NCAA Athletics Transition – Frequently Asked Questions

When will all NCAA sports be done at BYU – Hawaii?
The planned transition timeframe is three years, so the winter and spring sports will have their final seasons in 2017.

What options do the student athletes have?
Student athletes will have the options to continue with their teams during the coming scheduled seasons in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. All committed scholarships will be honored. Coaches and athletics staff will work with each student athlete to determine the best course of action for their goals and desires with collegiate sports participation, and will help them toward those goals and desires.

Was this decision based solely on finances?
It would be accurate to think in terms of resource allocation, instead of strictly money. Three areas of resources were the major considerations: space, headcount and budget. While money touches each of these areas, that was not the only consideration. Several options were presented and considered, some with more consideration toward money and others with less.

Did the Athletics department, coaches or teams do anything wrong?
No. The dedication and excellence of coaches, staff, and student athletes have been significant and noteworthy over the many years of Seasider athletics. The efforts of all who have contributed to the tradition of the athletics program are greatly appreciated. This transition is not in response to the performance of any team, coach, athlete or department.

Why a three-year transition instead of two, one or an immediate cancellation?
The decision to transition out of intercollegiate athletics over a period of three years was the timeframe most supported by the coaches. The coaches felt like three years would best honor those student athletes already at BYU – Hawaii.

How will coaches recruit competitive players to a program that is being transitioned out?
This will certainly require a different approach to recruiting. The message will be open and honest on the front end so student athletes will know what they are joining as they select BYU – Hawaii. Details of how this approach will work will be a key discussion for coaches and athletic leadership in the coming months and years.

How did KSL, Deseret News, Hawaii News Now and other media get information on the announcement before the students? Why did student athletes have to hear the information from outside sources first?
Every effort was made to protect the interests of the student athletes and the coaching staff and get information to them as soon as it was available. News reports prior to the official announcement on Friday, March 28, were not based on official information which was received on Thursday, March 27. Official notification was first given to those directly affected, coaches and student athletes, as soon as it was available and authorized.
Could we consider non-contact intramural sports, in addition to other traditional sports, such as ping pong, surfing, co-ed softball, volleyball and swimming?
These are some great ideas that certainly add to the conversations that are ongoing about new and innovative programs that involve more students and add to the recreational and athletic experience at BYU–Hawaii. One idea that has been suggested already is an outdoor recreational program that promotes an active lifestyle and takes advantage of the unique benefits of living in Hawaii, such as year-round hiking, running, water sports, etc.

Could cultural activities such as Culture Night and Foodfest be enhanced to take up some of the slack with students’ non-academic time?
Along with athletic activities, cultural activities can and should continue to be enhanced to add depth and breadth to the overall student experience.

What are the anticipated effects of the transition of intercollegiate athletics on the Exercise and Sport Science academic department?
It is expected that the EXS department will continue as it has as a significant department on campus. During and after the transition period, as it has historically, the program will be reviewed periodically to make sure it’s meeting the needs of our students and the university.

Was consideration given to keeping just a couple of the teams? What other options were considered?
Several options were considered over the years, and increasingly in the recent past as the discussion continued related to the future of intercollegiate athletics at BYU–Hawaii. Keeping a couple of teams was included in those options. The challenge with just a few teams is the participation in NCAA Division II. To be a member of Division II of the NCAA and participate in the PacWest conference, the university has to offer at least 10 teams. Because of that, it was not considered a feasible option. Other options included leaving everything as it was, various versions of fundraising, and associating with the NAIA instead of the NCAA.

With three recent National Championship runs and a legendary winning tradition, why is the intercollegiate athletics program being transitioned out?
As mentioned in the announcement, the decision to transition out of intercollegiate athletics is not a reflection of the performance of any team or individual inside or outside of the Athletics department. A tradition of excellence has always been a trait of Seasider Athletics.

