

871—24.44(96) Athletes—disqualifications. “Athletes,” as used in Iowa Code section 96.5(9), applies to professional athletes. A professional athlete is an individual whose occupation is participating in athletic or sporting events for wages. A semiprofessional athlete is within the scope of Iowa Code section 96.5(9), if such sports services are performed for compensation in covered wages. Auxiliary personnel, such as coaches, trainers, etc., are not considered professional athletes.

24.44(1) As used in Iowa Code section 96.5(9), “services performed by an individual, substantially all of which consist of participating in sports or athletic events” means all services performed by an individual in any subject employment during the individual’s base year if such individual was engaged in remunerative sports or athletic events for 90 percent or more of the total time spent in subject employment during such base year.

24.44(2) As used in Iowa Code section 96.5(9), “participating in sports or athletic events” means any services performed in an athletic activity by an individual as:

- a. A regular player or team member.
- b. An alternate player or team member.
- c. An individual in training to become a regular player or team member.
- d. An individual who, although performing no active services, is retained as a player or team member while recuperating from illness or injury.

24.44(3) The beginning and ending dates of any sport season and the beginning and ending dates of the time period between two successive sport seasons are determined by the department after considering custom and practice within a particular sport, published dates for beginning and ending of a season and any other information bearing upon such determination.

24.44(4) For the purposes of Iowa Code section 96.5(9), a reasonable assurance that an individual will perform services in sports or athletic events in a subsequent season is presumed to exist if:

- a. The individual has an express or implied multiyear contract that extends into the subsequent sport season, or
- b. The individual is free to negotiate with other teams or employers for employment as a participant in the subsequent sport season, and
- c. There is reason to believe that one or more employers of participants in athletic events is considering or would be desirous of employing the individual in an athletic capacity in the subsequent sport season, and
- d. The individual has not clearly and affirmatively withdrawn from participating in remunerative and competitive sports or athletic events.

24.44(5) Benefits that will be paid with respect to weeks of unemployment during a sports season shall be based on all wage credits of the individual. Wage credits would include those earned in sports as well as in other employment covered by an employment security law. With respect to weeks of unemployment that begin during a period between sports seasons (or similar periods) no benefits are payable on the basis of any athletic or nonathletic wages if substantially all (see subrule 24.57(1)) of the services performed by the individual during the base period were in sports or athletic events.

24.44(6) When a professional athlete is denied benefits because there is a reasonable assurance that the individual will again perform services as a professional athlete in the next ensuing season but the assurance fails to materialize, the denial of benefits is effective until the date established that the assurance is ineffective. Following the ineffective date, benefits can be paid if the individual is otherwise eligible. If an assurance given to an individual is found to be not a bona fide assurance, benefits are payable if the individual is otherwise eligible.

24.44(7) Benefits will be paid with respect to weeks of unemployment between sports seasons (or similar periods) based on wage credits of the individual, paid in other employment covered by employment security law except those in sports or athletic events or training, or preparing to so participate.

24.44(8) Athletes—denial of benefits. An individual (athlete) will be denied benefits between seasons based on services performed by such individual (athlete).

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.5(9).

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