



2023 DIVISION I
FOOTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP

PRE-CHAMPIONSHIP
2023-24 MANUAL

NCAA General Administrative Guidelines

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Section 1 • Introduction

During the 2023-24 academic year, the Association will sponsor 90 national championships – 42 for men, 45 for women and three for both men and women. Of the men’s championships, three are National Collegiate Championships, 13 are Division I championships, 12 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. Of the women’s championships, six are National Collegiate Championships, 12 are Division I championships, 13 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. The combined men’s and women’s championships are National Collegiate Championships.

The Pre-Championship Manual will serve as a resource for institutions to prepare for the championship. This manual is divided into three sections: General Administrative Guidelines, Sport-Specific Information and Appendixes.

Sections one through nine apply to policies applicable to all 90 championships, while the remaining sections are sport specific.

Section 1.1 Definitions

Pre-championship Manual. Resource for institutions to prepare for the championship.

Administrative Meeting. Pre-championship meeting for coaches and/or administrators.

Appendixes. Any supplemental documents to be provided and distributed through the various resources.

Championship Manager. The NCAA staff member(s) responsible for the operational oversight of the championship.

Games Committee. The committee assigned to supervise the conduct of each championship session at a specific site. For finals sites, the games committee is typically the NCAA national committee.

NCAA National Committee. The sport committee with direct oversight responsibilities for the championship.

Non-predetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host at the time of the participant/team selections announcement.

Playing Rules. The rules under which the competition will be conducted.

Predetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host before the participant/team selections announcement.

Preliminary Rounds. The rounds of the championship before the final or championship round.

Regional Alignment. The geographic location of institutions or regional advisory committees.

Schedule of Events. Official event schedule – includes all required activities (e.g., practices, banquets, etc.).

Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the team selection process.

Site Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the site selection process.

Squad Size. In any championship in which a squad limit has been established by the governing sport committee or by the bylaws, the number of eligible student-athletes in competitive uniform at the start of competition.

Tournament Physician. The physician designated by the host institution/conference to serve as the chief medical advisor for the championship event(s) to be hosted at the host venue.

Section 2 • Championship Core Statement

The championships and alliances staff strives to administer competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner so that the experience of the student-athlete is paramount.

This is attained by:

Ensuring student-athletes’ optimal experience.

Executing championship events reflecting appropriate quality and values to/for stakeholders – student-athletes, coaches, administrators, member institutions, sport committees, fans, broadcast partners and corporate champions/partners.

Coordinating all aspects of the championship in an efficient, effective manner through common operating policies and practices, using internal and external resources.

Integrating championships with broadcast and corporate relationships in a manner that maintains the integrity of the championship.

Assuring effective management of the business aspects of the operation.

Enhancing the assets of the NCAA and their value by collaborating with internal and external expertise to achieve heightened exposure (e.g., community programs, fan events, banquets, anniversaries).

Section 3 • Conduct

Section 3•1 Certification of Eligibility/Availability

[Reference: Certification of Eligibility/Availability in Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20.2.4, 31.2.1.7.1, 31.2.1.7.1.2 and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaws 7.3.1.5 and 18.2.1.1 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Division II Championships Committee Policy and Bylaws 31.2.1.5, 31.2.1.5.2, and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

Only student-athletes eligible under Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 may compete in NCAA championships. Member institutions are required to certify the eligibility of their student-athletes before the beginning of each academic year and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from all intercollegiate competition.

Member institutions are reminded to notify the NCAA national office before the selection date for each championship of any student-athlete who may have participated in regular-season competition but subsequently is determined to be ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition.

DISCOVERY OF INELIGIBILITY OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE AFTER SELECTION

If an institution fails to report an ineligible student-athlete and the omission is not discovered until after the institution is selected to participate in the championship, necessitating the institution's withdrawal from the championship, that withdrawal shall be considered as one of the years of ineligibility, provided another institution participates in the championship in place of the disqualified institution. If the discovery of the ineligible student-athlete occurs so near the beginning of the championship that the governing sport committee does not have a reasonable period of time to replace the disqualified institution in the bracket, that fact shall be taken into consideration in determining the number of years the disqualified institution shall be ineligible to participate.

Section 3•2 Drug Testing

As part of preparation and planning to participate in championship events, member institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable policy and legislative requirements pertaining to banned substances, drug testing and related eligibility requirements with their student-athletes. Student-athletes who compete in NCAA championships may be subjected to drug tests in accordance with legislation and may be determined to be ineligible as a result thereof. Only student-athletes who have consented in writing to such testing are initially eligible for these championships; and thereafter, student-athletes who are tested shall remain eligible only if they test negative.

Section 3•3 Honesty and Sportsmanship

Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.

Section 3•4 Misconduct/Failure to Adhere to Policies

MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in an NCAA championship is any act of dishonesty, unsportsmanlike conduct, unprofessional behavior or breach of law, occurring from the time the championship field is announced through the end of the championship, that discredits the event or intercollegiate athletics. Each games committee shall hold an administrative meeting with the representatives of participating institutions to review and explain the policies related to misconduct.

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A governing sport committee may assess a financial penalty against an institution for failure of any of its representatives to adhere to the policies and procedures governing the administration of the competition. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to comply with the procedures and deadlines for submitting scores, score sheets, schedules, rosters and entry/march-in forms for qualification and other materials necessary for the efficient administration of the competition. [Click here](#) to see the full misconduct/failure to adhere to policies and procedures online.

Section 3•5 Sports Wagering Policy

Sports wagering includes placing, accepting or soliciting a wager (on a staff member's or student-athlete's own behalf or on the behalf of others) of any type with any individual or organization on any intercollegiate, amateur or professional team or contest. Examples of sports wagering include, but are not limited to, the use of a bookmaker or parlay card; internet sports wagering; mobile betting; auctions in which bids are placed on teams, individuals or contests; and pools or fantasy leagues in which an entry fee is required and there is an opportunity to win a prize.

