



REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COMMITTEE  
JULY 10-12, 2018, MEETING

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative items.**

- None.

**2. Nonlegislative items.**

- a. Regional Site Selection. The NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee requests approval of the recommended sites for 2021 and 2022 Regionals.

Background: After accepting bids for regional sites in 2019 through 2021, the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee confirmed its support for the neutral regional format used for the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship at its January 2017 meeting and directed the NCAA staff to move forward with the bid process for regional sites for 2019 and 2020. The committee determined it wanted to revisit the regional site location before moving forward with the bid process for 2021 and beyond.

After further discussion regarding regional site location at its April 2018 meeting, the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee determined to maintain the current championships policy for neutral site regionals and resume the regional site selection process for 2021 and 2022 effective immediately. The 2021 and 2022 regional site selection process was reopened allowing new bids to be accepted and previously submitted bids to be reconfirmed. The Division I Women's Basketball Committee reviewed the bids at its July 10-12, 2018 meeting and prepared the recommendation below for approval by the Women's Basketball Oversight Committee.

Bid Review. The committee identified five priorities for site selection: student-athlete/team experience, competitive equity, attendance, finances and geographic (including time zone) distribution. The committee also reviewed a bid city and facility's hosting history, if applicable.

Site Recommendation. The committee recommends the following sites for the 2021 and 2022 regionals. The sites include a mix of experienced and new sites, facilities and/or hosts to continue to grow support of the championship in current and new markets. During its discussion, the committee was made aware of scheduling conflicts when sites had been awarded other NCAA championships during the same or close timeframes.

<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Host Institution/Conference</b>	<b>Time Zone</b>
<b>2021</b>	Albany, New York	Times Union Center	Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference	ET
	Austin, Texas	H-E-B Center	University of Texas, Austin	CT
	Cincinnati, Ohio	Cintas Center	Xavier University	ET
	Spokane, Washington	Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena	University of Idaho	PT

<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Host Institution/Conference</b>	<b>Time Zone</b>
<b>2022</b>	Bridgeport, Connecticut	Webster Bank Arena	Fairfield University and University of Connecticut	ET
	Greensboro, North Carolina	Greensboro Coliseum	Atlantic Coast Conference	ET
	Spokane, Washington	Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena	University of Idaho	PT
	Wichita, Kansas	Intrust Bank Arena	Wichita State University	CT

Rationale. Twelve institutions/conferences submitted bids for hosting the regional round in each year. Those that bid but were not awarded a regional are as follows:

Oregon State University (hosting in Portland, Oregon)  
Purdue University Fort Wayne (hosting in Fort Wayne, Indiana)  
DePaul University (hosting in Chicago, Illinois)  
University of Oklahoma (hosting in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)  
University of the Pacific (hosting in Stockton, California)  
Summit League (hosting in Sioux Falls, South Dakota)  
St. John's University (NY) (hosting in Uniondale, New York)

Budget Impact. Expenses have been accounted for and will be absorbed by existing budgeted funds.

Student-Athlete Impact. The recommended regional sites for 2021 and 2022 will enhance the student-athlete experience by providing participants the opportunity to play in front of larger crowds, while creating more exposure for the women's game.

- b. Automatic qualification for the 2019 championship. The committee recommended that the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee award the following 32 conferences automatic qualification status for the 2019 championship: America East Conference; American Athletic Conference; Atlantic Coast Conference; Atlantic Sun Conference; Atlantic 10 Conference; Big East Conference; Big Sky Conference; Big South Conference; Big Ten Conference; Big 12 Conference; Big West Conference; Colonial Athletic Association; Conference USA; Horizon League; The Ivy League; Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference; Mid-American Conference; Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference; Missouri Valley Conference; Mountain West Conference; Northeast Conference; Ohio Valley Conference; Pac-12 Conference; Patriot League; Southeastern Conference; Southern Conference; Southland Conference; Southwestern Athletic Conference; The Summit League; Sun Belt Conference; West Coast Conference; and Western Athletic Conference.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

