

US Gymnastics Trials

# Space tight for Rio field

By WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Technically, there are five spots available on the U.S. Olympic women's gymnastics team that will be unveiled on Sunday night at the end of Olympic Trials. But not really. And Ashton Locklear knows it.

"We all do the math in our heads," Locklear said. "I think you kind of have to. You need to know what's going on around you."

Barring injury or a catastrophic drop in form, Simone Biles, Gabby Douglas, Aly Raisman and Laurie Hernandez are heading to Brazil next month.

That leaves one position open — maybe — the one Locklear and good friend Madison Kocian will try to convince national team coordinator Martha Karolyi they're worthy of during what may be the most important 48 hours of their athletic lives.

No pressure or anything. "I definitely need to prove myself," Locklear said. "I definitely need to show consistency."

It's a testament to the depth of the powerhouse program Karolyi has built that the only real lingering drama with less than a month to go before the games centers around who will serve as the anchor on uneven bars. The top choices are the fluidly elegant Locklear — who helped the U.S. to team gold in the 2014 world championships — and the precise Kocian — who won gold on her favorite event at the 2015 world championships.

College Athletics

# Power Five heads propose more time off

By RALPH D. RUSSO  
Associated Press

Power Five conference commissioners want to change NCAA rules to give college athletes more time away from team activities, including no longer counting travel as an off day, a mandatory seven-day break after the season and an additional 14 off days from athletic activity during the academic year.

The agreement in concept was announced Thursday by the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern Conference. The leagues said they believed they had found the "right balance" with a proposal they are calling Flex 21. The extra 21 days off would be in addition to the current mandatory off days, and could be tailored to fit each team's schedule with input from coaches and athletes.

"We heard from our students that they would like more certainty in their schedules in order to engage in other activities."

— Power Five Commissioners

Joint statement issued in regards to proposed rules changes that would give college athletes more time away from their athletic commitments.

Formal proposals still need to be submitted, but the conferences could vote to turn them into NCAA rules at the next convention in January.

College sports leaders have been looking into changes to ease the time demands on athletes for several years. At the last NCAA convention, the issue was delayed so more research could be done, including a survey of athletes from all sports. Conference officials seem eager to provide more benefits to

athletes at a time when college sports is under legal and public pressure to make changes, including a push to pay athletes. Led by the College Athletes Players Association, members of the Northwestern football team made an attempt to unionize that ultimately failed.

NCAA members schools and conferences have in recent years agreed to raise the value of athletic scholarships to cover the federally determined true cost of attendance that goes beyond

tuition, books, room and board, and fees. They have also guaranteed four-year scholarships for many athletes and given athletes more say in making rules.

"We heard from our students that they would like more certainty in their schedules in order to engage in other activities," the commissioners said in a joint statement. "We recognize there will need to be a level of flexibility and reasonableness in carrying out these changes, especially with regard to travel, but students deserve time off and we want athletic departments to work in a sensible and appropriate way to provide it. We want administrators to have some degree of flexibility in implementing these rules, but they must be mindful that rest is important to a student's health, in addition to their athletic and academic performance."

Mixed Martial Arts

# Jones denies PED use when test knocks him out of UFC 200

By GREG BEACHAM  
Associated Press

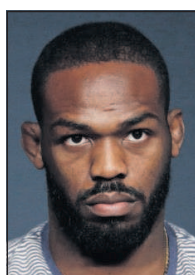
LAS VEGAS — Jon Jones struggled for words while his tears flowed. Frustration and fear were evident on his face.

Although the man widely recognized as the world's most talented mixed martial artist denied using any performance-enhancing substances, he couldn't explain the positive drug test that knocked him out of UFC

200's main event and threw his tumultuous career into crisis again.

The UFC interim light heavyweight champion repeatedly cried at a hastily arranged news conference Thursday, a day after his rematch with Daniel Cormier was canceled.

"I would never take anything that would enhance my game,"



Jones

Jones said. "Being labeled as someone who would ever cheat, it hurts me more than anything I've ever been through in my career."

Jones' manager, Malki Kawa, said the fighter was informed of a possible PED violation by USADA, which administers the UFC's anti-drug policy. They hoped to get the results of a test of Jones'

backup sample later Thursday, although they have little hope the result will change.

If the positive test is confirmed, Jones could face a multiyear suspension. Jones and Kawa declined to name the substance for which Jones was flagged, although Kawa said it "could be" related to a nutritional supplement.

Jones said he "can't even pronounce it. I've never even heard of it."

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