held annually in Hoover, Alabama), and derives substantial revenue from Conference media agreements entered in and administered from this District. LSU's membership in the SEC and its obligations under the Conference's governing documents are administered and enforced from this District.

22. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants Rouse, Ausberry, and Kiffin. In their official capacities, jurisdiction over these Defendants is coextensive with jurisdiction over LSU. *Kentucky v. Graham*, 473 U.S. 159, 165-66 (1985).

23. Defendant Rouse regularly attends meetings of the SEC's Presidents and Chancellors, including in-person meetings in this District, and takes action at those meetings in his capacity as a Chief Executive Officer of the Conference.

24. Indeed, Defendant Rouse was physically present in Birmingham, Alabama recently when he attended a two-day meeting of the Conference's Presidents and Chancellors, participated in Conference governance decisions, and engaged in conduct that is at the heart of this lawsuit.

25. Defendant Ausberry regularly attends meetings of the SEC’s Athletic Directors, including in-person meetings in this District.

26. Defendant Kiffin regularly attends meetings of the SEC’s head football coaches and has attended an in-person meeting in this District. Defendant Kiffin has also appeared in this District for intercollegiate competitions against another SEC member institution located in this District, the University of Alabama.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The SEC’s Mission and Governance Structure

27. The SEC was founded on the principle that intercollegiate athletics serves an educational purpose. The Conference aims to facilitate and assist its member institutions in maintaining intercollegiate athletic programs compatible with the highest standards of education and competitive sports.

28. From its founding, the SEC’s governance has rested in the hands of its member institutions. Under Article 4 of the SEC Constitution, the Presidents and Chancellors of those institutions serve as the Conference’s Chief Executive Officers (“CEOs”), with plenary power over all Conference affairs. The role of the Presidents and Chancellors as CEOs is equivalent to the role served by directors serving on a corporation’s board of directors. This structure reflects a deliberate choice that the rules governing SEC competition should be made by the leaders of the educational institutions whose students compete under those rules. Through this governance

structure, the member institutions collectively control the Conference and establish its policies and procedures. The Presidents and Chancellors make all final decisions regarding material and fundamental Conference matters.

29. Article 6 of the SEC Constitution charges the Chief Executive Officer of each member institution, including LSU, 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.” A copy of the SEC’s Constitution and Bylaws is attached as Exhibit A. This obligation to exercise institutional control reflects the SEC’s model of shared governance. The Conference enacts rules and each member institution is responsible for ensuring that its employees follow them. This includes the Professionalism Rules at issue in this action.

30. The SEC’s governance framework depends on compliance by both member institutions and their athletics employees. Each member institution is bound by the SEC Constitution and Bylaws as a condition of its membership in the Conference. LSU, as a member institution, has agreed to comply with all Conference rules and to enforce those rules at its institution. Ex. A at Bylaw 19.8.1 (“It is the obligation of each member institution to enforce and comply with the Rules.”)

31. The SEC and its members are also members of the NCAA. 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.

32. 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's member institutions.

The SEC's Professionalism Rules

33. Both the NCAA and the SEC have long maintained rules that prohibit individuals who have entered a professional draft, signed professional contracts, or been rostered on a professional athletics team from competing in college athletics. Among those rules is NCAA Bylaw 12.2.4, which 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 NCAA Bylaw is incorporated by reference and is effective as an SEC Bylaw pursuant to SEC Bylaw 14.01.1. *See* Exhibit A.

34. The SEC's Professionalism Rules are not new. They have been a cornerstone of the college athletics model since its inception, are fundamental to the SEC's mission, and reflect the core expressive message of the Conference: that collegiate athletics serves an educational mission and is distinct from professional

sports. The rules are grounded in the principle that college athletics are reserved for students 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.

35. The SEC's Professionalism Rules also promote competitive fairness in the context of college athletics. They recognize that an athlete who has pursued a professional career, with the benefit of professional-level training, resources, and competition, occupies a fundamentally different position than a student-athlete who has remained within the collegiate model.

