

Making the Connection!

Coaches serve a critical role – not only for the student-athletes they develop, but also for the overall advancement of NCAA Division II. Their voice makes Division II better!

Membership outreach and a division-wide census indicated that coaches were unfamiliar with Division II governance processes and the ways decisions were being made. That's why Division II established the **Coaches Connection Program** to enhance coaches' engagement and fortify their role as advocates for the value of Division II athletics. The more coaches know about Division II and its structure, the more they can positively influence how we conduct our sports programs.

HOW IT WORKS

Each Division II sport has a **"Connector"** (usually a former coach or an administrator) who oversees a **"Coaches Circle"** that includes a **representative from every conference sponsoring that sport**.

The Connector conducts **monthly teleconferences** (about 10 annually) with the Coaches Circle to address current issues impacting their sport and legislative proposals or policy recommendations being considered within the Division II governance structure. Also participating in the monthly calls:

- **The sport committee chair and the sport manager from the NCAA championship and alliances staff** join to better understand issues or suggested opportunities for change.
- **Liaisons from NCAA academic and membership affairs** serve as a resource regarding legislation, future academic requirements, transfer policies, etc.
- **Coaches association representatives** provide a more global perspective from the coaching body.

Connectors **share information** from NCAA Division II governance committees, including the 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.

Connectors **provide call reports** to Coaches Circle members and conference commissioners; Coaches Circle members send the reports to coaches in their conference; and conference commissioners send the reports to conference directors of athletics and senior woman administrators.

Connectors also:

- Encourage coaches to **participate in NCAA committee service**.
- Create a **relationship with the sport's national coaches association** and attend the annual coaches convention.
- Attend Division II championships **to meet with coaches** and participate in community engagement activities.



Join the Movement!

HOW TO BE INVOLVED

- **Know the Connector!** See the list at ncaa.org/governance?division=d2 for contact information.
- **Know the Coaches Circle representatives!** Communicate regularly with these individuals to clarify issues and concerns.
- **Be informed and inform others!** Make sure you receive reports from the monthly calls and send them to people who may benefit from the information.
- **Join the team!** Ask your conference commissioner how you can become a member of the Coaches Circle.

WHY TO BE INVOLVED

- **Networking** – The entirety of the coaching body is represented and informed, along with key administrators and conference commissioners. Coaches gain a full understanding of the Division II governance and legislative processes, philosophy, platform, strategic plan, and priorities.
- **Engagement** – Coaches are asked for their perspective and share information with a wider base, which encourages a more collective voice. Coaches' points of view are better articulated, and information is shared with a broader audience.
- **Inclusion** – More coaches have input regarding decisions that directly affect them; they better understand the Division II philosophy, how the division's balanced approach factors into policy making, and how they can advocate for the value of Division II athletics.
- **Results** – The program promotes effective and valued communication among stakeholders, resulting in decisions that enhance the Division II student-athlete experience.

