



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY COMMITTEE
JAN. 27-28, 2026, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. Cross country selection procedures – A-Team definition.

(1) Recommendation. Revise the Division II Cross Country A-Team definition by changing the requirement from five individuals to at least four of the seven student-athletes who represent the institution at the NCAA Regional Cross Country Championships and clarifying that all individuals who start a race are counted in this number, regardless of the total number of entries and if they finish.

(2) Effective date. September 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. The committee noted that the current A-Team definition is unclear regarding whether the five required student-athletes must start or finish the race. The revised wording clarifies that any student-athlete who starts a race is considered to have participated, ensuring consistency in how participation is counted and discouraging teams from choosing not to finish a race based on in-competition outcomes.

Adjusting the requirement from five athletes to four also aligns the A-Team definition with existing team composition requirements from the regional to the national championships, where institutions are required to run at least four of the seven student-athletes who competed at regionals. This change brings Division II into alignment with the Division I definition of an A-Team, which similarly requires four of the seven regional competitors. The committee believes this alignment will promote consistency across divisions and ensure that institutions field their true A-Team at both the regional and national levels.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None

(5) Student-athlete impact. The recommendation should create an incentive for coaches to race their top team and student-athletes more often.

b. Cross country selection procedures – Regional Point Gap Ratio.

- (1) Recommendation. Replace the current Regional Point Gap Ratio with a Regional Team Time Gap in the second step of the selection process.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. The committee believes that team time gap more accurately reflects competitive performance at regional meets and offers a clearer, more consistent method for comparing teams across regions. By measuring the actual time separation between teams rather than point-based scoring differences that may be influenced by regional depth or scoring compression, team time gap gives the committee a more reliable indicator of team quality for selection purposes.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **2025 annual meeting report**. The committee approved the report from its 2025 annual meeting in January.
2. **Championship recap**. The committee reviewed the championship recap form and noted the categories in need of improvement and those categories that went well at the regional and finals sites.
3. **Governance updates**. Maritza Jones, managing director of governance and policy, and Ryan Jones, director of governance and policy, joined the meeting to review Division II priorities.
4. **USTFCCCA Updates**. The Committee reviewed feedback from Eric Phillips, USTFCCCA Division II Cross Country president, and CEO Sam Seemes, who provided comments on behalf of the coaches. As part of this feedback, the committee was informed of several concepts raised by the coaches association, including the potential development of a selection show and the feasibility of implementing a selection process for regional championships rather than continuing with an all-comers format. The coaches also reiterated their interest in the previously submitted proposal regarding the reduction of automatic qualifiers, and the committee revisited that topic as part of the discussion.
5. **Championships Committee updates**. Micaela Kapsalis, associate director of championships and alliances, provided an update on several items the Championships Committee will be reviewing in the upcoming academic year, including the triennial budget process that will be initiated during the committee's February meeting, and the NCAA Power Index system for team selections. The cross country committee also had the opportunity to discuss with Ms. Kapsalis a few potential action items the committee is considering.

6. **Coaches Connection update.** The committee discussed the Coaches Connection program with Kim Duyst, Coaches Connection liaison for cross country, noting how the program enhances communication with the coaches.
7. **Legislation updates.** Katelyn Starr, assistant director of governance and member services, provided an update of the current legislation changes that took place at the NCAA Convention.
8. **NCAA playing rules.** The committee met with Jay Fitzwater, assistant director of playing rules, and Mark Kostek, cross country secretary-rules editor, to review the playing rules. In addition to discussing the shoe control policy implemented in 2025, for which a one-year waiver was granted during the most recent season, and for which an additional waiver will be approved for the 2026 season, the committee also discussed the overall rules-making process, including how rules are proposed, how they are evaluated by the playing rules committee, and how they ultimately are incorporated into the rules book.
9. **Preview of 2026 regional hosts and Division II Festival.** The committee reviewed the 2026 championships and addressed the following items:
 - a. **Schedule of events.** The committee reviewed the schedule of events as it relates to regional competition dates, selections, the Division II Fall Festival opening and closing ceremonies, and the national championship date. With cross country being part of the Fall Festival this upcoming year, all associated dates shift back by two weeks, and the committee discussed how these adjustments impact the overall schedule.
 - b. **Regional locations.** The committee reviewed all regional hosts and competition sites and confirmed there were no concerns with any of them.
10. **Sport sponsorship.** The committee reviewed the sport sponsorship list and noted the new institutions for the 2026 season and the provisional members.
11. **Results requirements memo.** The committee reviewed the results reporting memo and updated dates as well as some information.
12. **Timing company review.** The committee felt that Leone Timing has done an excellent job timing for the national championship but also noted some of the issues with the live results for the men's race this year. The committee talked through feedback on the issues provided to Leone Timing to more clearly understanding what occurred and noted this will not be an issue for future years.
13. **Clerking Policy.** The committee voted to continue to allow teams that have both genders racing to clerk them both in during the early window. There will still be a clerking window for the second race for those who do not have another team race before them. This will allow the

