



2025-26 NCAA Division I Football Championship Preliminary-Round Information and Bid Checklist

Selections

Selections for the 2025-26 NCAA Division I Football Championship will be announced at noon Eastern time, Sunday, November 23 on ESPNU.

Preliminary-Round Schedule

First Round:	Saturday, November 29
Second Round:	Saturday, December 6
Third Round:	Friday, December 12; or Saturday, December 13
Quarterfinals:	Saturday, December 20

Bid Checklist

The following materials must be submitted by institutions that wish to be considered as hosts for preliminary-round competition. All materials are due by **5 p.m. Eastern time, Thursday, November 6.**

Each of the online forms listed below may be accessed and submitted through the championships bid portal at <https://championships.ncaa.org>. The application is now part of My Apps and new users need to go through their SSO administrator to have it added to their My Apps account.

To begin the process of submitting a bid, you will need to locate the specific divisional sport and round in the Championships Available for Bidding section and click on Start Bid.

- ☐ **Proposed Budget(s).** An online proposed budget must be completed for **each** round of competition you wish to host. For those institutions submitting bids for multiple rounds, a 'copy' function is available in the system and will allow you to copy the budget or bid for another round. The appropriate round and date of competition must be indicated on each budget. Please be sure to include projected ticket sales in the Receipts section.

Note: Due to budget system upgrades, budgets submitted before the 2023-24 academic year can no longer be copied. Any newly submitted budgets will again be available for copying for future years/additional rounds. Previous budgets may still be accessed via the Home tab.

Free-form fields in the budget templates have been eliminated. Bidders will have to make their selections from a predetermined menu of options for each category. To assist with determining the appropriate option, bidders can hover over each option for examples/details.

Please carefully review pages 17-18 of the [2025 NCAA Division I Football Prechampionship Manual](#), before submitting a proposed budget, and make note of the following for all preliminary-round competition:

- All lodging expenses for on-field officials (eight), the instant replay official/communicator (two), site representative (one) and DVSPORT personnel (two) must be included in your budget.
 - Officials' fees, per diem and travel expenses do not need to be included, nor do per diem and travel expenses for site representatives – the NCAA will pay those expenses directly.
- ☐ **Facility Profile.** An online facility profile must be completed and/or maintained as necessary by each institution interested in hosting preliminary-round competition. Information regarding video board, LED board and/or ribbon boards should be entered via the “Boards/Control Room” tab of the applicable venue profile.

A facility profile can be maintained and updated on a regular basis. If a facility can host multiple sports, check the appropriate box(es) under the Sports tab of the facility profile to provide the information for that facility. Refer to page 17 of the prechampionship manual for facility requirements and site selection procedures. Facility information must be reviewed for completeness and accuracy once a year. Instructions on the process are included in the bid portal.

- ☐ **Key Contacts.** The key contacts for your institution should be entered and/or maintained as necessary within your profile. Please enter the information for the key personnel associated with running a championship at your site.

When starting a bid, you will be prompted to enter new key personnel or edit or confirm your existing key personnel. In addition, you will be asked to designate individuals who should receive the various host shipments (e.g., sport equipment, merchandise, awards, etc.). Please include the proper mailing address for overnight deliveries. P.O. box addresses will not be accepted.

Personnel who will administer the competition also will be listed and can be edited within the Profile section of the Championships Bid Portal. When entering individuals in this manner, information must be entered on both the General tab and the Role/Titles by Sport or Facility tab.

- ☐ **Critical Incident Response Team Contact Information.** The system automatically will generate a critical incident response team contact information form based on data entered into the key contacts form and the new Emergency Numbers tab in the facility profile. Individual points of contact from each agency are preferred, followed by LOCAL emergency numbers. The use of 911 should be avoided. If applicable, site representative information will be added by the championship manager once a site has been selected for hosting.
- ☐ **Safety and Security Plan.** Based on a review of current and future championships competition venues, discussions with safety and security experts, and their own expertise and knowledge,

the NCAA has established a Safety and Security Advisory Group to develop a compilation of *Best Practices* for NCAA Championships, which can be found [here](#). 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. Your safety and security plan documents should be uploaded in the document section of the facility profile, under the Safety and Security tab.

- **Alcoholic Beverages.** All Division I, Division II and National Collegiate championships are eligible to engage in the sale of beer, wine and prepackaged/premixed beverages (the latter with alcohol by volume of not greater than 15%), provided certain criteria are met. After starting a bid in the NCAA Bid Portal, users will be prompted to answer a few questions that will determine their institution's eligibility to sell alcoholic beverages at a given venue. If a school is deemed eligible and is interested in selling permissible alcoholic beverages, it will be required to complete one of the agreement options that must be signed and uploaded into the bid portal. Please thoroughly review the Championships Alcohol Sales Policy before determining and completing the appropriate agreement. A host that indicates it plans to sell alcohol at its site will see a new "Concessions Reporting" section in the budget. This section will need to be completed AFTER the conclusion of competition and submitted along with the actual expenses.
- **Lodging.** The host institution/agency shall negotiate a courtesy hold for the participating institutions/student-athlete(s). The selected hotel properties shall be priced at a fair and reasonable market room rate, while remaining sensitive to daily divisional per diem allowances. The selection of a competition site may be dependent on availability and quality of rooms for participating institutions/student-athletes. A [letter of intent template](#) is provided by the NCAA for the host to use to confirm the hold with the hotel(s).

