



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION II FIELD HOCKEY COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 30-31, 2023, ANNUAL MEETING**

**KEY ITEMS.**

- 1. Championship field expansion.** The committee recommends an expansion of the championship field in conjunction with a request for a first round budget increase, and automatic qualifiers if the expansion is approved.
- 2. Date formula change.** The committee is adjusting the date formula for the first round in Festival years so that games are played on the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving.

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative items.**

- **None.**

**2. Nonlegislative item.**

- **Date formula change.**

- (1) Recommendation. To adjust the date formula in Festival years so that first round games are played on the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving.
- (2) Effective date. Date formula to be updated in fall 2024. Change to be first utilized in the next festival year fall 2026.
- (3) Rationale. In a non-Festival year, first round games are played on the Saturday prior to finals and final games are played on the Friday and Sunday prior to Thanksgiving. This year being a Festival year, first round games were played on the Sunday after Thanksgiving and final games were played the following Thursday and Saturday.

The proposed change reduces the length of the regular season for most teams, alleviates the burden on first round hosts to conduct championship games over a holiday weekend, and provides additional planning and travel time for qualifying teams. The committee noted that conferences need to be aware of this change to adjust their championship game schedule in Festival years.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. In a Festival year, the extended length of the regular season can be taxing on the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes. The proposed change minimizes that burden by reducing the extended length of the season for non-qualifying teams and teams who qualify only to the first round. Qualifying teams are provided additional time to prepare for traveling and playing in the final games.

#### INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Approval of 2022 annual meeting report.** The committee approved the January 31, 2022 annual meeting report as written.
2. **2022 Championship review.** The committee was pleased with the overall championship experience for student-athletes, from the first round through the Festival. The facility at the final site, Renton Memorial Stadium, was an impressive venue; however, coaches expressed negative feedback for not having lines on the field for practice prior to the semifinal. This was due to snow washing away the painted lines. Positive feedback was received regarding the web stream, host hotel, and awards presentation. In particular, the new signage for the awards presentation was appreciated.
3. **2023 championship site planning – Manchester, NH.** Saint Anselm will host the 2023 championship. Committee member, Carolyn King-Robitaille, is the head coach at Saint Anselm and provided insight about her host site. She and the committee approved of the hotel that has been contracted for teams by OnLocation. However, Carolyn expressed reservations about the hotel contracted for headquarters and officials. The championship manager is in touch with OnLocation about alternate hotel options.

Regarding the venue, Saint Anselm has renovated all locker rooms. The committee approved of keeping the team benches on the same side as the crowd, should the host decide to do so. While this is not the typical format at other schools, this is how Saint Anselm conducts its regular season games and it creates an exciting atmosphere for participants. Barricades exist between the field and fans, and the national coordinator of officials approved of this format.

The committee decided to host a banquet in 2023 and recommended the New Hampshire Institute of Politics as a venue. The championship manager will schedule a site visit and may do so in the fall to observe a home game.

4. **Championship field expansion and automatic qualifiers.** Beginning fall 2024, the committee expects 37 field hockey teams to be represented in Division II, including 16 in the East Region and 21 in the Atlantic Region. Based on a 3:5 ratio the committee intends to implement automatic qualifiers for the three existing conferences if the field expansion is approved. This includes the Northeast-10 in the East Region and the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference and South Atlantic Conference in the Atlantic Region.

The championship will include one automatic qualifier and two at large bids from the East Region and two automatic qualifiers and three at-large bids from the Atlantic Region. The automatic qualifiers will include the teams that win their respective conference championships. The ranking process will remain the same with the regional committees presenting teams in their recommended order to be finalized by the national committee.

In 2022, 35 teams sponsored Division II Field Hockey resulting in an access ratio for teams of 5.833:1 with a six-team bracket. In 2024, the access ratio for teams is expected to be 4.625:1 with an eight-team bracket. The results from the Division II coaches survey reviewed by the committee in 2022 indicated unanimous support for increasing the bracket size and the committee reiterates the continued support. The committee noted the South Atlantic Conference has experienced significant growth recently and those student-athletes need a pathway to the championship.

5. **Feedback for bench size pilot.** The committee is in favor of permitting teams to have all student-athletes on the championship field and recognized the need to clarify the permissible activities of additional student-athletes (those beyond the squad size). The committee acknowledged that additional student-athletes have been with their respective teams since preseason and most travel to away games.

The committee intends to allow any rostered student-athlete to dress in uniform, practice, warm-up, and be announced. However, these individuals cannot play in the championship game. The table sports information director monitors which student-athletes are subbed in and out. If a team plays a student-athlete who is not permitted to play, the result may be a misconduct violation.

The travel party form will be updated so that teams can list the 24 student-athletes in the squad size, the six staff in the travel party, and any additional student-athletes. Only the squad size student-athletes will receive a trophy and coaches will be responsible for informing any additional student-athletes they will not receive a trophy on the field. Additional trophies may be purchased after the championship.

6. **Selection criteria.** The committee chair acknowledged the need for improved confidentiality in regional and national committee ranking calls. The committee intends to implement a confidentiality reminder before and after every call, as well as a review of all selection criteria at the start of each call.

Upon reviewing other selection criteria options, the group recognized that most of the criteria currently in use are already capturing any information offered in the other options.

KPI will be available to the committee in the fall to use on a trial and reference basis, but will not be used in ranking determinations. Members are interested in seeing how it would impact their rankings. They noted that each performance indicator captures the same data presented in different ways.

