



TECHNICAL MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

This manual outlines the technical procedures for competition for the 2026 NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Outdoor Track and Field Championships and provides case studies of situations that may arise during the course of the competition. This manual contains the following three sections:

- The technical procedures for administrating the championships.
- The relay policy for the competition; and
- Case studies, to assist coaches by reviewing and answering questions generated by situations.

This manual should be used in conjunction with the 2026 NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Outdoor Track and Field Pre-Championships Manual, the 2025 and 2026 NCAA Track and Field/Cross Country Rules Book, and NCAA Division III Bylaw 31 of the 2025-26 NCAA Manual, which pertains to the administration of NCAA championships. These publications will provide information about the general policies governing NCAA championships.

Although this manual and the other publications attempt to cover all phases of the championships, some questions may arise before or during the event. Please feel free to contact NCAA championship manager Laura Peterson-Mlynski at the national office.

CHAMPIONSHIP SITE REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION

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1. General Administration.

The administration of the championships is the responsibility of the NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committee, the NCAA championships manager, and the director of athletics of the host institution. They will delegate duties and responsibilities and assign other personnel as necessary to ensure the efficient and effective administration and promotion of the championships. The following will be used for assistance in the capacities indicated.

- a. Meet Director. The meet director will be appointed by the director of athletics of the host institution
- b. Meet Management. Meet management will select members track and field and cross country committee. Meet management will serve as the site review committee and have the responsibility to make any decisions or determinations necessary to protect the integrity of the championships.
- c. Meet Physician. The official meet physician will be appointed by the meet director and will be on site during all aspects of the competition to perform the duties prescribed in Rule 12-19 and Rule 20.
- d. Referee. All Referee positions will be appointed by the track and field and cross country committee and have the authority prescribed in Rule 12-4. The referee's decision can be appealed to the jury of appeals.
- e. Jury of Appeals. A jury of appeals will be appointed for this championship and will have final authority as prescribed in Rule 12-4.3 and 12-5.

2. Competition Format for the Championships.

- a. The championships will be conducted as a three-day event, with the men's and women's events alternating throughout the schedule.
- b. The order of events will be determined by the track and field and cross country committee. Exceptions for unusual conditions, facility constraints, and other concerns such as broadcast coverage will be considered. The actual time schedule for the competition will be established by the track and field and cross country committee and published on the NCAA Web site.
- c. Prior to the start of the championships, questions related to procedures not covered in this manual should be referred to NCAA championships manager, Laura Peterson-Mlynski, at the national office.
- d. The events contested in the championships are the 100 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters, 800 meters, 1500 meters, 5,000 meters, 10,000 meters, 100 hurdles (women), 110 hurdles (men), 400 hurdles, 3000 steeplechase, 4x100 relay, 4x400 relay, high jump, pole vault, long jump, triple jump, shot put, discus, hammer, javelin, heptathlon (women), and decathlon (men).
- e. In semi-final rounds, heats will be limited to eight lanes regardless of the number of lanes available. Semi-final round running event heats and lanes will be determined using Rule 15-11. Preliminary-round competing order in horizontal field events will be drawn by lot using Rules 13-4.1 and 13-4.2. Competing order in vertical field events will be drawn by lot using Rules 13-4.1 and 13-4.3. Specific event details are in Section 4 of this manual.

3. **Lane Assignments.**

- a. Unless otherwise indicated, all lanes in the first round of competition in any event at the championships site, including the only round, will be drawn by lot as prescribed in Rule 15-11.3.a.
- b. In all rounds after the first round, the lanes will be assigned as prescribed in Rule 15-11.3.b. In the 100 meters, 100 hurdles, and 110 hurdles, the preferred lane order will be: 5-6-4-7-3-8-2-9-1. In the 200, 400, 400 hurdles, 800, 4x100 and 4x400, the preferred lane order will be: 5-6-7-4-8-3-9-2-1.

4. **Heats, Flights, Qualifying Procedures, and Staggers.**

The provisions and procedures prescribed in Rules 15-10, 15-11, 13-4, regarding the formation, grouping, competition order, cancellation, or redrawing of heats or flights will apply in each round unless specifically superseded in this section. Changes to heats or flights, predetermined by declaration, may be made only with games meet management's authorization.

Any descending order list ties, by mark, for the last position to be accepted or for flight assignment, will be resolved by examining, of those tied, the second best valid qualifying meet performance submitted during the season, and so on until there is no basis for a mark comparison. For a tie not resolved after all available mark comparisons, acceptance will be awarded to the competitor who achieved the original tying mark later in the season. For a tie still not resolved, acceptance will be awarded to the competitor who achieved the second best valid qualifying meet performance later in the season, and so on until there is no basis for date comparison. As a last resort, the tie for the last qualifying position will be decided by the toss of a coin.