36. These Professionalism Rules also create and preserve opportunities for high school student-athletes and current college athletes. Each roster spot filled by a professional athlete is one 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 collegiate athletics.

37. The Professionalism Rules also promote roster stability and the settled expectations of student-athletes and institutions that have planned their programs around an established set of rules. Without consistent application of these rules, 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 uncertainty about their opportunities to join a roster and benefit from the experience of participating in college athletics.

38. The Professionalism Rules further promote competitive equity and fair competition among the SEC's member schools by ensuring that each member institution is engaged in competition with other institutions governed by, subject to, and compliant with the same foundational set of rules and requirements.

39. The SEC has publicly, consistently, and through formal governance action, expressed its institutional position on the issues at the heart of this dispute. These expressions are not incidental to the Conference's operations. They are integral to the SEC's organizational purpose and identity and the message it communicates to the public.

40. The SEC's Commissioner has repeatedly emphasized that the Conference's Professionalism Rules are essential to the integrity of college sports and grounded in the principle that athletics are an integral part of the academic experience. He has made clear that, in the view of the SEC and its member institutions, permitting professional athletes to return to competition 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.

**Defendants' Recruitment of Professional Football Players
and Intent to Roster Them**

41. In June 2026, the NCAA adopted a new age-based eligibility model, commonly referred to as the “5-for-5” rule, that allows student-athletes up to five seasons of competition within a five-year period beginning when they enroll in college.

42. Beginning in the summer of 2026, certain student-athletes who first enrolled in college in 2022 and had exhausted their eligibility by spring of 2026 (the “2022 Class”) began filing lawsuits across the country challenging the NCAA’s decision to implement the 5-for-5 rule and not to grant an additional year of eligibility to the 2022 Class. Among those athletes were several former college football players who had signed professional contracts with NFL teams during the 2026 NFL Draft and undrafted free agency period.

43. Despite the SEC’s longstanding rules prohibiting professional athletes from returning to college athletics, Defendants saw this as an opportunity to be exploited. They began an orchestrated campaign to recruit professional athletes to join LSU’s football roster for the 2026-27 season.

44. These efforts included recruiting players who had signed contracts with the NFL’s Cleveland Browns, New Orleans Saints, and Tampa Bay Buccaneers and were actively participating in NFL training camps.

45. Defendant Kiffin has publicly confirmed that professional players are now practicing with LSU's football team and that he intends to play them during the upcoming season.¹

46. On August 19, 2026, a group of professional athletes filed a lawsuit in Louisiana state court, seeking a fifth year of eligibility to participate in college athletics.

47. Three of those professional athletes had signed contracts with NFL teams but nevertheless sought the ability to return to college competition if they did not ultimately make a final professional roster.

48. In the days that followed, public reporting indicated that LSU and Defendant Kiffin recruited the three professional athletes to play football at LSU even though they would not be eligible to participate in college athletics pursuant to longstanding NCAA and SEC rules, including the Professionalism Rules. For example:

- (a) During his August 24, 2026 press conference, Defendant Kiffin said, in reference to the professional players: "They're available to recruit. **So, ourselves, like many places around the country,**

¹ See, e.g., Heather Dinich, *LSU's Lane Kiffin says his players pursuing ex-NFLers*, ESPN (Aug. 31, 2026, 3:00 PM), https://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/49785035/lsu-lane-kiffin-says-players-endorse-pursing-ex-nflers (Defendant Kiffin confirms that at least one former player is practicing with LSU's football team); Seth Emerson, *Lane Kiffin met with LSU's player leadership before adding returning pro players, he said*, New York Times (August 31, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7553369/2026/08/31/lane-kiffin-eligibility-lsu-college-football/> (quoting Defendant Kiffin stating, with regard to adding former professional players to LSU's team, "this is how the real world works. They can bring employees into certain jobs to help the company.").

