



## NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Update - February 2020

As Division I women's basketball leaders continue to focus on taking strategic steps to improve our game, we want to keep you apprised of significant developments. If you have any questions, please reach out to any of the staff liaisons associated with the specific issue.

**1. ESPN announcement regarding 2020 championship coverage.** On Jan. 21, ESPN announced it will air the entire 2020 Women's Final Four (semifinals and championship) in prime time on the flagship network. Additionally, the entire first and second rounds of the women's championship will be available nationally on ESPN's television networks, eliminating regionalization.

**Story:** [es.pn/2RZDtpj](https://espn.com/story/espn/2RZDtpj)

**2. 2025 and 2026 NCAA Women's Final Four announcement.** Four cities with a blend of NCAA championship host experience have been chosen as finalists to be considered as future hosts for the NCAA Women's Final Four in 2025 and 2026. The NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee identified four cities that will be under consideration to host during those two years. Those cities and venues are Columbus, Ohio (Nationwide Arena); Phoenix (Talking Stick Resort Arena); Portland, Oregon (Moda Center); and Tampa, Florida (Amalie Arena).

**Story:** [bit.ly/2uimfdJ](https://bit.ly/2uimfdJ)

**3. Playing rules update/reminders.** As the NCAA Women's Basketball Rules Committee continues to study the distance of the 3-point line, the 2020 Postseason Women's National Invitation Tournament will employ an experimental rule to extend the distance of the 3-point line to the men's distance for all tournament games. The data collected from this experimental rule will allow the rules committee to better evaluate and make more informed decisions regarding potential rules changes.

**Story:** [bit.ly/36YbcDC](https://bit.ly/36YbcDC)

Staff contact: Rachel Seewald

### 4. NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee update.

**a. Development of NCAA Evaluation Tool.** The Ratings Percentage Index continues to provide supplemental data for the Division I Women's Basketball Committee in its evaluation of teams for at-large selection and seeding for the 2020 Division I Women's Basketball Championship. While the RPI is in place for 2020, NCAA committee and staff are continuing work on developing an NCAA Evaluation Tool, or NET, for women's basketball. The committee will conduct its annual assessment of the RPI after the season and determine a timeline for possible adjustments of the RPI or full implementation of a women's basketball NET for 2020-21.

**b. Top 16 reveals.** The first of two NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee top 16 reveals took place Monday, Feb. 3, at halftime of the Oregon at UConn game. The reveal included the top 16 in seed order in addition to all teams being assigned to potential regional sites as of that date. Monday's top 16 reveal was the first of two planned for this season, with a second at 7 p.m. Eastern time March 2 on ESPN2 at halftime of the South Florida-UConn game. The top 16 announcements will have no bearing on the final 64-team field for the 2020 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship that will be announced during the ESPN Selection Show at 7 p.m. Eastern time Monday, March 16.

**Story:** [bit.ly/31qnsM9](https://bit.ly/31qnsM9)

Staff contacts: Meredith Cleaver, Lynn Holzman and Rick Nixon

Committee chair: Diane Turnham, Middle Tennessee senior associate athletics director

### 5. NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee update.

**a. Changes to the composition of the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee Competition Committee.** The chair of the Women's Basketball Rules Committee and the NCAA women's basketball secretary-rules editor have been added to the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee Competition Committee. Their expertise and perspectives are always needed at the table to address the committee's strategic priorities, which include the use of technology during the game.

**b. Commission on College Basketball and review for women's basketball.** The oversight committee received an update on the status of the recommendations generated from the review of the college basketball reform concepts for women's basketball. The oversight committee continued its discussion on the former student-athlete fellow concept, including how to inform and solicit membership before making a formal legislative recommendation to the Division I

Council.

c. **NCAA Board of Directors’ referral to examine the composition of NCAA Division I women’s basketball related committees.** The committee received an update on the work of the joint working group with men’s basketball tasked with initially reviewing the referral from the Board of Directors. The joint working group will continue its work on teleconferences this spring and have a formal concept for membership feedback in late spring/early summer.

**6. 2019-24 NCAA women’s basketball strategic plan.** The NCAA women’s basketball strategic plan is a game plan designed to guide decision-making in the sport across all three NCAA divisions.

**2019-24 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**OUR VISION**  
Unify and grow the women's basketball community; empower student-athletes to achieve their full potential; celebrate and elevate the game; and create an inspiring experience for all involved.

