

2026 NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Cross Country Championships Selection Procedures

The NCAA Division II Cross Country Committee has the responsibility of confirming the field of participants for the cross country championships. To be eligible to participate in the NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Cross Country Championships, teams and individuals must qualify through participation in their respective NCAA regional cross country meet. The process for allocating the berths is outlined below.

Definitions

- A-Team Definition – An “A-Team” is defined as having at least four of the members of the seven that represent each institution at their NCAA Regional Cross Country Championships starting a race. No “B” team results can count against or help a team being considered for selection. For example, a team cannot be penalized for running a split squad or having non-varsity runners competing at a meet. In situations in regular season races that allow more than 7 student-athletes to start all starting athletes will count towards to the calculations the A-B team comparisons.
- Late-season Performance – The committee will use data from meets starting with the date that is seven weeks (51 days) out from the NCAA Division II Regional Championships [except for a Fall Sports Festival year when it will be nine weeks (65 days)], and concluding after the culmination of the NCAA Division II Regional Championships.
- Race Distance: To be counted for at-large procedures, meets must have competitors race a minimum race distance of 5,000 meters for women and 7,000 meters for men.
- Regional Team Time Gap – The regional team time gap is only used to measure the strength of top teams. A team that is selected automatically is not necessarily a top team thus the comparison would be faulty.

Team Selections

A total of 34 teams will be selected. The process for allocating the berth is outlined below.

Automatic Qualification

The top three teams from each regional meet will automatically advance to the championship finals (24 teams).

At-large Selection

Ten at-large teams will be selected by the NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Cross Country Committee using the below outlined selection criteria (in priority order). There is no limit to the number of at-large teams that may be selected from any given region.

The following are the criteria used by the committee to select at-large teams, in order, until a selection emerges. Steps 1-3 are to be included in the TFRRS-based computer program. Step 4, if needed, is up to the judgment of the cross country committee.

Regional place order/performance. A team cannot be selected ahead of a team that placed in front of them at their respective regional championship meet.

Step 1: Head-to-Head and DII Common Opponents Record. The top eligible team from each region will be compared based on their head-to-head and DII common opponents record.

To start this step, the top unselected team from each region is compared to each of the other seven top unselected region teams and viewed one pair at a time (A vs. B, A vs. C, etc.) until all comparisons are complete.

- a. Head-to-head competition versus other team under consideration for at-large selection.
 - If the two teams have competed against each other, the team who won at each meet is given 1.5 points for each win.
- b. Results against common Division II opponents.
 - Each team will get a 1 point for any distinct, winning common competitor chain (A beats B, B beats C).
 - Each team will get -1 point for any distinct, losing common competitor chain. (A loses to B, B loses to C).
 - Each team will get 1 point for any victory against a second-degree common competitor (i.e. team A beats team B, team B beats team C, team C beats team D, so team A gets a win against team D).
 - Each team will get -1 point for any defeat against a second-degree common competitor (i.e. Team A loses to team B, team B loses to team C, team C loses to team D).
 - If there are both wins and losses in the common competitor chain, for either first or second degree opponents in common, this will not be counted for or against a team.
 - Each common competitor chain (both 1st and 2nd degree) must be unique. The same meet between the same two teams cannot be used in two different chains for any two teams under consideration.
 - Within each common competitor chain (both first and second degree), each link must represent a different competition. Chains using the same meet in multiple links should not be counted for or against a team.
 - Each team is given a score for DII common opponent net wins = (Common Competitor Wins) – (Common Competitor Losses)

During this step, head-to-head competition and common DII opponents will be evaluated simultaneously comparing each team to each team by the score of head-to-head wins (multiplied by 1.5) and adding the score for DII common opponents net wins. If one team has a higher score, the other team is eliminated in this round. If the score is a tie, then no team can be eliminated in that comparison. All teams are compared in this round and order of comparison does not matter. If all but one team has been eliminated, that team is selected and the process moves to the next selection. If more than one team remains, then we move to step 2.

Step 2: Regional meet team time gap.