are recruiting them.”² He also said, “[a]t the end of the day, you know, because of these rulings, they’re either going to play for you or they’re going to play somewhere else around the country. **So, we’ve made the decision to recruit them like probably most people are.”**

- (b) On August 25, 2026, on *The Pat McAfee Show*, Defendant Kiffin went considerably further. Kiffin said, “I said to our staff, I said, whoever the first player commits to will be the poster child . . . [and] the player chose us.”³ Defendant Kiffin stated that multiple schools were recruiting the player and “offering him a lot of money, **and he decided to come play for us.**” He also told his staff, “**Get ready, guys. . . . This will be Lane Kiffin, LSU . . . doing something nobody else is doing.**” Defendant Kiffin defended the decision to recruit and roster the professional athletes by saying “Our players know that, and I think our fans and administration . . . understand that [we]’re doing what’s best for their program.”
- (c) *CBS Sports* reported on August 25, 2026 that sources indicated Defendants Kiffin and LSU “reached out to multiple players on NFL rosters or their representation” with the purpose of getting them to pursue litigation that could enable them to return to college.⁴
- (d) During his August 31, 2026 press conference at LSU, Defendant Kiffin said he met with LSU’s player leadership committee and asked them whether the team wanted the former NFL players

² Lane Kiffin Press Conference (August 24, 2026) available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0V4ZUVdGps&t=14s>

³ See *Lane Kiffin Responds To Critics Of NFL Players Returning To Play At LSU*, THE PAT MCAFEE SHOW (August 25, 2026) available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXL-8iDvIsY>.

⁴ See John Talty and Chris Hummer, *How Lane Kiffin and LSU triggered a national showdown over NFL-to-college transfer*, CBS SPORTS (Aug. 25, 2026, 10:59 AM), available at <https://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/lane-kiffin-lsu-nfl-players-college-football-eligibility-loophole/>.

added.⁵ He described their response as, **“every one of them was emphatic about, ‘if they can help us win, bring ’em.’”**

49. On August 24, 2026, in response to this public reporting, the SEC’s Presidents and Chancellors unanimously affirmed the Conference’s longstanding position that individuals who choose to leave college athletics, sign professional contracts, and compete professionally should not subsequently be permitted to return to college competition. *See* Exhibit B, SEC’s Professionalization Memorandum dated August 26, 2026.

50. The Presidents and Chancellors explained that allowing professional athletes to compete in college sports would “blur the line between college and professional sports, create significant competitive equity concerns, and reduce opportunities for high school and current college athletes.” Ex. B. at 1.

51. On August 25, 2026, the SEC’s Presidents and Chancellors released a policy statement clarifying that its longstanding Professionalism Rules prohibit an SEC institution from having 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

⁵ *See* The Lane Kiffin Press Conference (Aug. 31, 2026) available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHGfBUnAXEk>.

league), NBA/G-League, or WNBA (or affiliate) roster.” Even Defendant Rousse, in his capacity as a CEO of the Conference, voted in favor of the Conference’s policy affirming that college sports are for college athletes.

52. The viewpoints expressed by the SEC as expressed above reflect a core tenet of the Conference’s institutional identity. The SEC holds itself out to its student-athletes, its fans, its media partners, and the public as an organization committed to competitive integrity, educational values, and the principle that collegiate athletics is distinct from professional sports.

The SEC’s First Amendment Rights

53. Defendant LSU is a public university and an instrumentality of the State of Louisiana. Defendant Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College is likewise an instrumentality of the State of Louisiana. As state institutions, these Defendants and their officials acting in their official capacities, including Defendants Rousse, Ausberry, and Kiffin, are state actors whose decisions are made under color of state law. *See West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 49-50 (1988) (holding that a state employee acts under color of state law when exercising responsibilities pursuant to state employment).