**"WE TIP WITH EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY"**

**TEAMWORK**  
We accomplish it better together.

**INCLUSION**  
We embrace diversity and celebrate differences.

**PASSION**  
We aspire to do the best we can in all we do.

**EXCELLENCE**  
We succeed in education, basketball and our lives.

**INTEGRITY**  
We honor and respect the game and each other.

**We're building our plan on the following goal areas:**

- Leadership**  
NCAA Women's Basketball leads within and beyond the sport to unify and strengthen the game and our community.
- Transformational Student-Athlete Experience**  
NCAA Women's Basketball shall be the gold standard for fair participation in intercollegiate athletics, serving as an integral component of the higher education experience and preparing student-athletes for life after college.
- Quality Competition**  
NCAA Women's Basketball shall administer and shape the game to showcase the commitment student-athletes and coaches devote to skill development and team play at the highest level.
- Memorable Championships**  
NCAA Women's Basketball Championships are the pinnacle of the student-athlete experience. We commit to providing the best and brightest stage on which to celebrate our game.
- Building Affinity**  
The unique identity of NCAA Women's Basketball is all about the connection people feel to the game, student-athletes and coaches.

**It's the time to execute strategies that lead us to victory.**  
With these as our guidelines, our strategic plan will elevate our game and our community. We're intentional about the steps we're taking to achieve our goals. We've set a course that will benefit those who play the game — and those who watch it — in all three divisions for years to come.

**2019-20 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL YEAR ONE PRIORITIES**

**PROGRESS TO DATE**

**LEADERSHIP**  
Diversity, Professional Development and Inclusion: 100%  
Women's basketball established a committee to advance diversity, professional development and mentor of coaches, and increase opportunities for women and coaches.  
USA National Team Collaboratives: 100%  
NCAA women's basketball teams were granted a joint invitation and competition against the USA Basketball national team during the 2019-20 season. This collaborative effort celebrates and promotes the growth of women's basketball, and provides the opportunity for student-athletes to compete at the highest level of competition while representing the USA Women's National Team for the 2020 Olympic Games in Japan.  
Coaches Credentialing Pilot: 100%  
Women's basketball coaches participated in the inaugural NCAA Coaches Credential Pilot study. The cooperative effort between the NCAA, NBCC and NABC was administered to inform future efforts to extend credentialing across NCAA sports. Evaluation of the first-year coaches credentialing pilot program will assess its effectiveness and help further define the program moving forward.  
USA Basketball's International Collaboration and Youth Basketball Participation: 50%  
Monthly conferences are held with leadership of key associations of the game (e.g., USA Basketball, WNBA and ESPN) on ways to further engage and grow women's basketball fans, including a focus on youth sport development.

**QUALITY COMPETITION**  
Innovative Technology: 100%  
Regulation and conference committees tested a playing rules review to use new technologies (e.g., the Hawk-Eye) that continue to push and elevate rule committees to explore innovations to advance the game.  
MEMORABLE CHAMPIONSHIPS: 100%  
New Division I Regional Format: 100%  
A new knockout, eight-team one-site regional model will be implemented for the 2023 championship. The new model will elevate and enhance the student-athlete experience, provide focused efforts to grow the sport in host cities, increase programming opportunities and align with strategic priorities (e.g., coach and officiating pipeline, student-athlete career development, health and well-being).  
Conference Marketing Program and Regional Advisory Committee (RAC): 100%  
An annual evaluation program has been implemented to solicit conference feedback on the impact and success of the Conference Marketing Program and RAC and ensure integrity in the team selection and seeding process.

**BUILDING AFFINITY**  
Digital Road Trip: 75%  
To build interest in the game, the NCAA digital team executed the "Go Home" (Women's Basketball National Media Day) effort. The team produced content to highlight women's basketball student-athletes and coaches, including press releases and coaching content to directly connect the women's basketball community through telling the sports connecting story.

**UPCOMING PRIORITIES**

**LEADERSHIP**  
Coaches Credentialing Phase II: 0%  
Women's basketball coaches from all three divisions are engaged in a process to create the framework for a Women's Coaches Credential as the model for coaches credentialing across other NCAA sports.  
QUALITY COMPETITION: 25%  
Experimental Playing Rules Review: 25%  
Review current experimental playing rules used during regular season and conference tournaments, and evaluate the opportunity for use during women's basketball championships.  
BUILDING AFFINITY: 25%  
2021 NCAA Playing Rules Cycle: 25%  
Review and recommend playing rule changes specific to the use of technology during competition in the 2021 NCAA rule cycle.  
BUILDING AFFINITY: 25%  
Media Advisory Group: 25%  
Launch a media advisory group for national media to engage quarterly on women's basketball issues and the state of the game.

As we work to grow the sport, we encourage others to join us in being champions for women’s basketball.

- View the strategic plan in its entirety at [ncaa.org/wbbstrategicplan](https://ncaa.org/wbbstrategicplan).
- View the year one progress report and upcoming priorities [here](#).

Staff contacts: Meredith Cleaver, Lynn Holzman, Binh Nguyen and Amy Reis

*This email was sent to NCAA Division I conference commissioners, NCAA Division I senior woman administrators, NCAA Division I directors of athletics, NCAA Division I women's basketball head coaches, the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee, the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee and the Women's Basketball Coaches Association based on contact information in the [NCAA Directory](#).*



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