- 1. Welcome.** Rhonda Bennett called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. after the conclusion of subcommittee meetings. The group welcomed Nina King as a new committee member. Andrea Gaither reviewed the meeting schedule.
- 2. Executive Session.** The committee conducted an executive session to begin the meeting.
- 3. Division I Women's Basketball Committee mission statement and conflict of interest policy.** The committee reviewed and affirmed its mission statement and conflict of interest policy during the executive session.
- 4. Vice president update.** Lynn Holzman updated the committee on the process thus far for shaping the NCAA women's basketball strategic plan with the help of The Pictor Group. She provided an overview of internal conversations and committee discussions supporting another Division I, II and III women's basketball joint championship. Formal committee approvals and financial planning are progressing, and staff would like to be more strategic in selecting when and where the joint championship will occur. The NCAA, IMG and WBCA held a joint meeting in June, which provided opportunity for the various staffs to communicate their respective priorities face-to-face. Ms. Holzman anticipates having a new director, the position vacated by Tracie Hitz, on board by end of September.

## Governance and Committee Reports

5. **Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee update.** Ms. Bennett recapped the oversight committee's meeting from June, including a meeting with ESPN and a session on strategic planning with The Pictor Group. At the request of the Division I Board of Directors, the oversight committee is reviewing the composition of basketball-related committees and whether their population criteria should result from football participation. Ms. Holzman reviewed the current state of action items following the Commission on College Basketball report. While the commission's charge was to review men's basketball specifically, the reforms that come from it will ultimately have an effect on women's basketball as well. The oversight committee is taking the lead on any commission actions that relate to women's basketball.
6. **2018-19 subcommittee assignments.** Ms. Bennett reviewed the subcommittee assignments for 2018-19. Each committee member is assigned to two subcommittees with the exception of the two new committee members, who will each serve on one subcommittee. The site selection subcommittee assignments will remain in effect through October 2018 to complete the Women's Final Four site selection process. The committee is reinstating the games management subcommittee to review feedback from championships, address concerns from teams and hosts, and guide future operational decisions.

## Officiating, Rules

7. **Review and future planning of National Officiating Program.** June Courteau reviewed several items to recap the year, including improved coordinator relationships and interconnectivity, successful regional clinics and continued educational outreach, video/technology updates, call charts, and evaluations improving accuracy. Future considerations for the committee include a proposed officiating "symposium" to replace regional officiating clinics every 4-5 years, removing the predetermination of second-round officials so that advancement is strictly based on performance (approximately a \$40,000 budget impact for travel), and developing an officiating strategic plan that will fit into the overall women's basketball five-year strategic plan. Tina Krah added that she is in the process of replacing the East regional advisor; the position is posted and will close at the end of July. She added that NCAA staff continues to look at game fees for NCAA championship games. A budget request has been made, as there is still a significant discrepancy in pay between officials for the men's championship and the women's championship.
8. **Officiating subcommittee update.** Leslie Claybrook reviewed the officiating subcommittee's meeting prior to the full committee meeting. The group reviewed an early iteration of an officiating strategic plan that will fit into the overall women's basketball strategic plan once complete. The group also reviewed the proposed edits to the selection and advancement procedures of officials during the Division I Women's Basketball Championship.

- 9. Women's Basketball Playing Rules Committee update.** Ms. Krah updated the group on discussions thus far on potential rules changes for the coming year, as every other year is a rules change year. The NCAA has data from experimental rules during the 2018 men's National Invitational Tournament that will guide the decision making.