All prospective hosts for non-predetermined sites will be required to identify the hotel properties they secured for the event via the Hotels tab, along with an upload of signed hotel agreement(s)/letter(s) of intent.

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, which includes on-site food/catering service.
- c. Be located within 45 miles from 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 where the visiting team drove.

All teams that fly to the site of competition and kickoff at or after 3 p.m. local time, should plan for a next day air charter departure. Teams that are a drive can determine if they want to depart post-game or next day.

For all traveling teams the NCAA per diem policy covers a full day of per diem on the day of competition and a half day the day after competition, should you travel home the day after competition.

The next day departure for fly teams that kick after 3pm local is intended to allow for a smoother travel experience and reduce many issues related to late departures (e.g., TSA screening, weather, availability of aircraft, response time to mechanical issues, etc.).

See Section 7 of the [Preliminary-Round Host Operations Manual](#) for more details on the lodging requirement.

Please use the following room blocks when reserving hotels.

	Day Prior to Practice	Practice Day	Game Day	Day Following Game
Teams	Min. 60 double rooms	Min. 60 double rooms	Min. 60 double rooms	Min. 60 double rooms
Site Representative	1 king room	1 king room	1 king room	1 king room
Officials/Replay/DVSPORT		12 king rooms	12 king rooms	12 king rooms

- ☐ **Visiting Team Accommodations Form.** Please complete the [Visiting Team Accommodations Questionnaire](#) pertaining to the lodging and locker room facilities available for the visiting team and upload it to the NCAA Bid Portal.
- ☐ **Photos of Television Announce Position and Camera Location.** Photographs of your designated television announce position and all designated camera locations must be submitted by each institution interested in hosting preliminary-round competition. These photos should be uploaded to the NCAA Bid Portal.
- ☐ **First, Second, and Quarterfinal-Round Preferred Starting Times Form.** Please complete the [First, Second, and Quarterfinal-Rounds Starting Times Form](#). For first-, second-, and quarterfinal-round games the prospective hosts should complete their preferred starting times. Please note the listed preferred game start times will be referenced and considered but the final determination of game time will be decided by ESPN in consultation with the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee.

Please use this form to provide your preferred game times should you be selected to host a first-, second- or quarterfinal-round game. Once completed, the first-, second- and quarterfinal-

round preferred starting times form should be uploaded to the Championship Bid and Host Portal.

The date and time of all quarterfinal and semifinal round games broadcast on linear ESPN networks (e.g., ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU) will be determined by ESPN in consultation with the NCAA.

- **Instant Replay Questionnaire.** Instant replay will be used for all games during all rounds of the championship. In order for the instant replay technology provider to begin its planning for these games, all institutions wishing to host a preliminary-round game during any round must submit the instant replay questionnaire. **If your institution uses DVSPORT Replay during the regular season there is no need to fill out the instant replay questionnaire.** If you do not currently have a DVSPORT replay system and have not hosted a game in the last three years, please submit photos of your booth, truck location and sideline connections. Pictures should be sent in a zipped file and emailed to replaysupport@dvSPORT.com. If you have any questions, please contact DVSPORT at 412-788-9070 or replaysupport@dvSPORT.com.
- **Instant Replay Cabling Requirements.** The host institution shall be responsible for providing the cabling needed to provide instant replay during all preliminary rounds of the Division I Football Championship. It will be a host institution expense to provide single mode tactical fiber with ST to ST connections and a minimum of six strands of fiber with dust caps. This cabling needs to be long enough to reach from the location of the television production truck to the location of the instant replay booth (which typically is next to the television talent booth). Please note that DVSPORT will provide the needed converters to turn that fiber into BNC and back from BNC to fiber for this need.

Host institutions can use single-mode fiber in the building or single-mode tactical fiber with other fiber connections (SC or LC), but will need to have patches in place to bring it back over to ST for the converters DVSPORT is supplying. If your institution wants to provide converters and just hand DVSPORT the HD/SDI feeds with BNC connectors, that would satisfy this requirement as well.

The length of this cable run will vary for each institution depending on its venue configuration. You will need to work on your respective campus to determine how much cabling you need to obtain to meet this requirement. The estimated cost of this cable will likely range from \$1,500 to \$2,500.

Failure to agree to provide the necessary instant replay cabling likely will remove an institution from consideration for hosting.

The host institution will also be responsible for reserving three hotel rooms for instant replay personnel during those rounds. As mentioned above, the instant replay officials' rooms should be paid and budgeted for by the host institution. The two additional rooms, which will be used by DVSPORT personnel, will be paid for by DVSPORT.