54. By recruiting professional athletes in contravention of the SEC’s longstanding principles and rules and reiterating their intent to add these players to their roster for the 2026-27 football season, Defendants forced the SEC to associate

its competitions, its brand, its championships, and its media properties with conduct that the Conference has expressly, unanimously, and publicly rejected and repudiated since its inception. Defendants have forced the SEC to associate its athletic competitions and the conduct of the Conference with professional athletes over the express and unanimous objection of every member institution aside from LSU. Such forced association undermines the SEC's identity and purpose and impairs the Conference's ability to express the values it has publicly espoused.

55. The First Amendment protects not only the right to associate with others “in pursuit of a wide variety of political, social, economic, educational, religious, and cultural ends,” *Roberts v. U.S. Jaycees*, 468 U.S. 609, 622 (1984), but also the corresponding right not to associate. *Id.* at 623; *see also Wooley v. Maynard*, 430 U.S. 705, 714 (1977) (First Amendment protection “includes both the right to speak freely and the right to refrain from speaking at all”). Where, as here, a group is forced to accept certain members whose conduct is antithetical to the group's viewpoint, that compulsion “may impair the ability of the group to express those views, and only those views, that it intends to express.” *Boy Scouts of Am. v. Dale*, 530 U.S. 640, 648 (2000). Defendants' recruitment of, and stated intent to roster, professional athletes in SEC competition, over the express and unanimous objection of every SEC member institution other than LSU, “significantly affect[s]” the SEC's ability to express its longstanding values. *See id.* at 650.

Harm to the SEC

56. Defendants' conduct has caused and continues to cause significant harm to the Conference.

57. Defendants' conduct has infringed the SEC's First Amendment right of expressive association by forcing the Conference to associate itself and its competitions with conduct that it has expressly repudiated.

58. Defendants' conduct has created competitive imbalance among SEC member institutions. LSU's stated intent to roster professional athletes in contravention of the Professionalism Rules, while other institutions have followed the rules and rostered only college athletes, provides an unfair competitive advantage to LSU.

59. Defendants' conduct has disrupted the settled expectations of student-athletes at other SEC institutions who relied on the rules governing roster composition and competitive fairness. Current college athletes who planned their careers around an established set of rules now face the prospect of being displaced by professional athletes.

60. Defendants' conduct has eroded public confidence in the integrity of SEC competition, confidence on which the Conference's brand, its media partnerships, and its educational mission depend.

61. Defendants’ conduct has damaged the Conference’s ability to fulfill the purpose for which it was created: to maintain intercollegiate athletic programs compatible with the highest standards of education and competitive sports.

62. These harms are ongoing. They will continue for as long as Defendants are free to engage in conduct that contradicts and undermines the Conference’s longstanding purpose and mission.

CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT I

DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF BASED ON ACTUAL AND THREATENED VIOLATIONS OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (Against All Defendants)

63. The SEC incorporates by reference all allegations in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

64. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble.” U.S. CONST. amend. I. The First Amendment is applicable to the States through the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. *Va. State Bd. of Pharmacy v. Va. Citizens Consumer Council, Inc.*, 425 U.S. 748, 749 n.1 (1976).

65. The Supreme Court has “long understood as implicit in the right to engage in activities protected by the First Amendment a corresponding right to

associate with others in pursuit of a wide variety of political, social, economic, educational, religious, and cultural ends.” *Roberts*, 468 U.S. at 622. “Freedom of association therefore plainly presupposes a freedom not to associate.” *Id.* at 623.

66. “This right is crucial in preventing the majority from imposing its views on groups that would rather express other, perhaps unpopular, ideas.” *Dale*, 530 U.S. at 647–48. “Forcing a group to accept certain members may impair the ability of the group to express those views, and only those views, that it intends to express.” *Id.* at 648. As Justice Jackson emphasized, “[i]f there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that *no official*, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.” *W. Va. State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624, 642 (1943) (emphasis added).

