

NCAA Division II Football Bracketing Initiative



Beginning with the 2019 championship, the NCAA Division II Football Committee has the ability to adjust qualified team’s placement in the championship bracket. Over the last few years, additional charter flights and increased charter costs have resulted in the football championship exceeding its travel budget. This new bracketing model, intended to reduce charter flights in the first two rounds, has been approved through all levels of the governance structure.

- Please note that the team selection process, including earned access, has not changed. Once the bracket is complete, there will be no additional changes until the semifinalists are determined.

New bracketing principles

- The teams awarded the No. 1 seed in each of four Super-Regions shall receive a bye in the first round. The No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 seeds from each Super Region are then placed in their appropriate positions on the bracket (No. 1 and No. 4 are in the upper half of the bracket with No. 2 and No. 3 in the lower half).
- Teams that are selected in the No. 5, No. 6, and No. 7 spots in each Super Region will be considered ‘unseeded’ and can be paired with any No. 2, No. 3, or No. 4 seeded team in the first round. Unseeded teams may be placed in any bracket if doing so reduces the number of flights in the first/second round.
- Teams that reach the field via Earned Access will be paired with a No. 2 seed in the opening round in their home Super-Region (unless preliminary round flights can be reduced by being paired with a No. 2 in an alternate Super-Region). In the event that multiple teams earn berths in the field via earned access, those teams shall compete against seeds two and three in the first round in an appropriate seed order as determined by the committee.
- 24 teams (all teams that are not No. 1 seeds) will play first-round games. Seeds No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 in each Super-Region will be paired with any unseeded team using pairings principles listed below.

Priorities for Bracket Placement of Unseeded Teams

No. 1 - Maximize reduction of first-round flights.

No. 2 - Reduce the likelihood of second round flights.

No. 3 - Repeating regular season match-ups in the first round of the championship should be avoided, provided that doing so does not increase the number of flights (per priorities 1 & 2).

No. 4 - Teams shall be paired accordingly based on what its seed would have been prior to being listed as ‘unseeded’.

<u>Example of Bracketing Principles</u>		
<u>Previous Model</u>		
	miles between	
	schools	travel
No. 2 seed hosts team A.....	880	flight
No. 3 seed hosts team B.....	331	drive
No. 4 seed hosts team C.....	617	flight
<u>Enacting New Bracket Principles</u>		
No. 2 seed hosts team B.....	450	drive
No. 3 seed hosts team C.....	460	drive
No. 4 seed hosts team A.....	550	drive