The committee expressed that coaches prefer rank order for all rankings, rather than the first one as alphabetical. However, the group acknowledged that this is the ranking process for all Division II sports. Additionally, in response to questions from coaches, it was explained that final published rankings are not posted and have not been posted going back at least ten years.

7. **2022-23 committee timeline.** The committee approved the timeline.
8. **Division II Governance update.** Maritza Jones and Ryan Jones from the Division II governance staff updated the committee on the 2022-23 Division II priorities. The committee expressed positive feedback and further interest in the Make Game Day Yours events and modules, as well as an interest in connecting with the national Student-Athlete Advisory Committee representative.
9. **Division II Academic and Membership Affairs update.** Susan Britsch, assistant director of academic and membership affairs, spoke with the committee about key updates from the NCAA Convention, including the elimination of test score requirements for first-year student-athletes. From a legislative perspective, she requested feedback on behalf of the management council regarding the proposal for student-athletes to enter the transfer portal by a June 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. She noted there is confusion because non-Division II student-athletes may not be educated on the process. The committee chair noted that, as a compliance administrator, she has found that Division I student-athletes often want to transfer later in the season, including baseball student-athletes in particular. The committee is in favor of an exception to the rule due to confusion and acknowledged it would potentially provide transfer opportunities for more student-athletes.
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11. **Division II Championships Committee update.** Karen Kirsch, director of championships, updated the committee on key topics from the championships committee. She relayed that the championships committee will ask for feedback on the date on which sports are planning to host their banquets and on the bench size limit. She shared that final decisions regarding budget allocations will likely be made in the fall and may create impacts in two ways, including division-wide enhancements, such as access to KPI, and sport-specific enhancements, such as championship field expansion with a focus on access ratios.

Karen explained that minimum sponsorships are being discussed and committees will have the opportunity to provide feedback on this topic should it progress. The committee discussed its proposal for an expanded championship field and Karen provided feedback as this proposal requires a budget request and may be analyzed from an access ratio perspective.

12. **Rules update.** Ben Brownlee, assistant director overseeing playing rules and officiating, and Cheryl Bruttomesso, rules interpreter, updated the committee on the rules proposals discussed at the convention and explained that the proposals will be discussed and potentially put forth for implementation by the rules subcommittee. Cheryl noted that certain rules modifications need clarification, including the video review. The group is considering creating an NCAA Field Hockey rulebook, instead of following the International Hockey Federation (FIH) rules in conjunction with NCAA modifications.
13. **Officiating update.** Tim Vaughan, national coordinator of officials, updated the committee on his experience serving in this role. Tim described the process he uses to select officials for the championship, explaining that he selects 38 top tier officials who are approved by the committee and then selects the additional 17 based on their availability and proximity to the championship. These officials are then assigned to all division championships as appropriate. The group acknowledged that additional education of officials would be beneficial. Tim, Ben, and Cheryl are planning to elevate the educational content for officials through the new RQ+ platform.
14. **National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA).** The championship manager and committee member coaches were in attendance at the NFHCA convention. The committee reviewed and discussed key initiatives from the convention. The NFHCA remains undecided about whether it will conduct an all-star game at future championships.
15. **Joint divisions meeting.** The committee joined the DI and DIII committees in approving the 2022 annual report. Each committee chair shared an update from its 2022 championship. Cheryl and Ben discussed the playing rules proposals. Ben announced the transition from Arbiter to RQ+. The committees engaged in a discussion of feedback regarding the roles and work of the national coordinator of officials and the rules interpreter.

Tim expressed difficulties in communicating and sharing feedback with conference assignors and the officials they assign during the regular season. Committee members expressed a concern over the lack of new officials in the pipeline and the challenge of obtaining coach buy-in to have an experienced official paired with a new official at the championships. They further expressed a desire for clearer communication to coaches and assignors to explain why particular officials are selected for each game, for example, if a new official is selected to give her an opportunity at the championship-level.

Sport leader, Caleb Kolby, shared a reminder of the upcoming bid process for the 2026- 2029 field hockey championships. The committees discussed the dates for 2024 annual meeting (see informational item 19).

- 16. Review of manuals.** The championship manager will implement changes and edits as appropriate based on the informational items.
- 17. Chair election.** The committee selected Julie Munson to serve as the chair beginning fall 2023.
- 18. Other business.** The committee is in favor of a joint championship and expressed so during the joint committee meeting. The group noted that location is important and a successful joint championship will required buy-in from the local community. The DI, DII, and DIII championship managers will discuss this topic and take appropriate next steps.
- 19. Future meeting dates.** The next annual meeting is scheduled for Jan. 29-30, 2024. The group intends to remain on same timeline with DI and DIII to continue having joint meetings.

*Committee Chair:* Stacey Gaudette, Mercyhurst, Pennsylvania State Athletic  
*Conference Staff Liaison(s):* Noël Couch, Championships and Alliances

Division II Field Hockey Committee January 30-31, 2023, Meeting	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Stacey Gaudette, Mercyhurst	
Julie Munson, Southern New Hampshire University	
Carolyn King-Robitaille, Saint Anselm College	
<b>Absentees:</b>	
Michael Cerino, Limestone University	
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>	
Susan Britsch	
Ben Brownlee	
Cheryl Bruttomesso	
Maritza Jones	
Ryan Jones	
Karen Kirsch	
<b>NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support if subcommittee) in Attendance:</b>	
Noël Couch	
Linda Godby	
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>	
None.	