



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II FOOTBALL COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 12-14, 2018, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- **None.**

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Modification of earned access.**
 - a. Recommendation. That football maintain earned access (in lieu of automatic qualification), but to qualify for earned access in each conference, a team must be in the top nine of the final super regional rankings on selection weekend as well as the highest ranked team (as determined by the football committee) from the conference.
 - b. Effective date. 2018 championship.
 - c. Rationale. Previously for conferences to be eligible for earned access, teams needed to be ranked in the top eight of the final super regional rankings on selection weekend as well as the highest ranked team (as determined by the football committee) from the conference. When the football bracket expanded two years ago from six teams to seven in each super region, the requirement for a team to be in the top eight to qualify for earned access did not change. This recommendation would restore the policy that in order for earned access to apply, teams would need to be ranked two spots lower than what the bracket size currently is.
 - d. Estimated budget impact. None.
 - e. Student-athlete impact. Moving the requirement to the top nine teams should provide most, if not all, conferences access to the football championship.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 2017 annual meeting report.** The Division II Football Committee reviewed and approved the 2017 meeting report as submitted.
- 2017-18 Championship Committee reports.** The committee reviewed action and information items from 2017-18, particularly those applicable to Division II football.

- 3. 2018 American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) convention.** Steve Mullins reviewed issues from the Division II football coaches who attended the convention in January. He noted that the Sunday night meeting with the Coaches Connection board was helpful and should be continued annually. The football committee will interact regularly with this group through Mel Tjeerdsma, the former head coach at Northwest Missouri State who serves as the Division II liaison for Coaches Connection. Mr. Mullins also noted significant conversation among coaches about the recent recommendations from the Sport Science Institute regarding preseason practice and conditioning and how they impact Division II football.
- 4. Review of the 2017 polls process.**

 - a. The committee had no issues with the weekly rankings but noted the challenge in certain regions with so many good teams. The committee discussed whether the ranking conducted on selection weekend could be the third and final ranking required by the Championships Committee.
 - b. The committee reported no issues with the online scoring system or the online balloting system during the rankings period.
- 5. Review of the 2017 championship.**

 - a. The committee believes Children's Mercy Park is a terrific venue to host the national championship. The committee noted that the yellow boundary line for media and others may have been painted incorrectly. Staff will work with the host committee to ensure proper painting for future years. The committee noted the efforts of Mike Racy and Amber Feldman from the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA), as well as Dan Lolli and Ryan Smith at Children's Mercy Park and members of the local organizing committee.
 - b. The committee reviewed evaluations from both the championship and preliminary rounds and noted the issues at respective sites.
 - c. NCAA staff provided the committee with media survey results from the championship. The committee discussed timing and location options for the opening press conferences. The committee is comfortable, if the opening reception is moved downtown, to conduct the press conference in conjunction with opening reception, which should allow for more local media to attend as the location would be much closer to downtown Kansas City. Phil Pierce also suggested a roped-off area that would allow access only to the winning team and keep photographers and camera operators where they are supposed to be.

- d. The committee noted that television ratings for the championship game were down slightly from the previous year. The committee mentioned the different starting time for this year's game as well as an NFL game in Kansas City as possible reasons why the rating may be lower. The committee also asked staff to check on television opportunities with ESPN for the semifinals to be on a linear channel as well as streamed on ESPN3. NCAA staff will provide more information as it becomes available.
- e. The committee discussed the two hotels that were used this year for the championship since the hotel used previously was being used for the volleyball coaches convention. Committee members noted that teams were pleased with each hotel but that the high catering costs make it difficult for teams to use in-house catering. Members also noted that should the start time of the game remain at 5 p.m. local time, hotels need to be aware that teams may not leave the hotel until 2 p.m. or later and rooms would need to be available until that time should the team be departing postgame to return home. The committee was pleased with the meeting space provided at each property and staff indicated that the downtown Marriott property would be available each of the next four years.
- f. The committee believes that practice facilities are sufficient for the championship. However, the committee did discuss possibly using the Sporting KC practice facility near the stadium for team practices, particularly on Friday both before and after team walk-throughs.
- g. The committee noted the tremendous security around the venue, and in particular to the playing field. As noted previously, the committee will look to provide additional media overflow seating and closely monitor the number of media on the sidelines.
- h. The committee thought the new schedule for the week worked well and believes no changes are warranted. The committee noted that teams should be on the field for the national anthem for all tournament games. One of the participating teams indicated that Friday late afternoon/early evening was a little crowded with so many scheduled activities and asked the committee to evaluate the timing of the coaches meeting and pep rally for the future.
- i. The committee was pleased with the Thursday night celebration at Children's Mercy Park and noted that the participating teams thought it was a very positive experience. The committee liked the fight songs being played as teams entered the venue upon their arrival to the celebration. The committee also asked the MIAA representatives to consider a more entertaining venue, like Dave and Buster's for the opening reception. The MIAA reps noted that Sporting KC uses similar venue located in the Power and Light District and agreed to explore its availability.