If you have any questions about any of the requirements listed in this Instant Replay section, please feel free to reach out to Kristen Jacob Smith, NCAA associate director, championships and alliances (who is also the broadcasting liaison for this championship). Kristen Jacob Smith

can be reached at 317-917-6584 or kjsmith@ncaa.org. You can also feel free to contact Andy Deering with DVSport, Inc. at 412-377-1339 or adeering@dvsport.com.

- **Professional Lighting Survey of Playing Field.** For television purposes the NCAA recommends that all preliminary-round hosts have field lighting that measures an evenly distributed 100 horizontal foot-candles at midfield and 70 horizontal foot-candles in the end zones. So that the NCAA and ESPN can plan for the ordering of additional lighting where needed, each institution submitting a bid is required to provide a professional lighting survey, **completed in the last 2 years.** For more information on NCAA lighting standards please, review the [NCAA best lighting practices document](#). The professional lighting survey should be uploaded onto the NCAA Bid Portal.
- **Power Verification Document.** Please complete the [Power Verification Form](#). Specific power requirements are needed for broadcast purposes at all sites hosting preliminary rounds of the championship. Each institutions submitting a bid to host a preliminary-round game must submit the Power Verification Document from, which states whether the required power specifications can be met. Once completed, the power verification form should be uploaded onto Championship Bid and Host Portal.
- **Liability Insurance.** Host institutions must maintain and provide proof of at least \$1 million of general liability insurance on an occurrence form for Bodily Injury and Property Damage, including Products Liability (including completed-operations coverage), coverage for contractual liability, independent contractors, and personal and advertising injury. Coverage cannot exclude liability arising from athletic participation, spectators, alcohol, or food-borne illness. The certificate must be submitted to NCAA prior to competition. State institutions subject to state governing tort laws are permitted to provide proof of limited liability under state laws instead of general liability coverage. (This is the minimum requirement per NCAA bylaws).

If applicable, off-campus venues must also maintain and provide a minimum of \$1 million in general liability insurance on an occurrence form for Bodily Injury and Property Damage, including Products Liability (including completed-operations coverage), coverage for contractual liability, independent contractors, and personal and advertising injury. Coverage cannot exclude liability arising from athletic participation, spectators, alcohol, or food-borne illness. The NCAA must be named as an additional insured.

All insurance must be provided by an insurance company with an A.M. Best Rating of A-, VII or higher.

Host institutions must provide the national office with the appropriate certificates of insurance or documentation of self-insurance. This information must be provided via the Certificate of Insurance link in the bid portal. As this is a new feature in the portal, all prospective hosts must upload their documentation once. Depending on the coverage, users must subsequently verify their documentation is still valid, or upload a new certificate once the previous version has expired.

Additional Host Information/Resources

Preliminary-Round Host Operations Manual. The 2025-26 NCAA Division I Football [Championship Preliminary-Round Host Operations Manual](#) will assist your institution in all stages of the bidding and hosting process.

Preliminary-Round Host Collaboration Zone. In anticipation of potentially hosting preliminary round competition, a link to a championship resource share drive will be provided to those that submit a qualifying bid. This drive will house all pertinent hosting information such as a template participant manual, meeting agendas, pre-game format, etc. In preparation for hosting competition, please take time to work through these folders in advance of the selection announcement once it is received.

Media Coordinators Manual. The [2025-26 NCAA Media Coordinators Manual](#) will assist your sports information director in all aspects of media coordination for preliminary rounds of the Division I Football Championship.

Drug Testing. Drug testing may occur at any round of the championship and the assistance of the host institution will be a vital part of the testing. You will be notified in advance if the round you are hosting has been selected for drug testing. Please review the [drug testing site coordinator manual](#) and note that Drug Free Sport International will provide materials to assist in the program.

Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that public establishments offer equal access and services to people who are physically and mentally challenged. The host institution/conference is required to confirm that each facility in which an NCAA championship or ancillary event occurs is in compliance with the Act by the various facilities hosting NCAA championship events. The host institution/conference is responsible for determining if the competition site will be in compliance as of the dates of the championship. If the host institution/conference becomes aware that a competition site hosting an NCAA championship event will not be in compliance, it shall immediately notify the NCAA national office staff member with responsibility for the event in order to discuss the issue.

Statement of Inclusion. The host institution/conference plays a central role in fostering, growing and preserving an inclusive culture on-site at NCAA championship events. Potential hosts should review the NCAA statement of inclusion [here](#) and prepare to deliver and maintain an environment that is safe, healthy, and free of discrimination and respects the dignity of all persons.

NCAA Bylaw 31. Please review Bylaw 31 of the [NCAA Division I Manual](#) as it contains policies regarding the administration of an NCAA event.

Contact Information. If you have any questions regarding the bid process, please contact the Ty Halpin (317-917-6136; thalpin@ncaa.org) or Donisha Carter (317-917-6652; dcarter@ncaa.org).