The current NCAA legislation against sports wagering prohibits NCAA student-athletes, member institutions' athletics staff and non-athletics staff with athletics responsibilities, and conference office staff from participating in sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activities concerning intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics practice or competition in a sport in which the NCAA conducts championship competition, in bowl subdivision football and in emerging sports for women.

A wager is any agreement in which an individual or entity agrees to give up an item of value (e.g., cash, shirt, dinner) in exchange for the possibility of gaining another item of value.

STUDENT-ATHLETES

A student-athlete found in violation of the prohibition against knowingly participating in any sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activity that involves intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics competition shall be ineligible for further intercollegiate competition, subject to appeal to the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of eligibility.

POSTSEASON

In championships in which a bracket format is used, student-athletes, coaches and administrators may not participate in bracket competitions where there is both a required entry fee and an opportunity to win a prize. Student-athletes and administrators may participate under current NCAA rules in bracket contests where there is no entry fee but a possibility of winning a prize. Some NCAA member schools, however, have chosen to ban student-athletes from participating in these types of bracket contests.

HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES

It is permissible for NCAA championships to be conducted at locations in states that permit sports wagering.

Section 3•6 Student-Athlete Experience Survey

During the NCAA championships, the student-athlete experience is paramount. NCAA staff and hosts dedicate themselves to planning the best experiences for all involved. As part of our commitment to getting better, following the championship, participants will receive a survey to provide feedback on their experience and input on how championships can be improved for future NCAA student-athletes. Institutional administrators and coaches will receive

an email containing a link to the survey and will be asked to forward the survey to student-athletes. Additionally, this survey will be accessible via QR code found on the back of NCAA-issued championship credentials.

We also understand that sometimes certain circumstances or conditions occurring during the events may require real-time consideration. When this is the case, student-athletes may reach out to their site representative or NCAA national office staff on-site.

Section 4 • Elite 90™ Award

The Elite 90 award was created to recognize the true essence of student-athletes by honoring individuals who have reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in their sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among their peers. The award is presented in every sport, every division, and goes to the student-athlete who has the highest cumulative grade-point average of all student-athletes competing at the finals site. One student-athlete per championship will receive the award, and the announcement of the winner will be made at the finals site.

Institutions that wish to nominate a student-athlete must do so through an online nomination process. For more information or to access the online form and submit a nomination, [click here](#).

Section 5 • Fan Travel

Through support from Marriott International as the Official Hotel Partner of the NCAA, NCAA championships are pleased to provide easy and affordable accommodations for family and fans to follow their favorite student-athlete(s) and team(s) as they participate in NCAA championships competition. Travel arrangements completed through Marriott and NCAA Travel help support NCAA student-athletes. Please direct your fans to [NCAA.com/travel](https://www.ncaa.com/travel) to search and book online hotel reservations.

Section 6 • Health and Safety

As part of preparation and planning to host and/or participate in championship events, member institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable health and safety policy and legislative requirements and guidance including, among others, those relating to concussion management, catastrophic injury prevention, inclement weather and independent medical care. These requirements and related information can be found in applicable division manuals, sports playing rules and the materials located on the [NCAA Sport Science Institute website](#). In addition, a summary of some of the key health and safety considerations related to traveling to championship events can be found in the [NCAA's Guidance for Medical Care and Coverage for Student-Athletes at Away Events](#).

Section 7 • Logo Policy

[Reference: Bylaws 12.5.4, 31.1.7 and 31.1.8 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw 12.5.4 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Bylaw 12.5.3 in the NCAA Division III Manual .]

A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (e.g., celebrations on the court, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met:

1. Athletics equipment (e.g., shoes, helmets, baseball bats and gloves, batting or golf gloves, hockey and lacrosse sticks, goggles and skis) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public; and

2. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including numbered racing bibs and warmups) and all other items of apparel (e.g., socks, head bands, T-shirts, wrist bands, visors or hats, swim caps and towels) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed 2-1/4 square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform and all other items of apparel shall not bear a design element similar to the manufacturer's trademark/logo that is in addition to another trademark/logo that is contrary to the size restriction.

Section 8 • Research

In order to avoid inappropriate and unnecessary participant distraction and disruption of championship events, it is expected any data collection or other research efforts conducted at or during championship events will be coordinated through the national office, with notice and a description of any research proposal to be submitted to the NCAA research staff at least six weeks before the championships event begins.

Section 9 • Travel Party

Please refer to the NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. NCAA Travel policies are updated annually and can be found online [here](#). Please reference Appendix A of the travel policies for reimbursable travel party numbers. The travel policies supersede all other documents.

Section 10 • Religious Conflicts

[Reference: Bylaws 31.1.4.1 and 31.1.4.2 in the NCAA Division I Manual.]

Institutional Policy. If a participating institution has a written policy against competition on a particular day for religious reasons, it shall inform the NCAA national office on or before September 1 of each academic year in order for it or one of its student-athletes to be excused from competing on that day. The championship schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate that institution. *(Adopted: 4/22/98, Revised: 8/11/98, 10/28/99, 5/2/13)*

Individual Championships. In individual championships, an athlete must compete according to the institution's policy regarding Sunday competition (if the institution has no policy against Sunday competition, the student-athlete shall compete on Sunday if required by the schedule).

Section 11 • Team Replacement Policy

The Division I Competition Oversight Committee developed a team replacement policy considering the possibility of unforeseen circumstances impacting championship fields. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the terms set forth in the policy document available [here](#) when, despite best efforts, a team within the championship field is impeded or hindered from participating in the championship for reasons beyond its control.