67. The Conference engages in expressive association. As set forth above, the Conference has repeatedly and publicly expressed its position that professional athletes should not be permitted to return to college competition and that the integrity of college athletics depends on maintaining the distinction between college and professional sports. These values are embodied in the Conference’s Constitution and Bylaws, in formal governance actions of its Presidents and Chancellors, in public statements by the SEC’s Commissioner, and in the Conference’s communications with its member institutions, student-athletes, fans, and media partners.

68. Further, Section 1983 provides that “[e]very person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State . . . subjects, or causes to be subjected, any citizen of the United States or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and laws, shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress.” 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

69. Each Defendant is a “person” within the meaning of Section 1983. Defendant LSU is a public university and an instrumentality of the State of Louisiana. Defendant Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College is a public university system board and an instrumentality of the State of Louisiana. Defendants Rousse, Ausberry, and Kiffin are state officials sued in their official capacities. Each Defendant acted and continues to act under color of state law in carrying out the conduct described herein. *See West*, 487 U.S. at 50.

70. Defendants, each of them a state actor, have through their conduct forced the Conference to associate its competitions, brand, and championships with conduct that the Conference has expressly repudiated by recruiting professional athletes, publicly announcing the intent to roster them, and permitting them to actively practice with LSU’s football team, all over the Conference’s express and unanimous objection. A state university and its public employees cannot force an

athletic conference to associate its competitions with conduct antithetical to the conference's expressed values. *See West*, 487 U.S. at 50 (“[G]enerally, a public employee acts under color of state law while acting in his official capacity or while exercising his responsibilities pursuant to state law.”) Such a forced association “significantly affect[s]” the Conference’s ability to express its views. *Dale*, 530 U.S. at 650.

71. The Conference has a constitutional right to determine the values that it expresses, to disassociate from conduct that contradicts those values, and to enforce its Constitution and Bylaws that give effect to those values. Defendants’ conduct infringes those rights and therefore violates the First Amendment.

72. Defendants’ actions were taken under color of state law. Defendants LSU and the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College are state institutions. The remaining Defendants carried out the challenged conduct in their official capacities as state employees exercising authority vested in them by the State of Louisiana. Their decisions to recruit professional athletes to LSU’s football team and allow them to practice with the team, along with their announced plan to place them on LSU’s official football roster, were made pursuant to their state-authorized responsibilities over LSU’s athletics program.

73. The State of Louisiana itself has weighed in on this issue. On September 2, 2026, the Attorney General of the State of Louisiana filed an amicus brief in the pending Louisiana state court lawsuit advocating in favor of allowing LSU to add former professional players to its football roster.

74. The deprivation of the SEC's constitutional rights was caused by Defendants' conduct, including Defendants' recruitment of professional athletes, Defendants' decision to have them practice with the football team, and Defendants' stated intent to add these professional athletes to LSU's official football roster. The First Amendment claim is ripe for adjudication now. Defendants' conduct infringes on the SEC's expressive association rights.

75. Further, Defendants' public, unequivocal commitment to place the recruited professional athletes on LSU's official football roster creates a real and immediate threat of further forced association with conduct contrary to the Conference's stated principles. Defendants have gone beyond mere public statements: they have permitted professional athletes to actively practice with LSU's football team, an affirmative step toward culmination of the wrongful forced association. The infringement of the SEC's expressive association rights is not conjectural or hypothetical.

76. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' violation of 42 U.S.C. § 1983, the SEC has suffered and continues to suffer injury, including the

infringement of its First Amendment rights, competitive imbalance among its member institutions, and harm to its institutional identity and public reputation.

77. The SEC therefore requests that the Court enter a declaratory judgment that the First Amendment protects the SEC's right to disassociate from Defendants' conduct.

78. The SEC is entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief, as well as an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988.

COUNT II
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF
(Preliminary and Permanent Injunction)
(Against All Defendants)

79. The SEC incorporates by reference all allegations in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

80. The SEC is entitled to preliminary and permanent injunctive relief.

81. ***Likelihood of Success on the Merits.*** As set forth above, the Conference is likely to succeed on its claims that Defendants have infringed the SEC's First Amendment rights.