coaches to focus more on the student-athletes during the competition.

- 14. Manuals review.** The committee reviewed the pre-championship manual and noted that one piece of information was missing: for the national championships, four of the seven declared student-athletes must have competed at regionals. This update will be added for the 2026 season. The committee also plans to conduct a more in-depth review of the host operations manual and the participant manual over the summer to ensure both documents are clear, accurate, and fully up to date.
- 15. Cross Country Selection Show.** The committee discussed adding a selection show for the 2026 Division II Cross Country Championships following strong support from the coaches association, noting it would provide a more visible and engaging way to announce qualifiers than the current press release. The group acknowledged the need to move the selections meeting one day earlier but agreed the shift is manageable and would allow the show to air on Monday after regional competition. Overall, the discussion emphasized the show's potential to enhance transparency and create a more memorable experience for student-athletes and programs.
- 16. Reduction of automatic qualifiers.** The committee discussed at length possibly reducing the number of automatic qualifiers from three to two for the Division II Cross Country Championships. Much of the discussion focused on how this change could impact the quality of the field in the championship event, the amount of travel that teams would need to make in the regular season and the long-term direction and overall health of Division II cross country. After considering the potential impact, the committee decided to maintain the current structure of three automatic qualifiers for the 2026 season. The committee noted it will continue to evaluate this concept for the 2027 season and plans to request feedback from the Championships Committee to determine whether the proposal aligns with Division II philosophy and regionalization principles. The committee also discussed that, should the sport committee ultimately choose to advance this proposal, it would seek guidance from the Championships Committee on whether such a change would be supported at that level.
- 17. Selections process for regionals.** The committee discussed possibly implementing a selection process for regional championships as part of the next triennial budget cycle (fall 2030–spring 2033), moving away from the current all-comers format. The committee noted that this change would require additional funding, as regional travel and per diem are not currently reimbursed by the NCAA, and that a formal selection process would need to be developed, including specific criteria and administrative procedures. Because implementing a selection process would reduce student-athlete access to the regional and national championships, the committee agreed that feedback from the Championships Committee will be essential and expressed interest in understanding what level of reduction, if any, the Championships Committee would consider acceptable based on previous feedback regarding an access-limiting proposal before moving forward with the concept.

18. Future evaluation of at-large team expansion. The committee also discussed potentially requesting an increase in the number of at-large teams as part of the triennial budget cycle that begins in 2030. As part of this long-term evaluation, the committee will review the overall number of institutions sponsoring Division II cross country, noting the growth that has occurred and is projected to continue through 2030. This analysis will help the committee determine whether proposing additional at-large teams for the national championships is appropriate when the next triennial budget cycle begins.

19. Committee composition. The committee reviewed its current composition and noted the two terms expiring at the end of August. The committee also reappointed Michael Rosolino, head coach at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (Florida), as chair for 2026-27.

Committee Chair: Michael Rosolino, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Florida).

Staff Liaison(s): Lindsey Eldred, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Cross Country Committee Jan. 27-28, 2026, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Jack Brunecz, King University.	
Carissa Cessna, Missouri Southern State University.	
Pete Gratien, Daemen University.	
Elizabeth Hoge, Ashland University.	
Andrew Huber, West Chester University.	
Randi Lydum, Western Oregon University.	
Michael Rosolino, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (Florida).	
Katelyn Smith, Adams State University.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Kim Duyst, Coaches Connection Liaison.	
Eric Phillips, USTFCCCA.	
Sam Seemes, USTFCCCA.	
Dave Stelnik, DirectAthletics.	
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:	
Lindsey Eldred, Championships and Alliances.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Sami Bogenschutz, Jay Fitzwaters, Maritza Jones, Ryan Jones, Micaela Kapsalis, Mark Kostek, and Katelyn Starr.	