### Partners

- 10. Women's Basketball Coaches Association update.** Danielle Donehew recapped a successful 2018 convention in Columbus, the third highest attended in convention history (Dallas was the highest attended). Columbus proved to be a wonderful host and coaches enjoyed their time in the city. Ms. Donehew equated the successful attendance the last two years to the shift in playing days to Friday/Sunday, as well as the renewed and focused convention programming that is now four days instead of five. Ms. Donehew reviewed actions the board took after their spring meetings, including restructuring membership fees – those who pay more (head coaches) will receive more benefits, programs and services with their membership, but those support staff, assistant coaches and coaches in Divisions II and III who are members had their fees lowered to encourage membership and growth. The board also adopted a revised and simplified code of ethics, a standard to which the board will hold members accountable and encourages institutional administrators to hold coaches accountable by the same standard. Lastly, the board established a benevolence fund for coaches to apply for should they fall on hard times after a job loss. The fund is available to all levels of coaches and applicants must go through a confidential and thorough application process. Ms. Donehew reviewed the WBCA's strategic plan, which she anticipates being formally approved and adopted at the board's July meeting. Ms. Donehew brought to the committee's attention other items from the WBCA, including an interest from the association in having a championship site in Las Vegas, and acknowledgement of the work of the Commission on College Basketball and its future impact on the men's and women's games.
- 11. ESPN update.** Fatima Martinez reviewed ESPN's new metrics for measuring digital, mobile and out of home viewing of events, which provide more detailed numbers on viewership demographics. The group spent significant time reviewing marketing creation, plans and production, as well as the success and investment on the production side throughout the entire championship. Alystia Moore previewed 2018-19 regular-season planning, including a game on a native American reservation between Arizona State University and Baylor University. Ms. Moore also asked the committee to consider reducing the top 16 reveals from three to two, with the second being as close to Selection Monday as possible to lead into selection coverage. The group reviewed and discussed proposed game times for predetermined sites. Discussion items from ESPN included changing the list/promote times for championship to "30 minutes after conclusion of first game" on the bracket, explanation of the game order philosophy based on marketing efforts, following No. 1 seeds through the tournament and participating institution's home markets. ESPN proposed a list of additional access requests, including a production request for additional 10-second extensions coming back from commercial breaks

(currently one per half), mic'ing of game officials, as done at other NCAA championships, to use the audio when clarifying reviewed calls, mic'ing of student-athletes and mic'ing of coaches. ESPN also offered to be a resource when seeking a national anthem performer, as they have many ties in the entertainment industry. Carol Stiff proposed moving the selection meeting to Bristol, which the committee emphasized would take a guarantee of significant gain from ESPN to make the move worthy, such as covering costs or added exposure on ESPN outlets.

The committee later discussed the game times ESPN proposed the 2019 championship. The committee has significant concerns based on the last two years of having the West regional site play the latest time slot on Monday, which limits the turnaround time for the advancing team to fly from the West Coast to the Women's Final Four city the next day. The committee is requesting ESPN move Portland to Sunday with a later window on ESPN2. The committee prefers Portland to play on Sunday, but current windows would put Portland's regional final at 11 a.m. local time, which is not ideal for ticket sales. Natalie Steger will follow up with ESPN and report back to the group at a future meeting.

The committee discussed ESPN's request for additional 10-second extensions coming back from timeouts. Rick Nixon and Ms. Steger informed the committee that there is not a policy regarding this in the tournament, and the committee has the flexibility to allow this. The committee confirmed its support of this extension, provided the request from ESPN comes prior to the game horn and teams returning to the floor.

The committee discussed ESPN's request to mic game officials. ESPN had attempted this once during a previous Women's Final Four, but game officials kept the mics turned off. Several other championships allow mics on game officials and are live most, if not all, of the contest. ESPN has the freedom to choose the clips and use discretion on what is aired. The staff will consult June Courteau on this request and bring it back to the committee for further discussion, if supported.

The committee agreed to help staff gather data regarding how many conferences allow coaches to be mic'ed during the regular season, as well as other sports that may allow it. Staff will begin the process for committee and membership review so that, if supported, the bylaw could be changed to allow mic'ing of coaches during championships.

## Championship

- 12. Review of 2018 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship attendance, finances and travel.** Mr. Nixon reviewed attendance figures from the 2018 championship, noting the best attendance at early rounds since 2008. Meredith Cleaver reviewed championship finances and travel costs from 2018. Ms. Krah reviewed a debrief from the

NCAA travel department regarding charter air travel and any issues that occurred during the championship.