If there is a tie for the last qualifying place in the final and it cannot be determined by 1/1,000th of a second, there will be a run-off scheduled.

a. **100 Meters, 200 Meters, 400 Meters, 100/110 Hurdles and 400 Hurdles.**

- 1) Two (2) rounds will be contested, a semi-final and a final.

The **semifinal round** will consist of three (3) heats. Two (2) heats of seven (7) and one (1) heat of eight (8).

Final: Nine (9), the winner from each semifinal heat plus the next best six (6) times, after tie breaking, will qualify from the semi-final to the final.

The final will be conducted in one (1) section.

- 2) For track events that start in lanes: The top four fastest-seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to one of the designated top four preferred lanes. The remaining seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to the remaining lanes.

b. **800 Meters.**

- 1) Two rounds will be contested, a semi-final and a final.

The **semifinal round** will consist of three heats. Two (2) heats of seven (7) and one (1) heat of eight (8).

Final: Nine (9), the top two (2) from each semifinal heat plus the next best three (3) times, after tie breaking, will qualify from the semi-final to the final.

The final will be conducted in one section.

- 2) For track events that start in lanes: The top four fastest-seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to one of the designated top four preferred lanes. The remaining seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to the remaining lanes.
- 3) A lane start, with a one-turn stagger shall be used.

c. **1500 Meters.**

- 1) Two rounds will be contested, a semi-final and a final.

The **semifinal round** will consist of two heats of 11.

Final: Twelve (12), the top four (4) from each heat plus the next best four (4) times, after tie breaking, will qualify from the semi-final to the final.

The final will be conducted in one (1) section.

- 2) Starting positions in the semi-final round and final round shall be drawn by lot.
- 3) A single waterfall start will be used.

d. **3000 Steeplechase.**

- 1) Two rounds will be contested, a semi-final and a final.

The **semifinal round** will consist of two (2) heats of 11.

Final: Twelve (12), the top four (4) from each heat plus the next best four (4) times, after tie breaking, will qualify from the semi-final to the final.

The final will be conducted in one section.

- 2) Starting positions in the semi-final round and final round shall be drawn by lot.
- 3) A single waterfall start will be used.

e. **5000 and 10,000 Meters.**

- 1) One round will be contested, a final.
- 2) Starting positions within each alley will be drawn by lot.
- 3) A two-alley, waterfall start with a one-turn stagger will be used. The outside alley will be the preferred alley.

The **final round** shall have 15 competitors assigned to the main waterfall across the entire width of the track and seven (7) competitors on the staggered waterfall.

f. **4x100 Relay.**

- 1) Two rounds will be contested, a semi-final and a final.

The **semifinal round** will consist of two (2) heats of eight (8).

Final: Nine (9), the top two (2) from each semifinal heat plus the next best five (5) times, after tie breaking, will qualify from the semi-final to the final.

The final will be conducted in one section.

- 2) For track events that start in lanes: The top four fastest-seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to one of the designated top four preferred lanes. The remaining seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to the remaining lanes.

g. **4x400 Relay.**

- 1) Two rounds will be contested, a semi-final and a final.

The **semifinal round** will consist of two heats of eight (8).

Final: Nine (9), the top two (2) from each heat plus the next best five (5) times, after tie breaking, will qualify from the semi-final to the final.

The final will be conducted in one section.

- 2) For track events that start in lanes: The top four fastest-seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to one of the designated top four preferred lanes. The remaining seeded competitors in each heat or section shall be drawn by lot to the remaining lanes.
- 3) A lane start, with a three-turn stagger shall be used.

h. **Long Jump and Triple Jump.**

- 1) A preliminary and final round of attempts on a single runway will be contested.

- 2) Flight assignment will be determined from the declared ranked descending order list.

Performances ranked 12th through 22nd will be assigned to flight one and performances ranked first through 11th will be assigned to flight two.

The jumping order within each preliminary flight shall be drawn by lot.

- 3) Competitors shall check in with the head clerk at the appointed time, which is located in the clerking schedule.
- 4) Each competitor will be allowed three (3) attempts in the preliminary round.

The competitors with the nine (9) best performances, after tie breaking, will advance to the final round in one (1) flight and compete in reverse order of preliminary round performance.

- 5) Each preliminary flight will be allowed a 20-minute flight-specific warm-up. There is no general warmup period. A maximum 15-minute warm-up period will be allowed before the final round; however, competition may begin before 15-minutes elapses if all competitors agree to start earlier.
- 6) Scoring is determined per Rule 13-2.5, by all marks during the preliminary and final round in the competition.

i. Shot Put, Discus, Hammer and Javelin.

- 1) A preliminary and final round of attempts on a single throwing surface will be contested.
- 2) Flight assignment will be determined from the declared ranked descending order list.