Division I Football

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Section 1 • General Administration

Section 1•1 NCAA Staff Contact Information

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Section 1•2 National Committee

Current members of the committee are:

WEST REGION

Kent Haslam

Director of Athletics
University of Montana

EAST REGION

Ed Kull

Director of Athletics
Fordham University

CENTRAL REGION

Brian Hardin

Director of Athletics
Drake University

WEST REGION

Steve Moniaci

Director of Athletics
Houston Christian University

SOUTH REGION

Gerald Harrison

Director of Athletics
Austin Peay University

EAST REGION

Mark Benson

Director of Athletics
University of Albany

CENTRAL REGION

Matthew Larsen

Director of Athletics
North Dakota State University

CENTRAL REGION

Tom Michael

Director of Athletics
Eastern Illinois University

EAST REGION

Tom Pincince

Director of Athletics
Central Connecticut State University

SOUTH REGION

Mark Wharton

Director of Athletics
University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

For additional information about the NCAA Division I Football Championship, contact:

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Alyssa Rice, Championships and Alliances
317-917-6627 / arice@ncaa.org

Kent Haslam, chair
Director of Athletics / University of Montana
406-243-5419 / kent.haslam@umontana.edu

Section 1•3 Regional Advisory Committees

NAME	INSTITUTION	CONFERENCE
CENTRAL REGION		
Brian Hardin, chair	Drake	Pioneer Football League
Bill Chaves	North Dakota	Missouri Valley Football Conference
Matt Larsen, chair	North Dakota State	Missouri Valley Football Conference
Andrew Goodrich	Gardner-Webb	Ohio Valley Conference/Big South Conference
Tom Michael, chair	Eastern Illinois	Ohio Valley Conference/Big South Conference
Phil Esten	St. Thomas (Minnesota)	Pioneer Football League
EAST REGION		
Mark Benson, chair	University at Albany	Coastal Athletic Association
Sherryta Freeman	Lafayette	Patriot League
Jeremy Gibson	Merrimack	Northeast Conference
Thomas Pincince, chair	Central Connecticut State	Northeast Conference
Ed Kull, chair	Fordham	Patriot League
Allison Rich	New Hampshire	Coastal Athletic Association
SOUTH REGION		
Mark Wharton, chair	Chattanooga	Southern Conference
Jason Donnelly	Furman	Southern Conference
Connell Maynor	Alabama A&M	Southwestern Athletic Conference
Gerald Harrison, chair	Austin Peay	ASUN/Western Athletic Conference
Jason Cable	Alabama State	Southwestern Athletic Conference
Ryan Ivey	Stephen F. Austin	ASUN/Western Athletic Conference
Alecia Shields-Gadson	Delaware State	Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference
Dr. Louis Perkins	North Carolina Central	Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference
WEST REGION		
Kent Haslam, chair	Montana	Big Sky Conference
Steve Moniaci, chair	Houston Christian	Southland Conference
Mark Orr	Sacramento State	Big Sky Conference
Richard Duran	University of the Incarnate Word	Southland Conference

Section 1•4 Important Dates

Monday, Oct. 2	Championship information and forms available on ncaa.org for prospective preliminary-round host institutions.
Wednesday, Nov. 1	Prospective preliminary-round host institutions bid submission deadline.
Sunday, Nov. 19	Final selections and announcement of bracket during a selection show at 12:30 p.m. Eastern time on ESPNU.

CHAMPIONSHIP DATES (2023-24)

The dates and sites of the NCAA Division I Football Championship are determined by the Division I Football Championship Committee, subject to the approval of the Division I Football Oversight Committee.

DIVISION I FOOTBALL

First Round	Saturday, Nov. 25, at on-campus sites (8)
Second Round	Saturday, Dec. 2, at on-campus sites (8)
Quarterfinal Round	Friday, Dec. 8 and Saturday, Dec. 9, at on-campus sites (4)
Semifinal Round	Friday, Dec. 15 and Saturday, Dec. 16, at on-campus sites (2)
Championship Game	Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, at Toyota Stadium - Frisco, Texas

DATE FORMULA

First Round	Last Saturday in November
Second Round	First Saturday in December
Quarterfinals	Second Friday/Saturday in December
Semifinals	Third Friday/Saturday in December
Championship Game	Between Dec. 29 and the day before the College Football Playoff Championship Game

FUTURE DATES

2024-25 Championship (*tentative*)

Championship Selections	Sunday, Nov. 24
First Round	Saturday, Nov. 30, at on-campus sites (8)
Second Round	Saturday, Dec. 7, at on-campus sites (8)
Quarterfinals	Friday, Dec. 13 and Saturday, Dec. 14, at on-campus sites (4)
Semifinals	Friday, Dec. 20 and Saturday, Dec. 21, at on-campus sites (2)
Championship Game	Dec. 29, 2024-Jan. 19, 2025

Section 1•5 Equipment

GAME BALLS

The Wilson F1005 (Classic - Red), F1233 (Classic - Tan), F1002 (GST - Red), F1003 (GST - Tan), F1105 (GST Prime - Red), F1103 (GST Prime - Tan), F10053 (Omega) and F1006 (NFL Cut) footballs are the official balls for the championship and will be used in all rounds of competition. Institutions will be allowed to choose the model of Wilson football they wish to use while on offense throughout the championship.

After selections, each participating team will receive 12 Wilson footballs which may be used throughout the duration of the preliminary rounds. It is the expectation that the 12 Wilson balls, provided by Wilson, will last through the duration of the preliminary rounds. Please note, however, that institutions may use their own regular season footballs as long as it is one of the approved Wilson ball models. Should extra footballs be needed, please contact Ty Halpin and Alyssa Rice at the NCAA national office. The two teams advancing to the Football Championship Subdivision Championship Game will receive a separate shipment of 12 footballs to be used for the 2024 NCAA Division I Football Championship Game.

