

Regulation 6

FOOTBALL

6.1 General Rules. Football Conference competition shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of the NCAA, the Mountain West Handbook, the Mountain West Football Game Management Handbook, and the Mountain West Football Championship Game Manual.

6.2 Championship Determination. The Conference champion shall be determined via the Mountain West Football Championship Game to be played annually between the winners of the Mountain Division and West Division, respectively. *(Adopted January 2013)*

6.2.1 Incomplete Championship Policy. In the event the Football Championship Game cannot be started or cannot be completed as a result of inclement weather, COVID-19 or other unforeseen circumstances, the championship game participant with the highest College Football Playoff (CFP) Ranking (or a composite average of selected computer rankings if no MW teams are ranked in the final CFP Top 25) between the two participants shall be declared the Conference champion for CFP purposes only. Otherwise, the two teams will be recognized as co-champions. *(Adopted January 2013; Modified November 2020)*

6.3 Host Determination. The Mountain West Football Championship Game shall be played at the site of the divisional champion with the highest winning percentage in Conference contests only. The host site shall be determined no later than the Sunday following the conclusion of the regular season. Additional information regarding host determination and host tie-breaking procedures can be found in the Mountain West Football Championship Game Manual. *(Adopted January 2013; Revised October 2014, April 2018)*

6.4 Divisional Champions. A divisional champion shall be the team with the highest winning percentage in all Conference contests, both inter-divisional and intra-divisional, in the division. The divisional champions shall be determined no later than the Sunday following the conclusion of the regular season. Additional information regarding divisional champions and divisional tie-breaking procedures can be found in the Mountain West Football Championship Game Manual. *(Adopted January 2013)*

6.5 Scheduling.

6.5.1 Divisions. The Mountain Division shall consist of the following teams: Air Force, Boise State, Colorado State, New Mexico, Utah State & Wyoming. The West Division shall consist of the following teams: Fresno State, Hawai'i, Nevada, San Diego State, San José State & UNLV.

6.5.2 Divisional Play. Each member of a division shall play each other member of its division on an annual basis (five contests) with alternating home and away designations. Each division member shall play three crossover opponents from the other division on an annual basis, rotating over a four-year period. Each team shall play the same three crossover opponents home and away in years one and two and then the remaining three crossover opponents home and away in years three and four. The cycle shall then repeat.

6.5.3 Scheduling Parameters. Specific football scheduling parameters are distributed to the membership on an annual basis as the schedule is being constructed.

6.6 Arrival at Contest Site – Conference Competition. The visiting team shall arrive at the contest site prepared to compete at the scheduled start time. A visiting team that does not arrive at the contest site prepared to compete at the scheduled time shall incur the following penalties: *(Revised October 2002, October 2003, July 2021)*

- a. Forfeiture of the contest at the moment the scheduled start time is reached, subject to the approval of the Conference office. **(Note:** Approval by the Conference office shall consider extenuating circumstances beyond the control of a visiting team that has made an appropriate effort to arrive at the game site at the scheduled start time. Involved institutions should try to communicate as early as possible any concerns in this regard. “Extenuating circumstances” could be affected by whether or not contracted television is involved.)
- b. A financial penalty equal to the amount of documented losses incurred by the host institution and the Conference, including, but not limited to, ticket refunds, concession losses, facility rental, personnel expenses, television contract rebates, officiating fees, and game operations costs.
- c. Inability by a team/teams to compete, or cancellations due to COVID-19, will not be considered extenuating circumstances. *(Adopted July 2021)*

6.7 Artificial Noisemakers. The use of artificial noisemakers or other similar devices is prohibited during game action, particularly at a time that could disrupt the performance of a player. More detailed information regarding the definition and elimination of artificial noisemakers can be found in the Mountain West Football Championship Game Management Handbook.

The prohibition against artificial noisemakers does not preclude the use of institutionally-controlled traditions (e.g., cannons, train whistle). Such items, however, must not be activated during game action or at a time that could disrupt the performance of a team or player. For example, it would be permissible to fire a cannon as the ball was kicked off, but not permissible to fire a cannon as the receiver was attempting to receive the kick.

Cheerleader megaphones and amplified sound systems are also permissible, provided they are utilized in a positive and sporting fashion. Cheerleaders are not permitted to direct amplified sound toward the field and are required to discontinue use of the system when the team(s) breaks the huddle for the next play. Amplified sound may not be utilized during game action or at any time that is disruptive to the competitors.