Performances ranked 12th through 22nd will be assigned to flight one and performances ranked first through 11th will be assigned to flight two.

The throwing order within each preliminary flight shall be drawn by lot.

- 3) Competitors shall check in with the head clerk at the appointed time, which is located in the clerking schedule.
- 4) Each competitor will be allowed three (3) attempts in the preliminary round.

The competitors with the nine (9) best performances, after tie breaking, will advance to the final round in one (1) flight and compete in reverse order of performance in the preliminary round.
- 5) Each preliminary flight will be allowed a 20-minute flight-specific warm-up. There is no general warmup period. A maximum 15-minute warm-up period will be allowed before the final round; however, competition may begin before 15-minutes elapses if all competitors agree to start earlier.
- 6) Scoring is determined per Rule 13-2.5, by all marks during the preliminary and final round in the competition.

j. High Jump and Pole Vault.

- 1) A single jumping or vaulting pit, with one flight, will be used.

The competing order within each event will be drawn by lot.
- 2) One continuous flight will be used per Rule 13.4.3a. See Rule 13-4.3. The 'one-hour' time limit indicated in Rule 16-1.6(c)(1) will be in effect.
- 3) Competitors will check in with the head clerk at the appointed time found in the clerking schedule.
- 4) High jump competitors will be allowed a 60-minute warm-up period, while pole vault competitors will be allowed a 90-minute warm-up period.

- 5) Starting heights and increments will be set by meet management after the qualifiers have been determined.

k. Combined Events – Heptathlon and Decathlon.

First event of day competitors will be allowed a 30-minute warm-up on track. In accordance with the rulebook the decathlon and heptathlon order of events and time between events will be as stated.

Check-in times will be a minimum of thirty (30) minutes prior to the first event each day.

100 Meters

- 1) The decathlon 100 meters will be conducted in three (3) sections.

Sections will be assigned based on qualifiers seasonal best performance as verified by TFRRS, with the individuals with the seven (7) fastest performances in a section, the next seven (7) fastest individuals assigned to a section, and the final eight (8) fastest individuals assigned to the remaining section.

- 2) Sections will be run slowest to fastest. Lane assignments will be drawn by lot.

200 Meters

- 1) The heptathlon 200 meters will consist of three (3) sections.

Sections will be assigned on the basis of qualifiers seasonal best performance as verified by TFRRS, with the individuals with the seven (7) fastest performances in a section, the next seven (7) fastest individuals assigned to a section, and the final eight (8) fastest individuals assigned to the remaining section.

- 2) Sections will be run slowest to fastest. Lane assignments will be drawn by lot.

400 Meters

- 1) The decathlon 400 meters will consist of three (3) sections.

Sections will be assigned on the basis of qualifiers seasonal best performance as verified by TFRRS, with the individuals with the seven (7) fastest performances in a section, the next seven (7) fastest individuals assigned to a section, and the final eight (8) fastest individuals assigned to the remaining section.

- 2) Sections will be run slowest to fastest. Lane assignments will be drawn by lot.

800 Meters

- 1) The heptathlon 800 meters will be conducted in one (1) section unless there are 13 or more competitors remaining in the competition, in which case there will be two (2) sections.

If two (2) sections are required, the top 11 competitors in the standings, following the javelin, will be assigned to the second section. The remaining competitors will be assigned to the first section.

- 2) A single waterfall start will be used.

- 3) Starting positions will be drawn by lot.

1500 Meters

- 1) The decathlon 1500 meters will be conducted in one (1) section.
- 2) Starting positions will be drawn by lot.
- 3) A single waterfall start will be used.

100 Hurdles

- 1) In the heptathlon 100 hurdles there will be six (6) sections using only alternate lanes with hurdles placed in all lanes. The determination of odd or even lanes will be made by meet management prior to the championships. A set of hurdles will also be placed inside of lane one or outside of lane eight unless facility constraints cannot accommodate this procedure.

Sections will be assigned on the basis of qualifiers seasonal best performance as verified by TFRRS. The fastest four (4) individuals will be assigned to a section, the next four (4) fastest individuals to a section, the next four (4) fastest individuals to a section, the next three (3) fastest individuals to a section and the final three (3) fastest individuals assigned to the remaining section.

- 2) Sections will be run slowest to fastest. Lane assignment will be drawn by lot.

110 Hurdles

- 1) In the decathlon 110 hurdles there will be six (6) sections using only alternate lanes with hurdles placed in all lanes. The determination of odd or even lanes will be made by meet management prior to the championships. A set of hurdles will also be placed inside of lane one or outside of lane eight unless facility constraints cannot accommodate this procedure.

Sections will be assigned on the basis of qualifiers' seasonal best performance as verified by TFRRS. The fastest four (4) individuals will be assigned to a section, the next four (4) fastest individuals to a section, the next four (4) fastest individuals to a section, the next three (3) fastest individuals to a section and the final three (3) fastest individuals assigned to the remaining section.

