



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II FOOTBALL COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 11-13, 2019, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. Revised bracketing model.

- (1) Recommendation. That once the football committee selects the seven teams from each of the four super regions (no change from previous selection process), those teams will be placed in the bracket as follows:

- The top four teams in each of the four super regions will remain in their original seed (as selected) and be placed in their home super region.
- The No. 1 seed will still receive a bye in the first round as has been the case in prior years.
- Teams ranked 5, 6 and 7 in each super region (at the point of selections as determined by the national committee on Selection Sunday) will be placed in the bracket in any region. The first priority in placing all unseeded teams will be to minimize potential flights.
- Teams selected in the 5th, 6th, and 7th spots from each super region will not have a seed affiliated with them when they are placed into the bracket.

The football committee will be aware of placing “unseeded” teams in the bracket so that flights will not be created in later rounds in regions where flights typically do not occur or occur very infrequently. Additionally, the committee will attempt to minimize, when possible, matchups that have occurred earlier in the season in the opening round. However, this cannot be guaranteed and will be avoided if doing so would create an increase in the number of flights in the opening round.

- (2) Effective date. 2019 championship.

- (3) Rationale. Over the past two years, the number of flights in football has increased from 12 in 2016, to 15 in 2017, and to 17 in 2018 (see attached chart). With each flight in football being a charter flight, travel costs are up close to \$1 million over the

past two years. The increases vary, of course, depending on the teams that are selected and then advance through the bracket, the latter of which the committee can't control. Still, the committee recognizes that these travel costs are not sustainable over time, and that the recommended strategy will create significant travel savings regardless of super regional alignment. Regions were realigned in 2017, and after analyzing brackets from the 2017 and 2018 season, the football committee has determined that simply going back to the old regional alignment (with a modification of moving the Great Midwest Athletic Conference to Super Region 1 and the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association to Super Region 2, which puts four conferences in each of the four super regions) would not have made much of an impact and in 2018 could have contributed to more flights over the first two rounds. It should be noted that a large majority of the flights that have occurred during the football playoffs have been in the first two rounds. The committee's analysis of brackets from 2015 to 2018 under the proposed bracketing model revealed a reduction of at least 8 flights in the first two rounds and potentially up to 21 depending on which teams would have advanced. The football committee has presented this model to the Coaches Connection group along with conference commissioners and has received mostly positive to neutral reaction. Coaches in particular indicated they would support this attempt to reduce costs rather than face a potential reduction in bracket size.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. The committee examined the last three years using average charter costs provided by the NCAA travel staff and determined that between \$556,000 and \$1.595 million could have been saved using the proposed bracketing model.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The proposed bracketing model would result in more teams taking ground transportation to first- or second-round sites, which in turn will allow families, friends and program supporters increased opportunities to attend playoff contests in support of their teams.

b. Final site recommendation for 2019, 2020 and 2021 championships.

- (1) Recommendation. That the NCAA Division II Championships Committee approve the following final site for the 2019, 2020 and 2021 Division II Football Championships.

Site	Venue	Host
McKinney, Texas	McKinney ISD Stadium	Lone Star Conference

- (2) Effective date. 2019 championship.

- (3) Rationale. The 2018 Division II Football Championship was moved to McKinney, Texas after Kansas City pulled its bid last fall. The experience provided to the student-athletes, coaches and fans of the participating institutions in McKinney was outstanding. The committee believes that McKinney ISD stadium is the right sized facility (12,500) for the championship and that the hotels and amenities in the area are outstanding. The committee was very impressed with the extraordinary efforts the McKinney ISD and Lone Star Conference staffs made on short notice to ensure a quality student-athlete experience. With a more normal timeframe for preparation, the committee strongly believes that the experience can be even better going forward.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Budgeted expenditures are estimated at \$109,335 with estimated revenues at \$109,500.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. As was the case in 2018, the venue will provide a top-caliber championship experience for the student-athletes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **2018 annual meeting report.** The Division II Football Committee reviewed and approved the 2018 meeting report as submitted.
2. **2018-19 Championship Committee reports.** The committee reviewed action and informational items from 2018-19, particularly those applicable to Division II football.
3. **2019 American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) convention.** Committee members who were at the convention reviewed issues from the Division II football coaches who attended. An adjustment to summer workout restrictions and the possibility of creating a dead period around the end of December were briefly discussed, but the committee decided no legislative amendments were necessary at this time.
4. **Review of the 2018 polls process.**
 - a. **Weekly rankings.** The committee had no issues with the weekly rankings. The committee did discuss potential actions to take when Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) members either miss calls or regularly demonstrate they are not adequately prepared to participate in a manner that meets expectations.
 - b. **Online scoring and balloting systems.** The committee reported no issues with the online scoring system or the online balloting system during the rankings period.

