HOW THE NCAA WORKS: Division III

The Division III philosophy maintains that a student-athlete’s athletics are an integral part of a well-rounded college experience. The athletic experience is designed to complement time spent in the classroom and pursuing other activities — some related to coursework, others extracurricular.

While Division III doesn’t permit athletics scholarships, roughly 80% of Division III student-athletes receive some form of academic grant or need-based scholarship.

Access to competing in national championships is important to Division III, where one of every 6.5 teams competes in the NCAA postseason. Division III is home to more than 200,000 student-athletes — the most in any division — who can earn the opportunity to compete in 28 Division III national championships.

The division’s philosophy and the rules that implement it are set by members hailing from approximately 430 schools and more than 40 conferences.

**DIII Legislative Calendar and Convention Process**

**Legislative Calendar**

- **JANUARY-JULY**
  - Division III committees and the Division III membership have ideas for new legislation and discuss these ideas often between January and July. They ask for feedback and input from different groups, refine the ideas and make recommendations. The Management Council and Presidents Council review recommendations during their April or summer meetings and decide whether to move them forward.

- **AUG. 15**
  - All membership-sponsored proposed pieces of legislation are published on ncaa.org in a publication commonly known as IPOPL, so schools can review them and begin developing opinions.

- **SEPT. 1**
  - Deadline for Presidents Council to sponsor legislation to be voted on at the NCAA Convention.

- **SEPT. 15**
  - Final changes from the sponsors are due.

- **SEPT. 23**
  - The proposed pieces of legislation are published on ncaa.org, this time with membership and governance proposals, in a publication commonly known as SPOPL.

- **NOV. 15**
  - Publication of the official notice identifying all proposals, resolutions and amendments to be voted on at the NCAA Convention.

- **NOV. 1**
  - Deadline for any proposal amendments and resolutions.

- **NOV. 15**
  - Publication of the official notice identifying all proposals, resolutions and amendments to be voted on at the NCAA Convention.

**Convention**

The NCAA Convention, held each year in January, is the finish line for all sponsored proposals in Division III. Delegates from every school and conference gather during a Convention business session to cast their votes on each proposal.

Since the division was established in 1973, it has operated under a “one institution, one vote” model. The Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee also has one vote at the business session.

**Proposed Legislation**

New rules in Division III begin in one of two ways. Proposals can start in Division III committees and be sponsored by the governance structure. Proposals can also be sponsored by the Division III membership if 20 active member schools or two conferences sign on as a sponsor.

**Membership Votes**

In most cases, Division III legislation requires only a simple majority vote of members present. Sometimes — such as in 2015, when the NCAA added beach volleyball as a championship sport — legislation applies to the entire Association, and each division must reach its own majority vote to pass.

**Legislation Approved**

Approved proposal takes effect on the date specified in the legislation, usually Aug. 1 of that year.
NCAA Division III Legislative Process

Start

It all starts here, with the schools and athletic conferences that make up Division III. The idea-generator might be an athletics director interested in allowing football players to autograph footballs for their programs. A faculty athletics representative wants the division to limit how many hours student-athletes can travel for competition or a coach who thinks scrimmage rules are too restrictive. No matter its origin, the proposal begins life as a discussion topic in one or more Division III committees.

**DIVISION III COMMITTEES**

- **Championships Committee**
  - Oversees administration of the division’s 28 championships.
  - 12 Members:
    - 2 - from Management Council
    - 2 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
    - 4 - Faculty athletics representatives
    - 1 - Conference Office staff
    - 4 - DIII personnel*

- **Committee on Infractions**
  - Oversees or reinstate processes for college athletics deemed ineligible because of a rules violation.
  - 6 Members:
    - 1 - from Management Council
    - 1 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
    - 4 - DIII personnel*

- **Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement**
  - Oversees or reinstate processes for college athletics deemed ineligible because of a rules violation.
  - 6 Members:
    - 1 - from Management Council
    - 1 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
    - 4 - DIII personnel*

