



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III FIELD HOCKEY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 27-28, 2025, ANNUAL MEETING

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Automatic qualification.** The committee requests approval for all eligible conferences to receive automatic qualification. (See Action Item 2-a.)
2. **Committee chair.** The committee elected a new chair for 2025-26. (See Informational Item 20.)
3. **Game ball change.** The committee is requesting to allow the use of the Kookaburra dimple ball during any round of the championship, so long as the host provides the appropriate quantity of practice and warm-up balls. (See Action Item 2-b.)

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **Legislative items.**

- None.

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

a. **Automatic qualification.**

- (1) **Recommendation.** Approve the following 18 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2025 NCAA Division III Field Hockey Championship: Atlantic East Conference, Centennial Conference; Conference of New England; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; New England Small College Athletic Conference; New England Women's and Men's Athletics Conference; New Jersey Athletic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; and United East Conference.
- (2) **Effective date.** September 1, 2025.
- (3) **Rationale.** Each conference meets the requirements of NCAA Bylaw 31.3.3 and has completed the automatic-qualification declaration form (note that pool allocations may be adjusted based on 2024-25 sponsorship numbers).

Anticipated allocations: Automatic Qualifiers – 18; At-large – 10.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

b. Game ball change.

(1) Recommendation. Allow the use of the Kookaburra dimple ball during any round of the championship, so long as the host provides the appropriate quantity of practice balls.

(2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.

(3) Rationale. The committee, with support the Division III membership of the National Field Hockey Coaches Association, believes that the Kookaburra dimple ball should be allowed during postseason play. Historically, the championship only allowed for a smooth ball, even on Astroturf surfaces, when the preferred ball is the dimple ball due to field watering. Through feedback from the membership, the committee proposes allowing the Kookaburra dimple ball during postseason at sites that wish to use the dimple ball. The committee will work with the NCAA to send the appropriate amount of game balls (12 per game) but will require the host to have the appropriate amount of practice and warm-up balls that must also match the game ball. The committee also requests the Kookaburra dimple ball at a final site with an Astroturf surface, which is the surface for the next three selected finals site hosts.

(4) Estimated budget impact. Minimal. The NCAA will reduce the prior year's order of the smooth ball to ensure the dimple ball can be ordered without impacting the budget. This includes no longer sending a dozen orange smooth balls per site, as well as no longer sending any practice balls to preliminary-round sites. Finally, the committee will no longer order a commemorative smooth ball for the finals site to help mitigate the budget impact. The committee acknowledges that there could be a budget impact on institutions that will now want to use the Kookaburra game ball during regular-season competition and practice to prepare for postseason. Historical pricing indicates that a dozen Kookaburra dimple balls is more than double the price of a dozen smooth balls.

(5) Student-athlete impact. The committee believes that allowing the Kookaburra dimple ball to be used during postseason play, if the host can satisfy the hosting requirements, will positively affect the student-athlete by allowing them to use the preferred ball for the type of surface in which the game is being played.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **2024 annual meeting report**. The committee approved the 2024 annual meeting report as submitted.

2. **Automatic qualification, pool breakdowns, and regional alignment.** The committee reviewed the regional alignments by conference. Staff noted conference membership changes and will be confirmed once the 2025-26 sponsorship information is available.
3. **Discussion with the national coordinator of officials.** The committee met with Tim Vaughan, national coordinator of officials, to review his annual report specific to Division III. Mr. Vaughan noted that there is still a gap in postseason quality umpires being available and eligible and what is required for the tournament. Mr. Vaughan did note that the number of registered and eligible officials was double from the year prior, which significantly increased the pool of umpires with four additional games across the divisions. Mr. Vaughan also noted monthly conference calls occurred between the NCAA officiating staff and the regular-season conference coordinators, which helped communication processes during the season into postseason.
 - **Umpire selection process.** The committee thanked Mr. Vaughan for his work throughout selections, including using the best available umpires for all rounds of the championship.
4. **Recap of the National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) convention.** The committee discussed the bulletin provided to the coaches at the breakout meeting of the convention. The committee reviewed the voting outcomes regarding proposed rules modifications at the convention, which also were reviewed during the joint meeting with the Divisions I and II Field Hockey Committees. The main takeaway from this piece was the overwhelming support of the coaches to allow the Kookaburra dimple ball during postseason (see Action Item 2-b above).
5. **Review materials for the joint meeting.** The committee reviewed the agenda and materials for the joint meeting with the Divisions I and II Field Hockey Committees and prepared its position statements on current topics. (See the joint meeting report for more information.)
6. **Rules proposals.** The committee discussed each rules proposal to provide feedback to the two Division III committee members who serve on the rules subcommittee. The goal was to ensure the rules subcommittee could accurately represent the interests of the Division III sport committee as well as the feedback received from the general Division III membership at the NFHCA convention.
7. **2024 championship review.**
 - a. **Rankings.** The committee reviewed the new NCAA Power Index regional ranking process. The committee reviewed the pros and cons of still posting regional rankings despite a national ranking being available.

