

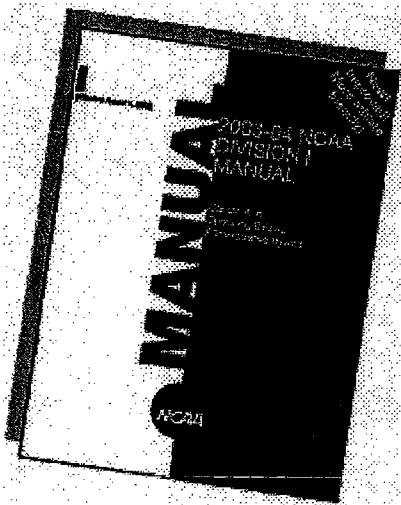
**The NCAA News**  
**News & Features**

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Centerpiece

## LESS bureaucratic IS MORE responsive

By Gary T. Brown, The NCAA News



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Regulatory NCAA continues effort to chip off the bureaucracy block
Basketball coaches hope flexible philosophy applies to 'five/eight'

When most people hear the word "reform," they think of tighter standards, but the latest reform the NCAA is taking on actually encourages the Association to loosen up.

During his State of the Association address at the 2003 NCAA Convention, NCAA President Myles Brand mapped out his vision for reform and advocacy in intercollegiate athletics. Part of that reform was a desire to create an NCAA that is more responsive to student-athlete needs. Since then there have been subtle but important distinctions that support Brand's vision. With legislative interpretations, waiver requests and reinstatement appeals, calls in the gray areas are going more to the "yes" side of the ledger when appropriate.

For example, in August, two soccer student-athletes who participated in two contests as members of an outside team had the traditional one-for-one withholding penalty cut in half because of mitigating circumstances. In another case, a swimmer who competed in a meet before the institution completed the one-time transfer exception paperwork was reinstated immediately because the student-athlete "had no culpability" for the violation, and the release could have been requested and received before the student-athlete competed.

Another decision exempted nine incoming men's and women's basketball student-athletes from repaying financial aid given to them despite their not having completed the mandatory six credit hours. The school had just changed its academic system from a credit calculation to an hour format and the aid was provided as a result of an administrative error in determining how the credits transferred to hours in the new system. Had the student-athletes been enrolled