- 2) Sections will be run slowest to fastest. Lane assignments will be drawn by lot.

Combined Events – Warm-ups

Field events warm-ups in the decathlon and heptathlon will be 30-minute, flight-specific for each event.

Long Jump

- 1) The long jump and will be contested in two simultaneous flights on separate, but similar competition venues.
- 2) Competition groups will be established once entries close.
- 3) Competition order will be drawn by lot within flights.

High Jump

- 1) The high jump will be contested in two (2) simultaneous flights on separate, but similar, competition venues.
- 2) Competition groups will be established once entries close.
- 3) Competition order will be drawn by lot within flights.

Pole Vault

- 1) The pole vault will be contested in two (2) simultaneous flights on separate, but similar, competition venues.
- 2) Competition groups will be established once entries close.
- 3) Competition order will be drawn by lot within flights.

Discus and Javelin

- 1) The discus and javelin will each consist of two (2) sequential flights.
- 2) Competition groups will be established once entries close.
- 3) Competition order will be drawn by lot within flights.

Shot Put

- 1) The shot put will consist of two (2) simultaneous flights contested on separate, but similar, competition venues.
- 2) Competition groups will be established once entries close.
- 3) Competition order will be drawn by lot within flights.

5. Coaching Area.

A coaching area, outside the area of competition, will be established for each field event and the distance events. Meet management will determine the location of this coaching area. Only coaches with proper credentials may use this coaching area.

RELAY PERSONNEL AND PERFORMANCE POLICY

1. Only one relay team from the descending-order list per institution may be declared. That relay team's performance will be used for seeding purposes. All other teams on the descending-order list from that institution must be scratched.
2. The alternates must be declared separately and not later than the close of packet pick-up at the championships.

An alternate is a student-athlete not already in the championships in any event. Please see Rule 15-8.2 for further information on relay replacement policies.

3. The four members who actually compete and earn a qualifying position will be the 'declared' relay team for that institution and will be the only individuals for which NCAA championships travel reimbursement will be provided. NCAA travel reimbursement will not be provided to alternates, even if they compete in the championships.

4. An athlete on a declared relay who is replaced with an alternate or substitute, may still compete in any event(s) in which he/she had previously been accepted into the meet.

CASE STUDIES

Breaking a tie for the last accepted position to the championships.

SITUATION 1: After declaration, 17 are declared in the men's 100 meters with a mark of 10.66 or better. Six additional are declared with a best descending order list mark of 10.67. Will all six be accepted into the championships?

RULING: No. Only 22 in total, will be accepted into the championships. That means only five of the tying six will be accepted. The second best valid qualifying performance mark submitted through the mandatory meet result reporting system will be examined for each of the six. Assume the second-best performance marks submitted are 10.68, 10.69, 10.70, 10.69, 10.68, and 10.72. The two individuals with the second best of 10.68 are accepted, and the tie-breaking procedure continues, but only involves the two individuals with submissions of 10.69. If one of those had a third valid qualifying submission, and the other did not, the individual with the third submission would be the last individual accepted.

SITUATION 2: After declaration, 18 are declared in the women's high jump with a mark of 1.84 or better. No one has a submitted best meet mark of 1.83. Two are declared with a submitted best meet mark of 1.82. Seven additional are declared with a best descending order list mark of 1.81. Will all seven be accepted into the championships?

RULING: No. Only 22, total will be accepted into the championships. That means, only two of the tying seven will be accepted. The second best valid qualifying performance mark submitted through the mandatory meet result reporting system will be examined for each of the seven. Assume that after examining the third best qualifying meet performance mark submitted, three still remain tied and there are no other available marks to compare. This mark is the last used as tie-breaking for comparative purposes. The performance date of their original mark that created the tie is then examined to determine who achieved the mark later, in order to determine which two are accepted into the championships. If a tie still exists, it is resolved by examining the performance date of the second mark and, if needed, the third mark in order to eliminate one. If the examination of the performance date of the third mark does not result in a break of the tie, the tie for the last qualifying position will be decided by the toss of a coin.

Relay Situations.

SITUATION: Of the four student-athletes listed on the championships declaration form for the 4x400 relay, three have injuries that prevent them from competing in the championships. Can the coach use other student-athletes who are competing in the championships or who are declared relay alternates, to fill the open spots on the relay?

RULING: Yes. There is no limit to the number of replacements to the declared relay team.

Field Events.

SITUATION: A long jumper takes a jump in the preliminary round of competition. Believing the mark to be sufficient to advance to the final round and also score in the event, the student-athlete leaves the competition area. Is this one valid mark sufficient to be used for scoring in the event?

RULING: Yes. In field events passing attempts in a competition is a strategy that may be employed.