- 13. Brand affinity update.** Mr. Nixon reviewed a brand affinity report based on social media activity and metrics. Metrics are very important in how the NCAA reaches fans and the general public through these channels and tracking responses. Overall, there is great value for women's basketball through social media. The metric was able to grade positive and negative coverage.
- 14. 2018 championship review.** Rachel Kay reviewed feedback summaries from the 2018 championship, noting that the games management subcommittee will review these further and suggest action items for the full committee. Additionally, the Atlantic Coast Conference has formally asked the committee to remove the requirement of head coaches attending the administrative meeting at first and second rounds. The committee reviewed other ways to communicate head coach obligations other than requiring them to attend the administrative meeting. The committee will have the games management subcommittee review the request and discuss it with the full committee at a future meeting.

  - Tourney Town. Amanda Benzine joined the committee to present a recap of Tourney Town and feedback from attendees. Tourney Town's programming and activities continue to evolve to include families, adults and women. Successes in 2018 include opening on Thursday to allow school field trips to come through the space, a Beyond the Baseline lounge, and a historical display in collaboration with the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. Future strategic development of the fan festival will include keeping it at an indoor location, making it a central hub for all activations around Women's Final Four, programming for target audiences that includes engagement of youth and the local community, education and empowerment of young professionals, and executing fan engagement that celebrates women's basketball.
- 15. Tampa Bay Local Organizing Committee planning and progress for the 2019 Women's Final Four.** Rob Higgins and Claire Lessinger previewed the organizing committee's work thus far for the 2019 Women's Final Four. The executive director title has been passed from Rob Higgins to Claire Lessinger. The city continues to build attractions, hotels and transportation, including a new Riverwalk cultural area, which allows transportation by water taxi. The team highlighted the inaugural Beyond the Baseline series from 2008, including a group of 20 influential women who launched it. This same group of women are still working a "Beyond" series that continues for every major sporting event that comes through the community. The LOC is looking forward to merging its existing Beyond series with the NCAA's Beyond the Baseline to make that programming even more robust for 2019. In addition, Tampa Bay has recently been approved for a chapter of WISE, which will launch during the next year.

### Selection, Seeding, and Bracketing

- 16. Top 16 rankings.** Mr. Nixon reviewed the release timing of last year's top 16 and ESPN's request to go from three to two rankings. ESPN had also requested having the top 16 teams be assigned by region. The committee is in favor of assigning the top 16 teams to regions for both rankings as a way to continue to promote the reveals and maintain a good partnership with ESPN. A reveal in March is a unique opportunity due to late timing of the selection meeting in 2019, and the committee supported a reveal in March before conference tournaments begin. Though ESPN requested a February 11 reveal, that is a travel day to a committee meeting, and the committee would have a higher comfort level with the reveal after an in-person meeting to discuss teams. The committee will request a reveal on February 18, if it does not conflict with existing events or programming on ESPN.
- 17. Review of selection, seeding and bracketing policies and procedures.** Due to time constraints, this item will be discussed at a future meeting.
- 18. Review use of analytics and assessment tools for team selection.** Kevin Pauga presented the KPI metric and explained how its calculations relate to rankings. He acknowledged the existing pitfalls of the RPI and strength of schedule, including ways to skew the metrics. Staff reminded the committee not to disregard current metrics, as they still allow all teams to be evaluated on an equal level. The committee still had 61 of 64 teams in the 2017 tournament compared to Mr. Pauga's ranking system and 62 of 64 teams in the 2018 tournament. Mr. Pauga also reviewed the current setup of the RPI team sheets and suggestions on how to view the data differently. The RPI subcommittee will review the team sheet setup and submit suggestions to the full committee for use in selecting the 2019 championship field.
- 19. Conference-related matters.** Mr. Nixon reviewed changes to conference alignment for the 2018-19 year. The group also reviewed new conference monitoring assignments for the year.