- j. The committee believes the pep rally is a nice event on the day before the championship game. The committee will continue to note that teams are not required to attend but that team bands and cheer squads are strongly encouraged to attend when possible.
 - k. The committee believes seeding the four semifinalists produced the intended outcome of having the two best teams participate in the national championship.
 - l. The committee believes the PowerPoint used for the administrative meeting was very helpful and moved things along quite nicely. The committee would like to see a similar PowerPoint used for preliminary-round administrative meetings.
 - m. The committee discussed the revised policy for film exchange implemented this year. Committee thought the process was much better this year through Hudl; however, the committee will clarify the policy to ensure that offense/defense/kicking along with down and distance are added to the requirements to ensure that all teams receive the same film.
6. **Discussion with NCAA chief medical officer.** The committee talked at length with NCAA Chief Medical Officer Brian Hainline on a number of topics related to health and safety in football, particularly the preseason practice guidelines that were implemented this past fall as well as mental health issues. Dr. Hainline also shared research data with the committee regarding concussions.
7. **Finance review.** The committee noted that the tournament required 15 flights this year versus 12 the year prior. Flight costs were up approximately \$11,000 per charter and with the additional flights the travel costs for football were up significantly from the previous year. The committee discussed some bracketing options once the field is selected that could result in fewer flights.
8. **Videoconference with championship teams.** The committee conducted videoconferences with the two teams that competed in the national championship game. Both teams were very complimentary of the venue for the championship and the hotels. Both teams expressed concern about the number of sideline passes available for each team and would appreciate additional passes. Administrators from each team said they appreciated the quarterfinal call with teams to plan for Kansas City and suggested that information be provided as to what is included at the team hotel in Kansas City. Overall, both teams enjoyed their championship experience and had positive comments about the city and venue.
9. **Officials.** The committee was pleased that all conferences were provided with at least one game during the tournament this year. There were no issues with DV Sport with regard to instant replay at the semifinals and championship. The committee is firmly behind the

officials evaluation process that has been in place for several years and believes the quality of officiating is improving annually. The committee appreciates the efforts of the officiating subcommittee led by Phil Laurie. The committee discussed the job description for the new Division II Coordinator of Officials and agreed that it should preclude the appointee from being the coordinator of a Division II conference while at the same time the national coordinator. The committee noted the conflict of interest should the appointee hold both positions. Staff reviewed a timeline for which a candidate would be hired and having the individual in place by the July coordinator meetings.