6.8 Squad-Size Limitations. Football traveling squads shall be limited to 74 student-athletes for the visiting team in all Conference competition. If a team exceeds the squad-size limitation, the team shall decrease its travel party size by one full-time coach for the next away-from-home regular-season Conference competition after the violation has been reported. The limit shall be 74 student-athletes for the Conference Championship. There shall be no limit on the squad-size for the home team or for non-conference contests. *(Revised April 2014, April 2015, June 2016, July 2019)*

6.9 Complimentary Tickets. The host institution shall provide 400 complimentary, maximum-priced tickets to the visiting institution. *(Revised June 2022)*

6.10 Video Exchange Policies and Procedures. Each contest shall be videoed and exchanged electronically between member institutions according to Mountain West standards and guidelines. This shall include

requirements related to the football officiating program. Video exchange arrangements for non-conference contests shall be determined on a case-by-case basis between the two participating institutions. The video crews from visiting institutions (especially those in the Mountain West) shall be afforded every possible courtesy and professional assistance with regard to moving equipment, camera positions and the like. For specifics on the video exchange process, please refer to the Mountain West Football Championship Game Management Handbook. *(Revised April 2007)*

6.11 Video/Scouting Report Exchange. An athletics department representative shall not send a film, video, or scouting report or give a written scouting report on a Conference team to any non-conference institution.

6.11.1 Violations of Exchange Policy. A member institution that exchanges video or scouting reports in the sport of football with institutions outside the Conference shall be subject to the following:

- a. **First Offense.** Private reprimand of the head coach and the individual who sent the items to the institution outside the Conference.
- b. **Second Offense.** Written notice from the Conference of the second offense. A copy of the notice shall be kept in the personnel file of the individual in the office of the institution's director of athletics.
- c. **Third Offense.** The Commissioner shall suspend the head coach for one contest. Such suspension shall occur immediately following receipt of notice by the Commissioner.

6.12 Visiting Bands and Spirit Squads. A visiting band and/or spirit squad (e.g., cheerleaders) shall notify its opponent no later than July 1 of its intent to perform at the football contest. Upon timely receipt of such notice, the band/spirit squad shall be admitted to the contest at no cost and shall be permitted to perform. The tickets for the band/spirit squad shall come from the visiting team's allotment of 400 complimentary tickets. Performance on the playing field shall be determined by the home team's game management. The host institution should endeavor to provide adequate seating for visiting band members, including flag and dance lines. *(Revised ??)*

6.12.1 Homecoming. Visiting bands and spirit squads shall be permitted to perform at halftime of an opponent's Homecoming contest, only if the visiting team was invited by its opponent to participate in the Homecoming activities. A visiting band shall not participate in Homecoming activities if it was not invited to do so.

6.13 Band Performances. Bands are prohibited from playing during game action or at any time that is disruptive to the competitors. Pregame, postgame, timeouts, halftime, between quarters, or other breaks in the action are permissible times for band activities. In the sport of football, bands must discontinue playing when the team with the ball breaks the huddle until the completion of the play. If a team plays a no-huddle offense, the band shall not play at any time during the offensive possession.

6.14 Public Address Announcers. Public address announcers shall NOT be cheerleaders for the home team, exhorting the crowd, or engaging in activities outside their responsibilities in reporting the pertinent facts of the game. Traditional inflections are permissible, but the PA announcers (as outlined in the Mountain West Championship Game Management Handbook) must be cognizant of not "crossing the line." Sound from the public address system must cease when the team with the ball breaks the

huddle. If a team plays a no-huddle offense, the public address announcer shall ensure his/her announcements are not disruptive to the offensive team.

6.15 Coaches Television Shows – Video Reciprocity. Institutions may use highlight footage from Conference contests for their respective coaches shows, subject to the provisions agreed upon with the Conference broadcast partners. Institutions shall be responsible for making such arrangements with non-conference opponents.

6.16 Selection/Placement Procedures for Bowl Games. The Conference office shall coordinate the process for the selection and placement of bowl-eligible institutions in bowl games – either those with which the Mountain West is contracted or for at-large opportunities. The parameters for a member institution’s participation in a bowl shall be negotiated and confirmed by the Conference (in accordance with existing agreements for those games with which the Mountain West is contracted).

6.16.1 Bowl Promotions. The Conference should not promote one institution over another. Institutions are responsible for promoting themselves and exchanges of telephone calls, emails, written materials, promotional items, videos, etc., between bowl officials and Mountain West institutional representatives are not limited. However, in-person, on-site (site of bowl officials) meetings by institutional staff members with officials of bowl games with which the Conference has a guaranteed relationship is prohibited. This does not preclude visits by the bowls to the institutions or to contests involving the institutions. Member institutions may also interact with bowl representatives away from their campus if they happen to be in the bowl’s location for a regular-season contest or are involved in a function at some location in which a bowl representative is also in attendance.