82. ***Irreparable Harm.*** Absent injunctive relief, Defendants' ongoing violations will cause continuing and irreparable harm to the Conference. The infringement of the SEC's First Amendment right of expressive association constitutes irreparable harm per se. *See Elrod v. Burns*, 427 U.S. 347, 373 (1976) (plurality opinion) ("The loss of First Amendment freedoms, for even minimal

periods of time, unquestionably constitutes irreparable injury.’’). Competitive imbalance introduced during the 2026-27 season cannot be undone. Student-athletes displaced from rosters by professionals cannot recover those lost opportunities. And the damage to the confidence of the public and the SEC’s member institutions in the integrity of SEC competition, once inflicted, is difficult if not impossible to repair.

83. ***Balance of Equities.*** The Conference’s interest in protecting its First Amendment rights outweighs Defendants’ interest in recruiting professional athletes and openly violating longstanding Conference rules—rules that LSU itself reaffirmed as recently as August 25, 2026. The Conference does not ask this Court to prevent any student-athlete from competing. It asks this Court to declare that Defendants cannot violate the SEC’s First Amendment right to freedom of association.

84. ***Public Interest.*** The public has a strong interest in the integrity of college athletics. The Professionalism Rules protect opportunities for current and incoming student-athletes, maintain competitive fairness, and preserve the character of college sports as distinct from professional sports. Enforcing those rules serves the public interest. Moreover, the public has an independent interest in ensuring that First Amendment protections are upheld against state encroachment.

85. The SEC requests that this Court enter:

- (a) A preliminary and permanent injunction prohibiting Defendants from violating the Conference's First Amendment rights by compelling the Conference to associate with conduct that is contrary to the Conference's purpose and mission;
- (b) A preliminary and permanent injunction barring Defendants from seeking to deter, coerce, prevent, or punish the Conference for exercising its First Amendment rights.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff the Southeastern Conference respectfully requests that this Court enter judgment in its favor and against Defendants, and grant the following relief:

- A. Enter a declaratory judgment that the First Amendment protects the Conference's right to disassociate from Defendants' conduct;
- B. Enter a preliminary and permanent injunction prohibiting Defendants from violating the Conference's First Amendment rights by compelling the Conference to associate with conduct that is contrary to the Conference's purpose and mission;
- C. Enter a preliminary and permanent injunction barring Defendants from seeking to deter, coerce, prevent, or punish the Conference for exercising its First Amendment rights; and

D. Grant such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

This the 3rd day of September, 2026.

**ROBINSON, BRADSHAW &
HINSON, P.A.**

By: /s/ Robert W. Fuller

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Attorneys for Plaintiff the Southeastern Conference

CIVIL COVER SHEET

2026 Sep-03 AM 11:42
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
N.D. OF ALABAMA

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

The Southeastern Conference

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Jefferson
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)
R. Thomas Warburton, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, LLP
1819 Fifth Ave North, Birmingham, AL 35203
(205)521-8000

DEFENDANTS

Louisiana State University; Board of Supervisors of
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College;
Wade Rousse; Verge Ausberry; Lane Kiffin

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant

(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF
THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
- ☒ 3 Federal Question
(U.S. Government Not a Party)
- ☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant
- ☐ 4 Diversity
(Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- | | PTF | DEF | | PTF | DEF |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Citizen of This State | ☒ 1 | ☐ 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State | ☐ 4 | ☐ 4 |
| Citizen of Another State | ☐ 2 | ☒ 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | ☐ 5 | ☐ 5 |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | ☐ 3 | ☐ 3 | Foreign Nation | ☐ 6 | ☐ 6 |

