

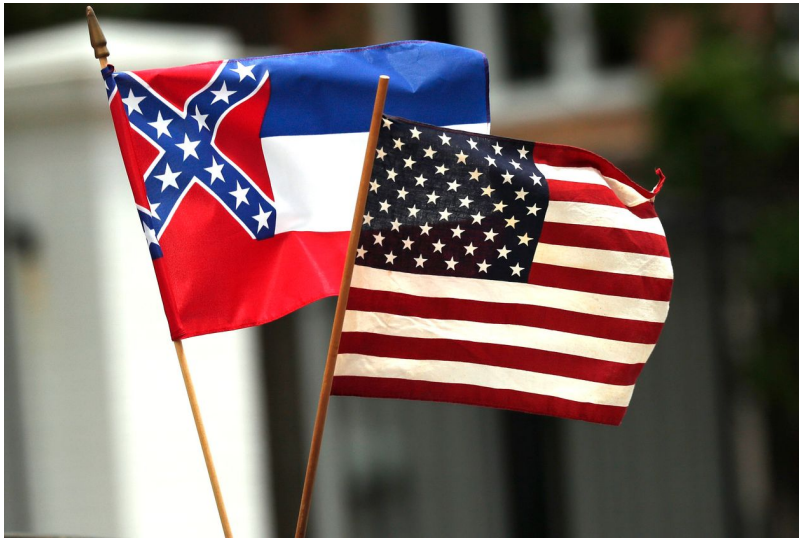
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SPORTS

NCAA Won't Hold Championship Events Where Confederate Flag Is Flown

According to a statement by the NCAA Board of Governors, the ban primarily affects Mississippi, whose flag features Confederate emblems



The NCAA's statement on the Confederate flag comes less than a day after SEC Greg Sankey called upon Mississippi to remove the Confederate emblem from its flag if the state wanted to continue hosting league championship events.

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By [Laine Higgins](#)

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The National Collegiate Athletic Association became the latest organization to take action in condemnation of the Confederate flag, saying Friday that it would not hold championship events in states where it “has a prominent presence.”

According to a statement by the NCAA Board of Governors, the ban primarily affects Mississippi, whose flag features the 13 white stars and blue bars of the Confederate flag in the top left corner.

“There is no place in college athletics or the world for symbols or acts of discrimination and oppression,” said Michael V. Drake, the outgoing president of the Ohio State

University who presides over the NCAA Board of Governors.

Meanwhile in Minneapolis, where George Floyd was killed by police, the Minnesota Twins removed a statue of their former owner outside Target Field and apologized for racist remarks he made forty years ago. Calvin Griffith, who moved the franchise from Washington D.C. in 1961, said in 1978 that he uprooted the team to Minnesota “when I found out you only had 15,000 blacks here.”

Prior to Friday, the NCAA in 2001 had barred schools in states that displayed the Confederate flag from being awarded championship sites in advance. However, those schools were still allowed to host NCAA events if they earned the right based on tournament seeding or ranking. This primarily affected sports where the NCAA does not decide the location of preliminary championship rounds in advance, such as baseball and softball.

The announcement from the NCAA comes amidst a racial reckoning in college sports, sparked by Floyd's killing that prompted college athletes to speak out against injustices within their locker rooms. It's a major shift for college sports, where the racial makeup of well-paid coaches and athletic directors does not mirror the predominantly black population in the most lucrative sports, football and basketball.

The NCAA's statement on the Confederate flag comes less than a day after Southeastern Conference Commissioner Greg Sankey called upon Mississippi to remove the Confederate emblem from its flag if the state wanted to continue hosting league championship events. In practice, that would preclude Mississippi and Mississippi State from hosting the most important conference games, which also are substantial revenue generating opportunities for universities. Ole Miss's nickname, the Rebels, is a reference to the Confederate army.

In the last decade, students have defaced statues of confederate leaders on campus and loudly criticized the state flag, which the university stopped flying in 2015.

“The University of Mississippi community concluded years ago that the Confederate battle flag did not represent many of our core values, such as civility and respect for others,” said Chancellor Glenn Boyce in a statement Thursday. “We support the SEC's position for changing the Mississippi state flag to an image that is more welcoming and inclusive for all people.”

Officials at Mississippi State also backed Sankey's statement, albeit with a dose of criticism.

"We are disappointed that our student-athletes and coaches will potentially be affected by something outside of their control," wrote Mississippi State Athletic Director John Cohen in a statement.

Of the two Mississippi SEC schools, Mississippi State has hosted the most NCAA championship events in recent years, in large part because of its dominant women's basketball program, runners up in the NCAA championship in 2017 and 2018 and frequent host of first and second-round NCAA tournament games.

For most sports, such as women's basketball and lacrosse, the NCAA does not decide the location of the preliminary rounds of championship tournaments in advance.

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