- **Interpretations and Legislation Committee**
  - Interprets all Division III legislative, issues official interpretations and reviews and refines legislative proposals.
  - 10 Members:
    - 1 - from Management Council
    - 1 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
    - 1 - Faculty athletics representative
    - 1 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
    - 6 - DIII personnel*

- **Membership Committee**
  - Reviews issues related to Division III membership, including status of signing and active members.
  - 10 Members:
    - 1 - from Management Council
    - 1 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
    - 1 - Faculty athletics representative
    - 1 - Conference Office staff
    - 6 - DIII personnel*

- **Student-Athlete Advisory Committee**
  - Composed of college athletics who monitor and act on issues related to Division III.
  - 21 Members:
    - 1 - from Presidents Council (chair and vice chair)
    - 3 - from Management Council
t
  - 7 - DIII personnel*

**Financial Aid Committee**

- Reviews and considers the bylaws that govern financial aid.
- 10 Members:
  - 2 - Financial aid administrators
  - 1 - Faculty athletics representative
  - 1 - Conference Office staff
  - 1 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
  - 3 - DIII personnel*
  - 1 - from Management Council

**Infractions Appeals Committee**

- Hear and acts on appeals of decisions by the Committee on Infractions.
- 6 Members:
  - 1 - from Presidents Council
  - 1 - from Management Council
  - 1 - General public
  - 4 - DIII personnel*

**Nominating Committee**

- Suggests individuals who can fill vacancies on various Division III committees.
- 10 Members:
  - 2 - from Presidents Council
  - 2 - from Management Council
  - 2 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
  - 4 - DIII personnel*

**Strategic Planning and Finance Committee**

- Makes budget recommendations and monitors the Division III Strategic Plan.
- 12 members:
  - 2 - from Presidents Council
  - 2 - from Management Council
  - 2 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
  - 2 - Faculty athletics representatives
  - 1 - Conference Office staff
  - 1 - DIII personnel*

**Administrative Committee**

- Takes action on issues that arise between meetings of the Presidents Council and Management Council.
- 5 Members:
  - 2 - from Presidents Council (chair and vice chair)
  - 3 - from Management Council

**MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

- The Management Council is composed primarily of individuals who have day-to-day knowledge of athletics operations, including faculty athletics representatives – the college faculty members who are designated liaisons to athletics.
  - 23 Members**:
    - 9 - Directors of athletics or senior woman administrators
    - 2 - Presidents or chancellors
    - 2 - College athletics direct reports
    - 2 - Faculty athletics representatives
    - 3 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
    - 4 - DIII personnel*

- makes recommendations to the Presidents Council related to Division III.
- Reviews appeals by members of decisions made within the Division III governance structure.
- Sponsors proposals for membership vote to be considered by Management Council.

**PRESIDENTS COUNCIL**

- The top leadership group in Division III, the Presidents Council is composed of presidents and chancellors and establishes and directs general policy.
  - Establishes a strategic plan for Division III.
  - Implements policies adopted by the NCAA Board of Governors.
  - Can sponsor legislative proposals that are considered by Division III members each year at the NCAA Convention.
  - Can adopt some administrative bylaws and regulations without approval of full membership.
  - Approves the Division III budget.
  - Approves championships regulations.
  - Orders proposals for voting at the Convention business session.
  - 23 Members**:
    - 21 - Presidents or chancellors
    - 2 - from Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

The proposed rule recommended by either the Presidents or Management Council, may be sponsored for the convention or adopted by either council.

**CONVENTION**

- Takes action on issues that arise between meetings of the Presidents Council and Management Council.
- 5 Members:
  - 2 - from Presidents Council (chair and vice chair)
  - 3 - from Management Council (chair, vice chair and most tenured president)

- makes recommendations to the Presidents Council related to Division III.
- Reviews appeals by members of decisions made within the Division III governance structure.
- Sponsors proposals for membership vote to be considered by members at the NCAA Convention.