INSTANT REPLAY

Instant replay will be used at each game of all rounds of the championship. Instant replay equipment will be provided to each site using instant replay by DVSPORT. Each stadium will be responsible for providing all audio/video cabling and ring-down phone connections from the broadcast truck positions to the replay booth.

Personnel

1. **Replay Official and Communicator.** The conference selected to officiate the preliminary-round game will recommend a replay official and a replay communicator for the game. The recommendations must be approved by the NCAA, in consultation with the national coordinator of football officials, Steve Shaw. Those selected should not have any conflict of interest (perceived or actual) to any team or conference participating in the game they are assigned to work. The NCAA will coordinate air travel, if necessary, and help secure the use of a rental car for the replay official and communicator. Rental car expenses will be direct billed to the NCAA (when using Enterprise or National).

The NCAA will be responsible for reimbursing the replay official and replay coordinator for the game fee (\$710 for the replay official; \$500 for the communicator), transportation between home and the game site in their personal automobile (at the current rate per mile, if the official did not fly) and per diem (\$45 per day).

NCAA staff will reimburse these positions via RefQuest Plus and these individuals will receive information on setting up an account in RefQuest Plus once they are selected to work a game.

The host institution will be responsible for securing, and will need to be direct billed for, lodging for these individuals for up to two nights. The host institution should reflect these instant replay lodging expenses in the proposed budget as a budgeted expense.

2. **DVSPORT Staff.** Two representatives from DVSPORT will be on-site to manage the technical aspects of the instant replay equipment and work with the replay official in the replay booth during the game as the communicator and technician. The host institution will be responsible for securing, and will need to be direct billed for, lodging for these individuals for up to three nights. The NCAA will coordinate and cover the cost of air travel, if necessary, and help secure the use of a rental car for DVSPORT personnel.
3. **Sideline Assistant.** The host institution will secure two local individuals to serve as sideline assistants. The sideline assistants assist the replay official in communicating with the on-field officials for the review and discussion of plays, when necessary. The sideline assistants should each be paid a \$100 fee for their service, which should be paid by the host institution. The host institution should reflect these expenses on its proposed budget and financial report as a budgeted expense.

Space and Power Requirements

Dedicated “private” space in the press box or suite level to accommodate not fewer than four people is required. This space should contain the following:

1. An unobstructed view of the playing field.
2. Adequate counter space (at least 10 feet long and two feet deep) in the front of the box.
3. At least two dedicated power sources with a minimum of four power outlets.
4. Enough power to accommodate a power consumption of 520 Watts/110 Volts = 4.73 amps.
5. Separated from any other activity (media, fans, etc.).

A representative from DVSPORT will be present at the mandatory administrative meeting to answer any questions.

Section 1•6 Rules

Per NCAA Bylaws 18.6 and 31.1.6, member institutions shall conduct all intercollegiate competition in accordance with the playing rules of the Association in all sports for which the NCAA develops playing rules.

NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations will be followed and may be downloaded at www.ncaapublications.com.

OFFICIALS

A sport committee or games committee may not require membership in any specific officials’ association as a prerequisite for selection to officiate in an NCAA meet or tournament. Officials shall be selected and assigned by the sport committee or games committee (with the assistance of Steve Shaw), which shall ensure that officials adhere to the Association’s policies relating to gambling activities and drug and alcohol use. Furthermore, officials must conduct themselves in a manner befitting intercollegiate athletics. Failure to do so may result in termination of the officiating assignment.

DIVISION I FOOTBALL

The seven game officials and one alternate for all games will be selected by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee/College Football Officiating, LLC (CFO) from Division I Football Championship Subdivision conferences. The committee will use the following criteria when assigning officials: (1) Officials must be neutral, and games between two institutions from the same conference must be officiated by an officiating crew from another conference; (2) proximity of officials to the playoff site; and (3) frequency of assignments.

Note: If a conference used an eight-person officiating system during the regular season, that system may be used during the championship.

Section 1.7 Uniforms

The host institution will be the home team and will wear dark jerseys in the first-round, second-round, quarterfinal and semifinal contests. The visiting team will wear white jerseys. At the championship game, the higher-seeded team will be the home team and wear dark jerseys. The visiting team will wear white jerseys. If neither team is seeded, the home team will be determined by the NCAA. In all cases, the visiting team will be introduced first and will take the field first.

The logo restriction on student-athletes' apparel set forth in Bylaw 12.5.4 shall apply during NCAA championships to all personnel (e.g., coaches, athletic trainers, managers) who are in the team area for practices and games, or who participate in news conferences. The logo restriction on student-athletes' apparel set forth in Bylaw 12.5.4 shall apply to commercial logos on uniforms worn by band members, cheerleaders, dance team members and the institution's mascot during NCAA championship events.

LOGOS

[Refer to General Administrative Guidelines, Section 7.](#)

Section 2 • Determination of Championship Participation

Section 2.1 Championship Format

The NCAA Division I Football Championship provides for a maximum field of 24 teams. Ten member conferences have been granted automatic qualification for the 2023 championship. The remaining 14 teams will be selected at large by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee.

The top eight teams in the 24-team bracket for the championship will be seeded. Team pairings will be determined according to geographical proximity. Teams from the same conference will not be paired for first-round games (except for teams from the same conference that did not play against each other during the regular season; such teams may play each other in the first round).