- b. Regional Advisory Committees.** The committee noted upcoming vacancies. The committee also discussed the new role of the RAC. The committee reviewed the need for weekly calls and how to better use the RAC in future years.
- 8. Selection day and show review.** The committee discussed the selection day timeline and was pleased with the changes in timing this year to better accommodate the timing of the selection show. The committee will consider moving it up even further assuming the conference championship schedules remain the same. With NPI, the committee could project and confirm final brackets on selection Sunday with ample time to ensure they are creating the most competitive bracket, per the bracketing principles.
- 9. Site representatives.** The committee was pleased with the recruitment and training of the site representatives used at the first, second, and third rounds. Members appreciated the work these individuals provided to support the championship.
- 10. Preliminary-round policies.** The committee discussed the policy improvements from 2023 to 2024 and will continue with changes made to practice order selection and awards. The committee will add more flexibility with the host practice time for second/third round competition.
- 11. First-round game times.** The committee discussed the potential of changing the timeframes in which first-round games can be played. The committee ultimately did not recommend a change to ensure flexibility is allowed for all teams participating in the tournament, while being fair to potential travel impacts on visiting teams.
- 12. Second-round game times.** The committee affirmed the second round start times of 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The committee understands the need to keep the 10 a.m. start time available but prefers to use this only if absolutely necessary, with case-by-case approval annually.
- 13. Joint NCAA postseason round hosts.** The committee was pleased with the additional work surrounding dual hosts for field hockey and soccer. The committee believes hosts that were committed to both championships put on a supreme experience for each set of student-athletes at their site.
- 14. Awards.** The committee discussed the potential change to the awards structure but ultimately left the process the same for 2025.
- 15. 2024 finals site championship review.**
 - a. Team hotel.** The committee was pleased with the addition of complimentary team meeting rooms for each team, with audio visual services. Additionally, the committee was pleased with the signage provided at the team hotel. The committee noted feedback from teams on potential improvements for future years.

- b. **Banquet.** The committee was pleased with the work of the hosts at the 2024 banquet. The committee affirmed the plan to continue with a traditional banquet format at the 2025 championship once a plan is proposed by the hosts.
 - c. **Schedule of events.** The committee discussed the schedule of events at the finals site and confirmed the practice times and order on Thursday were correct. The committee was pleased with the change in allowing teams with a higher NPI to select their practice times. While the committee discussed moving semifinal times, members decided the prescribed times of noon and 3 p.m. were best for the student-athlete experience. The committee will revisit this timing in the fall through discussions with the host. The committee decided to move up the national championship game time to noon, host, and weather dependent, to assist with team travel and the staggering of championship game times at all three divisions.
 - d. **Video review.** The committee was pleased with the additional resources invested in video review at the finals site, including partnering with DVSPORT. The educational materials provided by the officiating staff was also helpful. The committee was also pleased with the use of the Division III federated rule allowing two uses of video review by each team, rather than only one.
 - e. **Uniform policy.** The committee urged the officiating staff to help enforce uniform requirements throughout the regular season, so it was not an issue during postseason. The committee affirmed the desire to follow the uniform rules as written and will ask the team that is in violation of the contrasting requirement to change in the 2025 postseason.
 - f. **Inclement weather policy.** The committee was pleased with the adoption of new inclement weather policies and happy to not need them during the championship.
 - g. **NCAA Power Index (NPI).** The committee noted the successes and challenges regarding the NCAA Power Index in year one of usage. The committee is excited to see year two data. The committee believes the system is more consistent and transparent than the previous criteria. The committee also noted a desire for more frequency in rankings updates prior to selection week.
 - h. **Access ratio.** The committee noted the success of the two additional teams to the bracket due to the new Division III access ratio of 1:6. The committee also discussed maintaining 28 teams with the fluctuation of the field hockey sport sponsorship.
16. **Division III Championships Committee update.** NCAA Director of Championships Laura Peterson-Mlynski joined the committee to discuss the upcoming Division III Championships Committee initiatives and meetings.

- 17. Division III update.** NCAA Managing Director of Division III, Bill Regan provided an update from the NCAA Convention and other ongoing Division III initiatives. Additionally, Jeff Myers from the academic and membership affairs staff joined to provide legislative updates from the NCAA Convention.
- 18. Committee roster.** The committee noted the expiring term of Victor Brady, who represents Region V. The committee is pleased with the current rotation of term expirations to help maintain an experienced base from year to year.
- 19. Field hockey manuals review.** The committee reviewed the various manuals and instructed staff to make the appropriate updates.
- 20. Committee chair.** The committee confirmed that Wendy Andreatta, head field hockey coach at University of Rochester, will serve as the chair for 2025-26.

Committee Chair: Victor Brady, Bryn Mawr College, Centennial Conference
Staff Liaison: Caleb Kolby, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division III Field Hockey Committee January 27-28, 2025, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Wendy Andreatta, University of Rochester.	
Carrie Austin, University of the South.	
Victor Brady, Bryn Mawr University.	
Therese Doyle, Kean University.	
LA Lane, Clark University.	
Krystyanna Ramsdell, Worcester State University.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Tim Vaughan, National Coordinator of Officials.	
Cheryl Bruttomesso, Secretary Rules Interpreter.	
NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support if subcommittee) in Attendance:	
Caleb Kolby.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Jeff Myers, Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Bill Regan and Markell Staton.	