6.16.1.1 Restrictions. Mountain West institutions shall not attempt to “outbid” fellow Conference members for potential bowl slots by offering financial bonuses, ticket guarantees, or other incentives to bowl officials. *(Revised April 2000, November 2005, and April 2006)*

6.16.2 Bowl Partners Selection. Mountain West institutions shall be required to compete in the post-season if selected. The Mountain West bowl partners are not bound by the final standings and may select participants at their discretion, except as specified in the contractual agreements, in consultation with the Conference office. Every effort shall be made to protect the league champion(s) in the bowl selection process. Co-champions and other ties in the standings shall remain unchanged for Conference awards, records, and revenue distribution purposes. Eligible Mountain West teams selected for a bowl or CFP game will be expected to travel and compete in the designated post-season game. Should an institution choose not to be or be unable to participate, they may be subject to penalties. *(Revised April 2006, July 2021)*

6.16.3 Alternate Bowl Teams (5-7 Regular-Season Record). A Mountain West football team which finishes with a 5-7 record may participate in a postseason bowl game at the discretion of the institution -- should the NCAA system have an insufficient number of deserving (6-6) teams and need to utilize the established alternate criteria. However, said institution must fund its team’s participation at its own expense unless it requests a bowl reimbursement subsidy from the Conference. Any such request requires approval by the Mountain West Board of Directors. *(Adopted June 2016)*

6.16.4 Additional Bowl Selection Process. Mountain West Bowl Placement Protection for Divisional Champions. The divisional champions in the MW Football Championship Game shall receive consideration for bowl placement over the remaining bowl-eligible teams, regardless of record. While not a prescribed selection for any bowl partner, these two teams must be placed and consideration given to destination/match-up.

Mountain West Bowl Eligibility Guidelines. The following criteria shall be used to determine which teams at the lower end of the bowl eligibility pool shall have priority to be placed in bowl games in the event the number of bowl-eligible teams in a given year exceeds the number of available bowl slots. Said criteria shall be applied in order, until the necessary separation is achieved, to distinguish between eligible teams in a given year. *(Revised August 2014)*

- a. Regular-season Conference record (with the stipulation that Mountain West records shall be considered directly comparable, even though teams may have played different opponents depending upon the crossover match-ups for that season).
- b. Head-to-head results.
- c. Common opponents (including all Mountain West and non-conference games for that season).

6.16.4.1 Exception. The bowl partners may select a team other than that identified via the above process, so long as the team distinguished by the criteria is placed in a bowl.

6.16.4.2 Exception. These guidelines shall be subject to review on an annual basis to facilitate the identification of any unintended consequences and/or to discuss necessary adjustments.

6.17 Awards. The Conference football coaches and media as selected by the Conference office shall select recipients for all awards.

6.17.1 All-Conference Team. The All-Conference team shall consist of 25 first-team and 25 second-team players. There shall be 11 offensive players by position, 11 defensive players by position, one place kicker, one punter and one special teams player on the first team and second team. Select players shall be named honorable mention. Each shall be provided an award from the Conference except honorable mention.

6.17.2 Individual Awards. Individual awards shall be provided to the Coach of the Year, the Offensive Player of the Year, the Defensive Player of the Year, the Special Teams Player of the Year, and the Freshman of the Year.

Only head coaches are viable coach of the year candidates. There shall not be a tie for Mountain West Coach of the Year. In the event of a tie, coaches shall re-vote between the two (or more) highest vote receivers. Co-awards for the individual student-athlete awards are permitted, but there must not be more than two. In the event of a three-way tie for an "Of the Year" award, the coaches shall re-vote amongst the three to get to one or two recipients.

To be considered for the Offensive Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, and/or the Special Teams Player of the year, the recipient shall have been a first-team All-Conference selection. To be considered for Freshman of the Year, the recipient shall have been the highest-ranking freshman on any All-Conference team. *(Clarified August 2017)*

6.17.3 Championship Game Most Valuable Players. The outstanding offensive and defensive players from the Mountain West Football Championship Game shall be provided an award from the Conference at the conclusion of the contest.

6.18 Meeting of Coaches. There shall be an annual in-person meeting of the head football coaches to be held at the site of the Mountain West Spring Meetings. Attendance by each head coach at the in-person meeting is mandatory. Head football coaches will also be required to participate in meetings (e.g., monthly calls or virtual meetings) during the academic year as scheduled by the Conference office. *(Revised July 2021)*