- a. Each of the teams under consideration in the current comparison will be viewed one duo at a time, 1 vs. 1, 1 vs. 2, etc.
- b. Comparing the team being considered for an at-large bid to the team that placed directly in front of them in the regional results only if that team has already advanced via an at-large selection, not as an automatic selection.
- c. Example: In Region A if a sixth-place team has a team time of 2:00:00 and a seventh-place team has team time of 2:01:00 the gap would be 1:00. In region B if a fifth-place team has a team time of 2:01:00 and the sixth-place team has a team time of 2:02:30 the gap would be a 1:30. The smaller gap would be deemed a closer performance, so in this example Region A would go over Region B.

If all teams being looked at in this step have a team time gap , the team with the lowest gap is selected and the process moves to the next selection. If there is no data or a tie in the gaps, then we move to step 3.

Step 3: Results against common non-Division II opponents.

- Each of the eight teams under consideration in the current comparison will be viewed one duo at a time, 1 vs. 1, 1 vs. 2, etc. using a similar system to step 1 with second tier D2 opponents.

The team with the most net wins would be selected here and the process moves to the next selection. If no team can be selected then we move to step 4.

Step 4 : In the case of a comparison between any two of the eight teams under consideration for an at-large bid in which there is no data generated from the above criteria, the process will advance by the judgement of the NCAA II Men's and Women's Cross Country Committee. Regular season success and strength of schedule will be taken into account.

Other selection notes:

Breaking Team Ties

In the case of a tie-breaker when comparing teams under consideration at a regular season meet/race that includes DI, DIII, NAIA or NJCAA schools, those schools must be taken out of the scoring comparisons by the committee unless used as a common opponent. For example, a team could lose to another team in a large meet with various non-Division II schools factored into the scoring, but still beat them head-to-head if the two teams were scored only against each other as a dual meet.

Rationale for Using Division II common opponents with 1st and 2nd degree chains.

- Net wins provide a more accurate assessment of a record rather than winning percentage, where 1-0 would be better than 10-1.
- Net wins reward a team for winning against common competitors, but also penalizes a team for losing against a common competitor. If only wins were counted, 4-2 would be worse than 8-12.
- Net wins, when combined with second-degree comparisons, rewards a team for beating a very

strong team, as the stronger team is likely to generate many second- degree “wins” for the team in question.

- Including common comparisons to the second-degree allows for more data in a situation where limited data may be available.
- Including common comparisons to the second-degree allows teams that do not travel outside of their region to benefit from beating teams in their region who have done well against common competitors.

Additional Individual Selections

After the 34 selected teams have been determined, a minimum 24 additional individuals per gender are selected to compete at the NCAA Championships.

1. The top two individuals from each region who are not part of a qualifying team will automatically advance to the championship (16 individuals).
2. All individuals who finish in the top five at the regional meet and are not part of a qualifying team automatically will advance to the championship.
3. The next eight individuals will be selected at-large. There is no limit to the number of at-large individuals that may be selected from the same region. The top individual from each region not receiving an automatic qualifying spot and not on a qualifying team, will be compared head-to-head using the same model as in the at-large team selection process. Place at the regional meet and strength of region are factored into the formula when comparing at-large individuals using the following equation:

$$[\# \text{ of team qualifiers from the region}] / [\text{Individual regional placing}] = \text{Individual score ratio}$$

The individual with the highest score using the above equation will be selected first. This will account for and reward individuals competing well in stringer regions, based on the number of teams that region qualifies to championships. When an individual receives an at-large selection, the next non-qualifying individual from that region will move up to the consideration round of eight individuals.

- Example:

Region A Individual:
Individual finishes 15th
5 teams qualify
 $5/15 = 0.33$

Region B Individual:
Individual finishes 12th
3 teams qualify
 $3/12 = 0.25$

Individual from Region A would qualify.

Breaking Individual Ties

If a situation occurs where two or more individuals are vying for the last qualifying spot, the tie will be broken by selecting the individual with the highest individual placement at his/her regional. If a tie still remains after the tie breaking procedure has been applied, all tied student-athletes will be selected to the championships.