Eight first-round games will be conducted on the campus of one of the competing institutions, and the winners will advance to the second round. The second round features eight games (including the eight teams that received a first-round bye) on the campus of one of the competing teams. Second-round winners meet in the quarterfinals on the campus of one of the competing institutions. Quarterfinal winners will advance to the semifinals on the campus of one of the participating institutions. The winners of the semifinal games will play in the 2024 NCAA Division I Football Championship Game in Frisco, Texas, on Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024.

START TIMES

Starting times shall be determined by the NCAA's broadcast partner in consultation with the NCAA and the host institution.

During the first three rounds of the championship, the NCAA will solicit the preferred starting times of host institutions. However, it is preferred that games not start earlier than 2 p.m. local time.

Tentative ESPN Broadcast Schedule:

ROUND	DATE	TIME	BROADCAST NETWORK
First-Round Games (8)	Nov. 25	TBD	ESPN+
Second-Round Games (8)	Dec. 2	TBD	ESPN+
Quarterfinal-Round Game	Dec. 8	TBD	TBD
Quarterfinal-Round Game	Dec. 9	TBD	TBD
Quarterfinal-Round Games (2)	Dec. 8 or 9	TBD	TBD
Semifinal-Round Game	Dec. 15	TBD	TBD
Semifinal-Round Game	Dec. 16	TBD	TBD
Championship Game	Jan. 7	2 p.m. Eastern time	ABC

The quarterfinal and semifinal rounds will be conducted on different days. One quarterfinal game will occur Friday, Dec. 8, and one quarterfinal game will occur Saturday, Dec. 9. The other two quarterfinal games may take place either Friday, Dec. 8 or Saturday, Dec. 9. One semifinal game will be played Friday, Dec. 15 and the other Saturday, Dec. 16.

The quarterfinal and semifinal schedules will be determined by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee the Saturday night of the preceding round. Prospective hosts should note these date possibilities in their facility evaluation forms and when developing their proposed budgets.

*Note: Friday games are not permitted in the first or second rounds.

TICKETS

Each competing institution will have access to an allotment of 500 tickets for each round of the championship. The host institution may use its discretion in the location for the visiting team tickets. Host institutions may place the visiting team fans in the same location(s) as they do for all regular-season games.

The host institution or sponsoring agency will retain 250 of the 500 tickets, and the competing institutions will be advised that they are available, if needed. Additional tickets may be purchased, but the seat locations will not be guaranteed.

The visiting institution is required to purchase a minimum of 200 tickets from the host institution at the standard price point for tiering in that location for any preliminary-round playoff game.

Each institution shall return all money and unsold tickets and inform the host institution or sponsoring agency of the number it will require from the 250 tickets being retained, not later than 6 p.m. three days before the game (i.e., Tuesday for a Friday game and Wednesday for a Saturday game). If the tickets are not returned to the host institution or sponsoring agency by this time, the institution shall be responsible for all unreturned tickets at face value. Once the competing institutions release the tickets being retained, the host institution or sponsoring agency will use them for public sale.

There are no minimum ticket prices for first-round games. However, for the second round, quarterfinals and semifinals, the host institutions shall not set ticket prices lower than the regular-season ticket prices. Host institutions may not offer complimentary tickets for the championship.

Should the visiting team bring its band to a preliminary-round game, band members should be provided admission at no charge. The seating for the visiting band should be in addition to the visiting team ticket block. Visiting teams are required to officially notify the host institution tournament manager not later than 5 p.m. (host institution local time) Monday of game week whether they plan to bring a band and, if so, how many seats are needed for the band.

TRAVEL PARTY

The size of the travel party is 130 persons for the first-round, second-round, quarterfinal and semifinal contests, including a maximum of 64 student-athletes in uniform.

For the championship game, the travel party will be 145 persons, including a maximum of 70 student-athletes in uniform.

Section 2•2 Selection Information

ALLOCATION OF BERTHS

The championship provides for a field of 24 teams. Ten conference champions qualify automatically; the balance of the field is selected at large by the Division I Football Championship Committee.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

Conference champions must be determined not later than Saturday, Nov. 18. Conferences must submit their notification of automatic qualifier online at www.planningpoint.net/Events/CHAMPSAQ.

The following 10 conferences have been granted automatic-qualification privileges for the 2023 championship:

ASUN Conference / Western Athletic Conference	Ohio Valley Conference/Big South Conference
Big Sky Conference	Patriot League
Colonial Athletic Association	Pioneer Football League
Missouri Valley Football Conference	Southern Conference
Northeast Conference	Southland Conference

The NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee will annually make the determination of which eligible conferences will receive automatic qualification. The following criteria are used when determining which conferences shall receive annual automatic qualification for the NCAA Division I Football Championship:

1. Non-conference records.
2. Strength of non-conference opponents.
3. Recent postseason history.
4. Competition against Football Bowl Subdivision opponents.

AT-LARGE SELECTION

For the 2023 NCAA Division I Football Championship, 14 at-large spots will be available in the 24-team championship field.

PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES (COUNTABLE COMPETITION)

For NCAA team-championship selection purposes per NCAA Bylaw 31.3.3, competition is countable only when the teams played are varsity intercollegiate teams of four-year, degree-granting institutions that conduct a majority of their competition in that team sport against varsity intercollegiate teams (see Constitution 3.2.4.5) of United States four-year, degree-granting institutions. Competition against service teams, professional teams, semi-professional teams, amateur teams, two-year colleges and club teams shall be excluded.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

During the championship, institutions that are playing within 400 miles (one way) of their campus will be required to travel to that site via bus. Institutions traveling equal to or more than 400 miles (one way) to their game will be approved for air travel to that site. All air travel arrangements will be made via Short's Travel Management.