5. Review of the 2018 championship.

- a. Evaluations.** The committee reviewed evaluations from both the championship and preliminary rounds and noted the issues at respective sites.
- b. Press conference.** NCAA staff provided the committee with media survey results from the championship. The committee members discussed the Thursday night press conference and noted that while the event ran well, there could have been more media in attendance and more active media participation from those there. The committee also discussed changing the timing of the press conference during the week, but after discussion felt there was no better option.
- c. Television.** The committee reviewed the television ratings from the NCAA broadcast staff. The committee would like to see if the championship game could be televised on ESPN2 in the future (as had been prior to 2018) rather than on ESPNU.
- d. Hotels.** The committee believes the two hotels used this year were excellent. Both teams raved about the service and hotel staff with no complaints.
- e. Practice facilities.** The committee believes the practice facilities were sufficient. Minor safety concerns were raised at the indoor facility with stray sports equipment laying around the edge of the field.
- f. Security.** The committee noted the tremendous security around the venue. Members briefly discussed providing additional field credentials to participating universities after the topic was raised by one of the participating teams and agreed to discuss the idea further at a future meeting.
- g. Schedule.** The committee thought the schedule for the week worked well and believes no changes are warranted. The committee did discuss potentially staggering community engagement on Friday to cut down on the dead time between community engagement and practice for the team that practices later.
- h. Thursday night celebration.** The committee was incredibly pleased with the Thursday night celebration at Main Event Frisco. Many committee members thought it was the best event they'd ever been a part of surrounding a national championship.
- i. Film exchange.** The committee discussed the difficulty some teams have with film exchange when converting the film files across platforms. Committee members discussed potential solutions and agreed to share them with any effected coaches.
- j. Start times.** The committee discussed potentially changing future start time guidelines for games where a team is flying west to east over multiple time zones.

- k. Seeding.** The committee believes that seeding the semifinalists once again achieved a positive result.
- l. Friday night meetings.** The committee agreed to adjust the required attendees for Friday night meetings during the championship. The committee agreed that during the first three rounds, the school's sports information director, athletic trainer and ranking administrator are the only people required to attend. However, the committee unanimously agreed that for the semifinals and final, the head coach should also be required to attend the Friday night meeting.
- 6. Officials.** The committee discussed the open Division II Coordinator of Officials position as well as potential candidates to fill the role.
- 7. Finance review.** The committee noted that the tournament required 17 flights this year versus 15 the year prior. Flight costs were up approximately \$3,000 per charter, and with additional flights the travel costs for football were up significantly from the previous year. The committee discussed and ultimately proposed an alternative bracketing model to use once the field is selected that could result in fewer flights. (See Action Item 2-a.)
- 8. Selection criteria.** NCAA staff and the committee discussed whether nullification is properly applied when seeding the semifinalists in addition to applying it prior to selections. The committee agreed that it is and asked for the Championships Committee to review the topic.
- 9. 2019-2021 site selection.** The committee unanimously supported McKinney, Texas as the host site for the 2019-2021 Division II Football Championship. (See Action Item 2-b.)
- 10. Earned access.** The committee reviewed the conferences eligible for earned access for the 2019 championship and noted that a recommendation would be submitted for the Championships Committee's June meeting.
- 11. Discussion with NCAA chief medical officer.** The committee talked at length with NCAA Chief Medical Officer Brian Hainline on several topics related to health and safety in football, including mental health and the state of current concussion studies. Dr. Hainline also shared information on the American Development Model and USA Football's new task force to study bringing youth football in line with the model.
- 12. National Letter of Intent Program.** Susan Peal from the national office talked with the committee about the impact of the early signing period. Ms. Peal shared with the committee that Division II football had seen a large spike in the number of high school seniors signing national letters of intent with Division II schools, and that the early signing period is likely a large contributor.

- 13. Videoconference with championship teams.** The committee conducted videoconferences with the two teams that competed in the national championship game. Both teams were very complimentary, consistently mentioning how the experience from start to finish featured a national championship atmosphere. Both teams said they were initially concerned about the Thursday night event but felt that it was an incredible experience. Administrators from each team expressed a desire to increase the number of sideline passes available. Student-athletes from both teams said they appreciated the cowboy hat gifts. Overall, both teams enjoyed their championship experience and spoke well of the city and venue.
- 14. Legislation review.** NCAA staff updated the committee on several legislative matters, including Division II University and the changes to football camps and spring practice adopted at the recent NCAA Convention. Staff discussed the Management Council's proposal to honor other divisions' redshirt rules for student-athletes transferring from those divisions to Division II. Staff wanted to gauge committee interest on adopting the new Division I policy that allows footballs to be used during the five-day acclimatization period. The committee generally expressed support but would rather see changes in what is considered countable athletic related activity (CARA) during that period.
- 15. Governance update.** Division II Vice President Terri Steeb Gronau joined the meeting to discuss issues related to the 2018 championship, particularly those regarding team travel and potential bracketing solutions. The committee discussed and ultimately proposed a bracketing adjustment to reduce costs. (See Action Item 2-a.) Staff and committee members also discussed potentially relaxing neutrality guidelines during preliminary rounds and noted that the Gulf South Conference has submitted a similar recommendation to the Championships Committee.
- 16. Head injury messaging.** At the request of a committee member, the committee discussed if any member had knowledge of a university that presented head injury messaging during games. The committee had no knowledge of any university with this practice.
- 17. Annual meeting dates.** The committee will meet February 10-12, 2020, in Indianapolis.
- 18. Outgoing committee members.** The committee thanked Dick Christie and Reid Amos for their service to the committee over the past four years.

Committee chair: Reid Amos, Mountain East Conference
Staff Liaison: Donnie Wagner, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division II Football Committee February 11-13, 2019, Meeting	
Attendees:	
Reid Amos, Mountain East Conference.	
Mike Babcock, McKendree University.	
Dick Christy, University of North Carolina, Pembroke.	
Daryl Dickey, University of West Georgia.	
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.	
Zach Christopher, Championships and Alliances.	
Brian Hainline, Chief Medical Officer.	
Terri Steeb Gronau, Division II Governance.	
Maritza Jones, Division II Governance.	
Ryan Jones, Division II Governance.	
Roberta Page, Championships and Alliances.	
Susan Peal, Governance/National Letter of Intent.	
Melissa Piening, Finance.	
Phil Pierce, Championships and Alliances.	
Stephanie Quigg, Academic and Membership Affairs.	
Molly Simons, Championships and Alliances.	