



## NCAA DIVISION II COACHES CONNECTION PROGRAM Created AUGUST 2017

- Vision:** Enhance coaches' engagement and fortify their role as advocates for the value of Division II athletics.
- Mission:** Prepare coaches to take ownership and responsibility for the growth and future of their sport to provide Division II student-athletes with an educational experience, a balanced approach in their high-level competition experience and an opportunity to Make It Yours.

### Coaches Connection Program History and Guiding Principles

- The Coaches Connection began in 2012-13, as a pilot program for the sports of football and women's volleyball.
- The success of the program warranted an expansion in 2014-15 to include men's and women's tennis and men's and women's soccer.
- As the success of the program grew, a proposal was submitted to the NCAA Division II Planning and Finance Committee as part of the Foundation for the Future initiative for funding to include all Division II sports in the program.
- The Foundation for the Future initiative approved funding for the Coaches Connection program for 2016-17 through 2020-21. Since then, the Division II Presidents Council has approved base budgeting the program starting in 2021-22 and moving forward.
- Sports were added/will be added to the program in the following years:
  1. 2016-17 – Baseball, Softball, Men's and Women's Track and Field, and Wrestling.
  2. 2017-18 – Men's and Women's Golf, Men's and Women's Lacrosse, Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving.
  3. 2018-19 – Men's and Women's Cross Country.
  4. 2019-20 – Men's and Women's Basketball and Field Hockey.
  5. 2020-21 – Women's Rowing and National Collegiate Championships.

### Program goals

- Enhance coaches' engagement and fortify their role as advocates for the value of Division II athletics.

National Collegiate Athletic Association

*Supporting student-athlete success on the field, in the classroom and for life*

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

- Educate coaches, ensuring a full understanding of the Division II governance and legislative processes, philosophy, platform, strategic plan, and priorities.
- Serve as advocates to inform and articulate coaches' points of view.
- Share information with sport coaches and seek feedback from a wide base of sport coaches.
- Encourage coaches to be informed and active in sport policy and/or legislative changes.
- Commissioners will serve as a conduit between athletics administrators and coaches, to enhance the dialogue amongst the stakeholders, allowing the flow of information regarding current concerns and issues for sport coaches as they serve Division II student-athletes.
- To allow for effective and valued communication amongst the stakeholders, resulting in decisions that best serve Division II and its student-athletes.

**Communication and engagement efforts will include:**

- Each sport will have a coaches' circle, including representatives from each of the conferences that sponsor the sport. Conference coaching representatives will be appointed by conference commissioners. Conference representations are expected to be on all monthly calls. Institutions sponsoring a sport listed as an independent will have a representative on the committee.
- Each sport will have a sport administrator (Connector) who oversees the coaches' circle.
- The Connector will organize monthly calls (ideally 10 calls) for conference representatives. Attendance and participation will be tracked. Commissioners will be notified of the participation (or lack thereof) of the conference's representative on calls.
- Minutes will be kept by the Connector. The Connector will distribute minutes to participants on the call, commissioners, selected NCAA staff, and Coaches Connection program administrators.
- The conference coaching representative will be responsible for distributing the minutes to coaches in their conference.
- Commissioners will be responsible for distributing minutes to directors of athletics and senior woman administrators in the conference.

**Enhanced communication efforts will include:**

- The Championship and Alliances sport liaison and the NCAA Sport Committee Chair will participate in monthly conference calls to better understand concerns, issues or suggested

opportunities for change, such as selection criteria, championship structure, playing rules or other topics to enhance the student-athlete experience.

- The Academic and Membership Affairs liaison will participate in monthly conference calls to serve as a resource regarding legislation, future academic requirements, transfer policies, etc.
- Connectors will share with the coaches' circle the minutes and newsletters from other Division II governance committees, including Championships Committee, Legislation Committee, Playing Rules Oversight Panel, Academic Requirements Committee, Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports, Management Council, Presidents Council and others.
- National intercollegiate coaches' association representatives will participate on monthly conference calls to serve as a resource regarding coaches' association wide activities and events.

**Connector responsibilities in addition to monthly calls will include:**

- Provide guidance and suggestions to the coaches' circle on governance and legislative processes when looking to make changes or when issues are identified.
- Encourage coaches to participate in NCAA committee service such as regional advisory committees, governance committees and any other committees which impact service to Division II student-athletes.
- Participate in an orientation session held at the national office, when necessary.
- Create a relationship with the sport's national coaches' association.
- Attend an in-person meeting at the sport's annual coaches' convention and meet with all Division II coaches.
- Attend the sport's Division II National Championship to meet with coaches and participate in community engagement activities.

Updated: January 2020