### Key Discussion and Future Planning Items

- 20. 2019 through 2024 Women's Basketball Strategic Plan – stakeholder session with The Pictor Group.** Carolyn Schlie Femovich lead the committee through a strategic planning session so that the committee could contribute and provide feedback on the plan thus far.
- 21. Joint Divisions I, II and III Women's Basketball Championship.** Ms. Cleaver reviewed the process leading up to and success of the 2016 joint championship, which many in the women's basketball community continue to cite as an event that should be repeated. Staff is working with Divisions II and III to engage those committees, earmark funds and move forward with formal recommendations and support planning for a future joint championship. The committee supported continued efforts to host a future joint championship with Divisions II and III.



## 22. Site selection.

- a. 2021 and 2022 Regional site selection process. Ms. Bennett reviewed the regional site selection process thus far and the discussions of the site selection subcommittee earlier in the week. The subcommittee determined seven of the eight needed sites for 2021 and 2022 but was split on the decision of the last site. The full committee voted 6:3 in favor of going to Spokane for 2022. The committee voted and approved the subcommittee's recommendations for 2021 and 2022 regional sites, which were submitted to the women's basketball oversight committee for final review (see Action Item 2-a).
- b. Women's Final Four site selection process update. Ms. Cleaver reviewed the cities bidding to host the Women's Final Four in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. She reviewed the timeline for the coming months regarding bid review, site visits, bid city presentations and site selection. The committee supported a request from Minneapolis to have media along for the staff and committee's visit to the city and would support similar requests from other cities.
- c. First- and second-round hosting requirements. The committee discussed the current parameters for top 16 hosting at home or at an alternate facility. The committee voted to amend the language to include hosting parameters. It was amended to the following: *The Division I women's basketball championship first and second rounds sites will be awarded to the top 16 seeded teams as of Selection Monday that submit a bid meeting minimum requirements for hosting in their regular season women's basketball home facility (specifically venue and hotel availability).*
  - The committee considered a waiver request from University of South Carolina to play at a proposed alternate location from its home facility – The Bon Secours Wellness Arena – as a rehearsal for the same venue to host the 2020 women's basketball regional. The committee voted (8 in favor, 1 abstain) to allow South Carolina to submit a bid with this alternate facility for consideration.

## Other Business

23. **Future meeting and teleconference schedule.** Ms. Cleaver reviewed the list of future committee meetings.
24. **Adjournment.** Ms. Bennett adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m.

*Committee Chair:* Rhonda Bennett, University of Nevada, Reno; Mountain West Conference  
*Staff Liaison(s):* Lynn Holzman, Championships and Alliances  
Meredith Cleaver, Championships and Alliances

<b>NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee July 10-12, 2018, Meeting</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Ceal Barry, University of Colorado, Boulder; Pac-12 Conference.	
Rhonda Bennett, University of Nevada, Reno; Mountain West Conference.	
DeJuena Chizer, University of Houston; American Athletic Conference.	
Leslie Claybrook, Southeastern Conference.	
Nina King, Duke University; Atlantic Coast Conference.	
Teresa Phillips, Tennessee State University; Ohio Valley Conference.	
Debbie Richardson, Atlantic 10 Conference.	
Tamica Smith Jones, University of California, Riverside; Big West Conference.	
Diane Turnham, Middle Tennessee State University; Conference USA.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	
None.	
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>	
June Courteau, National Coordinator of Officiating.	
Cheryl DiCarlo, ESPN	
Danielle Donehew, Women's Basketball Coaches Association.	
Rob Higgins, Tampa Bay Sports Commission.	
Jill Husak, ESPN.	
Kate Jackson, ESPN.	
Claire Lessinger, Tampa Bay Sports Commission.	
Pat Lowry, ESPN.	
Fatima Martinez, ESPN.	
Alystia Moore, ESPN.	
Kevin Pauga, Michigan State University.	
Carolyn Schlie Femovich, The Pictor Group.	
Carol Stiff, ESPN.	
Chelsea Wilson, Extern.	
<b>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</b>	
Meredith Cleaver, Lynn Holzman.	
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>	
Amanda Benzine, Andrea Gaither, Rachel Kay, Julie Kimmons, Tina Krah, Daress McClung, Rick Nixon, Natalie Steger, Kyani White-Tate.	