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES	
☐ 110 Insurance ☐ 120 Marine ☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument ☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment ☐ 151 Medicare Act ☐ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) ☐ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits ☐ 160 Stockholders' Suits ☐ 190 Other Contract ☐ 195 Contract Product Liability ☐ 196 Franchise	PERSONAL INJURY ☐ 310 Airplane ☐ 315 Airplane Product Liability ☐ 320 Assault, Libel & Slander ☐ 330 Federal Employers' Liability ☐ 340 Marine ☐ 345 Marine Product Liability ☐ 350 Motor Vehicle ☐ 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability ☐ 360 Other Personal Injury ☐ 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice	☐ 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability ☐ 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability ☐ 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY ☐ 370 Other Fraud ☐ 371 Truth in Lending ☐ 380 Other Personal Property Damage ☐ 385 Property Damage Product Liability	☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 ☐ 690 Other LABOR ☐ 710 Fair Labor Standards Act ☐ 720 Labor/Management Relations ☐ 740 Railway Labor Act ☐ 751 Family and Medical Leave Act ☐ 790 Other Labor Litigation ☐ 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION ☐ 462 Naturalization Application ☐ 465 Other Immigration Actions	☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 ☐ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS ☐ 820 Copyrights ☐ 830 Patent ☐ 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application ☐ 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY ☐ 861 HIA (1395ff) ☐ 862 Black Lung (923) ☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) ☐ 864 SSID Title XVI ☐ 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS ☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) ☐ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	☐ 375 False Claims Act ☐ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) ☐ 400 State Reapportionment ☐ 410 Antitrust ☐ 430 Banks and Banking ☐ 450 Commerce ☐ 460 Deportation ☐ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations ☐ 480 Consumer Credit ☐ 485 Telephone Consumer Protection Act ☐ 490 Cable/Sat TV ☐ 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange ☐ 890 Other Statutory Actions ☐ 891 Agricultural Acts ☐ 893 Environmental Matters ☐ 895 Freedom of Information Act ☐ 896 Arbitration ☐ 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision ☐ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
REAL PROPERTY ☐ 210 Land Condemnation ☐ 220 Foreclosure ☐ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment ☐ 240 Torts to Land ☐ 245 Tort Product Liability ☐ 290 All Other Real Property	CIVIL RIGHTS ☒ 440 Other Civil Rights ☐ 441 Voting ☐ 442 Employment ☐ 443 Housing/Accommodations ☐ 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment ☐ 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other ☐ 448 Education	PRISONER PETITIONS Habeas Corpus: ☐ 463 Alien Detainee ☐ 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence ☐ 530 General ☐ 535 Death Penalty Other: ☐ 540 Mandamus & Other ☐ 550 Civil Rights ☐ 555 Prison Condition ☐ 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement			

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 Original Proceeding
- ☐ 2 Removed from State Court
- ☐ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
- ☐ 4 Reinstated or Reopened
- ☐ 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
- ☐ 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer
- ☐ 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):

42 USC § 1983

Brief description of cause:

Declaratory and Injunctive Relief

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

☐ CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.

DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:

JURY DEMAND:

☐ Yes☒ No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE

DOCKET NUMBER

DATE
09/03/2026

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # _____ AMOUNT _____ APPLYING IFP _____ JUDGE _____ MAG. JUDGE _____

EXHIBIT A

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

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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

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*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.

CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 6

Institutional Control and Responsibility

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***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

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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

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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

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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]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 14

Eligibility: Academic and General Requirements

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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*]

BYLAW, ARTICLE 15

Financial Aid

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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]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 16

Awards, Benefits, and Expenses for
Enrolled Student-Athletes

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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]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 17

Playing and Practice Seasons

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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]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 18

Championships and Tournaments

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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]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 19

Compliance and Enforcement

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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.]

BYLAW, ARTICLE 21

Committees, Meetings, Events

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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]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 22

Media and Related Agreements

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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]*

BYLAW, ARTICLE 23

People, Culture, and Community Initiatives

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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 BYLAW, ARTICLE 30

Administrative Regulations

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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

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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.

EXHIBIT B



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



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