1. **Arrival Times at Playoff Sites.** Participating institutions in first-round, second-round, quarterfinal and semifinal games shall arrive not later than the established practice time the day before competition.
2. **Lodging.** The host institution or sponsoring agency shall make local reservations for the visiting team and advise them of the arrangements. These arrangements should include an appropriate amount of meeting space at the hotel for the visiting team. Each visiting institution is obligated to confirm their accommodations. A minimum of 60 double-double rooms should be reserved by the host institution for the visiting team for all preliminary-round games. It is strongly recommended that the hotel reserved for the visiting team meet the following specifications:
 - a. Lodging accommodations all located in one hotel property.
 - b. A full service property.
 - c. Be located within 60 miles of the competition venue.
 - d. Have minimum meeting space to accommodate one room for 100 for the purpose of team meals, two breakout rooms for 40 per room and a conference room for athletic training needs.
 - e. Provide a late check-out for any game starting after 4 p.m. local time.

Failure to meet any of the above recommendations may have an impact on a site being selected to host during the preliminary rounds. If any of the above recommended requirements cannot be met, the host institution must make the NCAA championship managers (Ty Halpin and Alyssa Rice) aware of the shortfall when submitting other bid materials.

A visiting team hotel lodging/accommodations questionnaire will be required to be submitted with the hosting bid materials. If a visiting team prefers to stay at a hotel other than the one to which it has been assigned, it may be released from all or a portion of its room obligation only if it obtains a written release of the reserved rooms from the hotel general manager before 5 p.m. local time on the Tuesday prior to the game. The hotel is under no obligation to provide this release. The visiting institution must file a copy of the written release with the NCAA site representative and the host institution. If a visiting institution fails to obtain this written release with the assigned hotel for the use of the original reserved rooms, full charges for these rooms will be the visiting institution's financial responsibility. Unless approved by the NCAA in advance, an institution is precluded from relocating to a hotel where the game or instant replay officials may be assigned.

DIVISION I FOOTBALL

The host institution is responsible for making hotel arrangements and providing payment for the lodging of the eight officials, the instant replay official, communicator, two DVSPORT personnel and the NCAA representative assigned to its site, for a total of 13 rooms. These lodging expenses should be budgeted for and included in the proposed budget.

- 3. Transportation.** Please refer to NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. Travel policies can be found online at ncaa.org/sports/2013/11/7/championships-travel-information.aspx.
- 4. Expense Reimbursement.** Transportation expenses and a \$160 per diem will be provided for each member of the travel party. The size of the travel party is 130 persons for preliminary-round contests, including a maximum of 64 student-athletes. For the FCS Championship Game, the travel party will be 145, including a maximum of 70 student-athletes.

Section 2•3 Selection Criteria

At-large teams shall be selected by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee, assisted by four regional advisory committees that serve in an advisory capacity only.

The following principles shall apply when selecting at-large teams:

1. The committee shall select the best teams available on a national at-large basis to complete the bracket. Per NCAA Bylaw 31, the basic criteria used in the selection of at-large participants are (1) won-lost record, (2) strength of schedule, and (3) eligibility and availability of student-athletes for the NCAA championship;
2. There is no limit to the number of teams the committee may select from one conference;
3. The won-lost record of a team will be scrutinized to determine a team's strength of schedule; however, fewer than six Division I wins may place a team in jeopardy of not being selected;
4. The committee may give more consideration to those teams that have played all Division I opponents; and
5. If a committee member's institution is under consideration, that committee member will not be allowed in the room during discussions involving his/her team and may not vote for his/her team during the voting process. Similarly, a committee member from a conference office may not be present during discussions, nor vote for any team from his/her conference.
6. The committee will use the AFCA Coaches' Poll and the Stats Perform FCS Top 25 Poll as a tool for evaluating teams.

BRACKET PAIRINGS

All pairings will be made by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee. The following principles are applied when pairing teams:

1. The teams awarded the top eight seeds shall receive a bye in the first round and are placed in the appropriate positions in the bracket (Nos. 1, 8, 4 and 5 in the upper half; and Nos. 2, 7, 3 and 6 in the lower half);
2. The remaining 16 teams will play first-round games and will be paired according to geographic proximity and then placed in the bracket according to geographic proximity of the top eight seeds previously placed in the bracket;
3. The NCAA mileage threshold for mandatory team travel via ground is 400 miles (one way);
4. If a conference has four or more teams in the championship, the committee may allow an additional flight in the first or second round in order to avoid a conference having all of its teams on the same side of the bracket;
5. Regular-season non-conference match-ups in the first round of the championship should be avoided, provided it does not create an additional flight(s);
6. Teams from the same conference will not be paired for first-round games (except for teams from the same conference that did not play against each other during the regular season; such teams may play each other in the first round); and
7. Once the first-round pairings have been determined, there will be no adjustments to the bracket (e.g., a seeded team may play a conference opponent that advanced out of the first round).

Section 2•4 Site Selection

Regarding first-round, second-round, quarterfinal and semifinal sites, in addition to the criteria listed in Bylaw 31.1.3.2.1, the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee shall consider the following additional criteria when selecting playoff sites:

1. The committee will consider previous crowd-control measures and crowd behavior of the prospective host institution (regardless of seeding).
2. Prospective host institutions must submit the following minimum financial guarantees, which shall be 75% of the estimated net receipts as submitted on the proposed budget:
 - First round - \$40,000
 - Second round - \$50,000
 - Quarterfinals - \$60,000
 - Semifinals - \$70,000
3. If the minimum financial guarantees are met, the committee will award the playoff sites to the higher-seeded teams.
4. When determining host institutions for playoff games when both teams are unseeded, criteria shall apply as follows: (1) quality of facility, (2) revenue potential plus estimated net receipts, (3) attendance history and potential, (4) team's performance (i.e., conference place finish, head-to-head results and number of Division I opponents), and (5) student-athlete well-being (e.g., travel and missed class time).
5. A conference champion would host a first-round game against a conference opponent (if applicable). This policy would be contingent upon the conference champion meeting the facility requirements to host and submitting an acceptable bid by the established deadline.
6. If a second-round, quarterfinal or semifinal playoff site is not available due to the fact the institutions involved did not submit a proposed budget, the committee will contact the institutions and offer the opportunity to submit a bid at the current round's minimum financial guarantee level. If seeded teams are not involved, the committee will determine the host institution by applying the championship site-selection criteria in Bylaw 31.1.3.2.1.