10. **Selection criteria.** The committee reviewed the new criteria implemented in 2015, noting that it did not have as much of an effect as the committee would prefer. The committee continues to evaluate other criteria that might be available that could assist the committee in both rankings and selections.
11. **Earned access/automatic qualification.** The committee discussed again the merits of automatic qualification following the recent legislation adopted at the 2016 NCAA Convention to allow sport committees that administer championships with brackets of fewer than 48 teams to apply for AQ. Of particular concern to the committee is the fact that not all conferences have a conference championship game, and the committee wants to continue evaluating the impact those games have on the teams that earn berths to the football championship. Further, for those conferences that conduct a championship game, the selection of teams for those games vary by conference and is of concern to the committee. The committee believes that maintaining earned access is best for the sport at this time. (See Action Item 2a).
12. **Regional alignment.** The committee discussed the new regional alignment in place for 2017 and heard no criticism from the membership. However, the committee did discuss whether the new alignment caused the increased number of flights for the playoffs. The committee believes it is hard to tell from one year of the new alignment but will continue to evaluate annually.
13. **Regionalization.** The committee reviewed the report from the Regionalization Working Group and discussed possible options around rebracketing the championship. The committee would like to ensure that the No. 1 seeds in each super region maintain that top seed and hosting opportunity. The committee will continue to discuss options on an upcoming call and submit any potential changes by the Championships Committee's June meeting.
14. **150th Anniversary of College Football.** Oliver Luck attended the meeting to update the committee on preliminary discussions regarding how to celebrate the 150th anniversary of college football in 2019. Committee members noted they are willing to assist as necessary.

15. **Game times.** The committee had considerable discussion around the start time of preliminary-round games. The committee will have more discussion with both teams if the game time is not at 1 p.m. local time, particularly to prevent any gamesmanship if the visiting team is coming from a different time zone. The committee did reiterate that games should start at noon for those sites that do not have lights.
16. **Governance update.** Division II Vice President Terri Steeb Gronau joined the meeting to discuss issues related to the championship in Kansas City as well as other matters surrounding the new Sport Science Institute guidelines.
17. **Legislation review.** NCAA staff updated the committee on several legislative matters, including the preseason model and five weeks for spring practice. Staff noted that the legislation committee would like to see all three divisions have the same language related to the preseason model and that legislation will likely be recommended in March. The committee also noted it would support a legislative proposal that the Great Lakes Valley Conference may be sponsoring to include five weeks for spring practice. Finally, staff discussed possibly eliminating the recruiting calendar for football except for dead periods, but committee members in attendance did not support the idea.
18. **National Letter of Intent Program.** Susan Peal from the national office talked with the committee about the impact of the early signing period enacted this year in football. The committee believes that it was well received in Division II with student-athletes understanding where they were with potential Division I offers. Ms. Peal also discussed with the committee a single signing period that would extend to August 1.
19. **Coaches Connection.** Mel Tjeerdsma joined the meeting to listen to the discussion with Dr. Hainline and will continue to work with the coaches on the preseason model for the future.
20. **Manual review.** The committee reviewed the various manuals used to administer the championship. The committee made note to allow bands to play only when their team has the ball. The committee would allow the visiting team to play an intro video if the visiting team provides it to the host.
21. **Annual meeting dates.** The committee will meet February 11-13, 2019, in Indianapolis.
22. **Chair.** The committee recommended that Reid Amos, commissioner of the Mountain East Conference, replace Steve Mullins as the chair of the football committee when Mr. Mullin's term as chair expires at the end of August.

Committee chair: *Steve Mullins, Arkansas Tech University, Great American Conference*
Staff Liaison: *Donnie Wagner, Championships and Alliances*

NCAA Division II Football Committee February 12-14, 2018, Meeting	
Attendees:	
Reid Amos, Mountain East Conference.	
Dick Christy, University of North Carolina, Pembroke.	
Daryl Dickey, University of West Georgia.	
Steven Mullins, Arkansas Tech University.	
Gary Pine, Azusa Pacific University.	
Kent Weiser, Emporia State University.	
John Wristen, Colorado State University-Pueblo.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
None.	
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:	
Donnie Wagner, Championships and Alliances	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Geoff Bentzel, Academic and Membership Affairs.	
Brian Hainline, Chief Medical Officer.	
Oliver Luck, Executive Vice President of Regulatory Affairs.	
Terri Steeb Gronau, Division II Governance.	
Ryan Jones, Division II Governance.	
Susan Peal, Governance/National Letter of Intent.	
Phil Pierce, Championships and Alliances.	
Juanita Sheely, Finance.	
Natalie Steger, Championships and Alliances.	