Why did student athletes not get a voice in this decision until after it was final?
It is difficult, even impossible in most cases, to include all interested parties in every organizational decision. Coaches and athletics staff have been and will continue to be involved at appropriate times throughout the transition period. Their support and feedback has been valuable and critical to the process, and they will continue to seek ideas, input and suggestions from students.
Why were coaches as well as athletics department staff recruited and hired when plans for removing the athletics department were already in discussion?
Final confirmation of the decision to transition out of intercollegiate athletics didn’t occur until immediately prior to the time of the official announcement. It would have been presumptuous to make plans based on inaccurate or incomplete information until that point. If a coach is on a contract (contracts are written for 12 months/one season), his/her current and any renewed contracts during the three-year transition period will be honored.

How are staff members in the Athletics department going to be helped to find new jobs? If they leave during the transition period, who will replace them?
Athletics leadership will work closely with each member of the Athletics staff and BYU–Hawaii Human Resources to give access to tools like LDS Employment Services (LDSJobs.org) and other resources throughout the three-year transition period. If a member of the staff secures a new job during the three-year transition period, they will be replaced, but with an individual who understands the temporary nature of the position. The duties will not simply be spread among those who remain.

Can donors give directly to the Athletics program?
Yes, anyone can choose to donate to any program, but if the program is not a Board of Trustees-approved priority, the university cannot solicit those donations. The main priorities in recent years have been international student aid (1WORK) and online education.

Was fundraising considered as an option to cover the cost of intercollegiate athletics?
Yes. Fundraising was among the several options presented to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. Different versions and strategies of fundraising for intercollegiate athletics were considered and ultimately determined to not be in the best interest of the university as it actively seeks to serve and educate more students as its primary purpose.

How will scholarships work during the three-year transition period? Will more or less money be available?
Committed scholarships will be honored for all student athletes. Current scholarship policies will remain in force and the amount of funds allocated to scholarships will not change during the three-year transition period. Funds may be allocated differently, however, to accommodate varying needs of the student athletes – such as providing a summer semester scholarship, for example, to help a student graduate sooner.

Some student athletes may not graduate or complete their eligibility within the next three years. Will they receive scholarships beyond the three years?
Any case like this would be considered individually by the Athletics department leadership and coaches.

Do the university and Church see intercollegiate athletics as a missionary tool?
Yes, it is a missionary tool. Stories of conversion within Seasider Athletics are common and often carry with them unique and inspiring elements. There have been wonderful stories over many years. It would be impossible to minimize the impact on any convert’s life. This is a case where a choice had to be made between two positive things, and as a result, some positive outcomes will be lost in favor of other positive outcomes.
How does the university plan to continue promoting to the local community without an intercollegiate athletics program?
As intercollegiate athletic contests are transitioned out over three years, new and innovative ways of partnering with and involving the local Laie and North Shore community will be developed. Existing efforts will also continue and be strengthened. Cultural events such as Culture Night and destinations such as The Hub are part of this effort.

Where will the additional students live when the enrollment reaches 3,200? Is there concern with some of the off-campus living conditions?
It is anticipated that all the incremental growth of the student body will be housed on campus. The University Housing office is working hard to establish standards for off-campus housing, and is making progress with the majority of landlords who house students. Any concerns with living conditions should be reported to the Housing office.

Many athletes have chosen BYU–Hawaii because of the uplifting environment where moral standards are high. They are now faced with the decision to stay in the uplifting environment or transfer to work toward personal and career goals. What advice can be given to them?
This again is a case where a choice must be made between two positive things, and as a result, some positive outcomes will be lost in favor of other positive outcomes. Most student athletes will be able to complete their education at BYU–Hawaii during the three-year transition period, and we are hopeful that the majority of the current student athletes will choose to remain at BYU–Hawaii to complete their degree.

Is there a plan to discontinue the name Seasider? Are the official colors of the university going to change?
We will continue to use the Seasider in various places across campus. Official branding of the university, including the colors, will remain the same.