Section 2•5 Preliminary-Round Hosting – Proposed Budget

Any institution interested in hosting preliminary-round competition of the 2023 NCAA Division I Football Championship must submit a proposed budget, respond to sport-specific questions, ensure that the institution's key contacts and facility information is up to date, submit proof of insurance, and upload the video board questionnaire (if applicable), instant replay questionnaire and photos of the designated instant replay space via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal (championships.ncaa.org). To submit a bid, first search for the desired championship under "Championships Available for Bid" and select "Add Bid."

Please note that all member institutions are allowed to regularly and easily access their profiles by visiting championships.ncaa.org. For profile issues, user access or to reset a password, please email championshipbid@ncaa.org or contact Kerstin Hunter (khunter@ncaa.org) at the NCAA national office.

CHAMPIONSHIPS BID AND HOST PROFILE PORTAL

The Championships Bid and Host Profile portal can be accessed at championships.ncaa.org. The deadline to submit all bid materials for this championship is Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023.

As a reminder, prospective hosts' budgets should include the lodging expenses of the committee/site representative, eight game officials, the instant replay official, communicator, DV/sport personnel, state and city taxes/fees, if applicable, and any ticket fees. Committee/site representative's per diem, mileage and luggage fees will be paid by the NCAA. Game officials will also be reimbursed by the NCAA using the RefQuest Plus system for their game fees, per diem, mileage and luggage fees.

FACILITY PROFILE

Institutions interested in hosting preliminary-round competition of the 2023 NCAA Division I Football Championship must add (or ensure the accuracy of) facility information for the applicable competition venue. This information is located at championships.ncaa.org. Any supporting information (e.g., facility diagram, pictures) may be uploaded and attached to that facility's profile. This information will be made available to the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee to aid in their deliberations of prospective host sites.

KEY CONTACTS

Each institution should list and then maintain its key contacts associated with each sport and the institution. Individuals can be added via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal at championships.ncaa.org.

SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN

Based on a review of current and future championships competition venues, discussions with safety and security experts, and its own expertise and knowledge, the NCAA has established a Safety and Security Advisory Group (SSAG) to develop a compilation of Best Practices for NCAA Championships. We urge each competition venue to take these Best Practices into account when developing its safety and security program. As part of your bid, please submit a safety and security plan for your venue, which would be inclusive of the NCAA Championships Safety and Security Team contact information form, located in Appendix A of the Best Practices document.

The best practices for venue safety and security, along with the safety and security contact form, are located at championships.ncaa.org.

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

A final financial report from each championship site must be submitted via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal under the "budget" tab not later than 60 days after the event.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding the bid process, please contact Ty Halpin (317-917-6136 / thalpin@ncaa.org) or Alyssa Rice (317-917-6627 / arice@ncaa.org). If you experience technical difficulties with the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal, please contact championshipbid@ncaa.org.

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Appendix A • Bracket



2023 NCAA Division I Football Championship

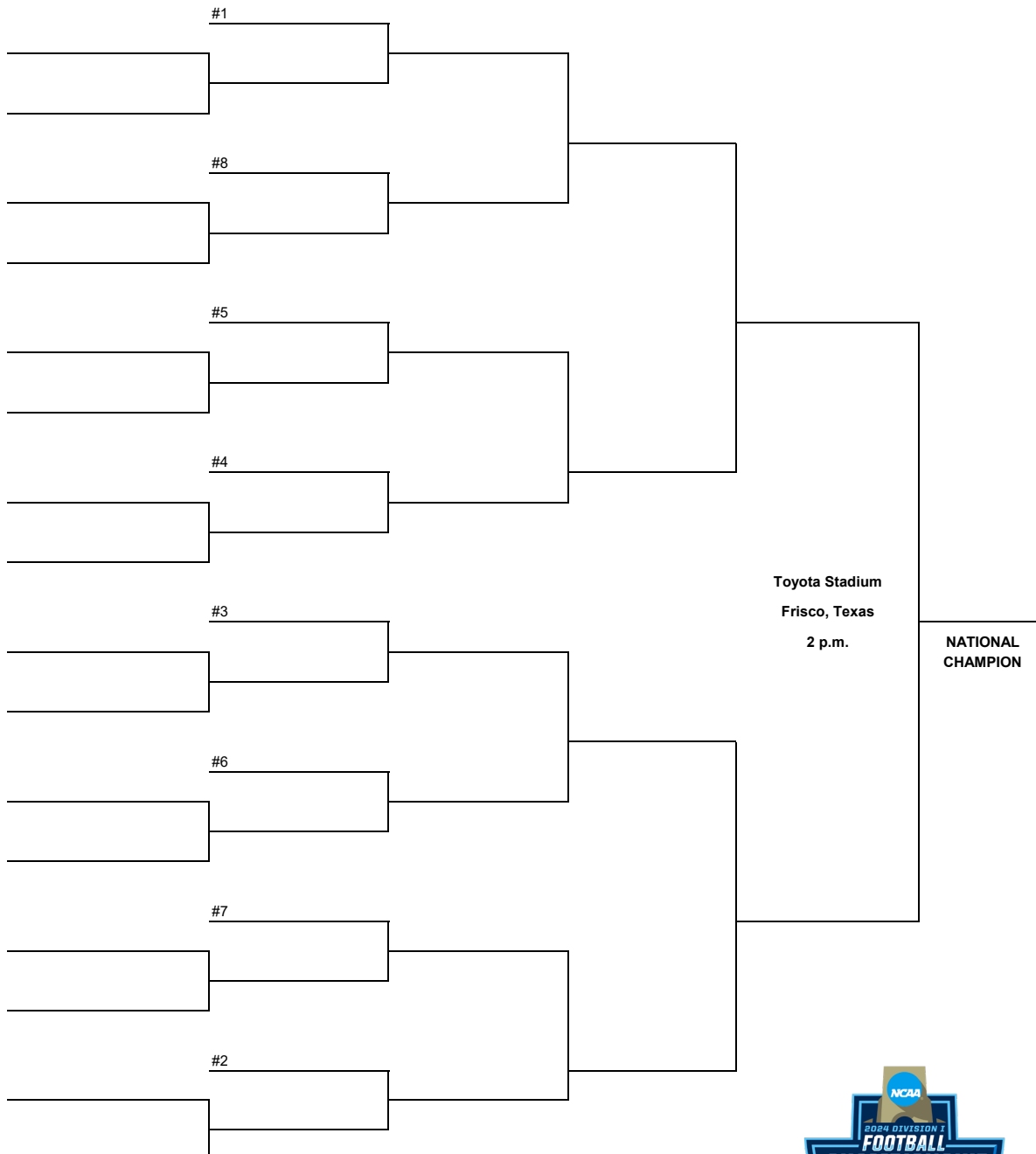
First Round
Nov. 25

Second Round
Dec. 2

Quarterfinals
Dec. 8/9

Semifinals
Dec. 15/16

Final
Jan. 7



* Host Institution
 All times are Eastern time. Information subject to change.
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Appendix B • Sport Sponsorship

CENTRAL REGION

Missouri Valley Football Conference (12)

Illinois State University
 Indiana State University
 Missouri State University
 Murray State University
 University of North Dakota
 North Dakota State University

University of Northern Iowa
 University of South Dakota
 South Dakota State University
 Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
 Western Illinois University
 Youngstown State University

AQ Conference

Ohio Valley Conference/Big South Conference (9/*10)

Bryant University
 Charleston Southern
 Eastern Illinois University
 Gardner-Webb University
 *Lindenwood University (reclassifying - eligible 2026)

Robert Morris University
 Southeast Missouri State University
 University of Tennessee at Martin
 Tennessee State University
 Tennessee Technological University

AQ Conference

Pioneer Football League (10/*11)

Butler University
 Davidson College
 University of Dayton
 Drake University
 Marist College
 Morehead State University

Presbyterian College
 University of San Diego
 *University of St. Thomas (Minnesota) (reclassifying - eligible 2025)
 Stetson University
 Valparaiso University

AQ Conference

EAST REGION

Coastal Athletic Association (15)

University at Albany
Campbell University
University of Delaware
Elon University
Hampton University
University of Maine
Monmouth University
University of New Hampshire

North Carolina A&T State University
University of Rhode Island
University of Richmond
Stony Brook University
Towson University
Villanova University
William & Mary

AQ Conference

The Ivy League (8)

Brown University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College

Harvard University
University of Pennsylvania
Princeton University
Yale University

Non-AQ Conference

Northeast Conference (7/*8)

Central Connecticut State University
Duquesne University
Long Island University
Merrimack College

Sacred Heart University
Saint Francis University (Pennsylvania)
*Stonehill College (reclassifying - eligible in 2026)
Wagner College

AQ Conference

Patriot League (7)

Bucknell University
Colgate University
Fordham University
Georgetown University

College of the Holy Cross
Lafayette College
Lehigh University

AQ Conference

SOUTH REGION

ASUN Conference/Western Athletic Conference (7/*10)

Abilene Christian University
 Austin Peay State University
 University of Central Arkansas
 Eastern Kentucky University
 University of North Alabama

University of Southern Utah
 Stephen F. Austin State University
 *Tarleton State University (reclassifying - eligible in 2024)
 University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (eligible in 2025)
 *Utah Tech University (reclassifying - eligible in 2024)

AQ Conference

Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (6)

Delaware State University
 Howard University
 Morgan State University

Norfolk State University
 North Carolina Central University
 South Carolina State University

Non-AQ Conference

Southern Conference (9)

The Citadel
 East Tennessee State University
 Furman University
 Mercer University
 Samford University

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
 Virginia Military Institute
 Western Carolina University
 Wofford College

AQ Conference

Southwestern Athletic Conference (12)

Alabama A&M University
 Alabama State University
 Alcorn State University
 University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
 Bethune-Cookman University
 Florida A&M University

Grambling State University
 Jackson State University
 Mississippi Valley State University
 Prairie View A&M University
 Southern University, Baton Rouge
 Texas Southern University

Non-AQ Conference

WEST REGION

Big Sky Conference (12)

California Polytechnic State University
California State University, Sacramento
University of California, Davis
Eastern Washington University
University of Idaho
Idaho State University

University of Montana
Montana State University-Bozeman
Northern Arizona University
University of Northern Colorado
Portland State University
Weber State University

AQ Conference

Southland Conference (7/*8)

Houston Christian University
University of the Incarnate Word
Lamar University
McNeese State University
Nicholls State University

Northwestern State University
Southeastern Louisiana University
*Texas A&M University, Commerce (reclassifying - eligible in 2026)

AQ Conference