



REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION II FOOTBALL COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 11-12, 2025, ANNUAL MEETING

**KEY ITEMS.**

1. **Bracket expansion.** The Division II Football Committee recommends expanding the championship bracket from 28 to 32 teams, effective with the 2025 NCAA Division II Football Championship. (See Action Item 2-a.)
2. **Postseason officiating crew sizes.** The Division II Football Committee also recommends allowing officiating crews in the Division II Football Championship to continue to use the same number of officials as their respective conferences have used throughout the regular season. (See Action Item 2-b.)

**ACTION ITEMS.**

1. **Legislative items.**

- None.

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

a. **Bracket expansion.**

- (1) Recommendation. Expand the championship bracket from 28 teams to 32 teams.
- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.
- (3) Rationale. This request is able to be reviewed now as a result of two actions at the 2025 NCAA Convention: (1) The Division II Executive Board's approval of additional exceptions to the triennial budget process, to include bracket adjustments when a Division II championship policy is triggered; and (2) the Division II membership's adoption of a proposal to establish football as an automatic qualification (AQ) sport (instead of the previous earned access model). The Division II Championships Committee has a policy stating that bracket expansion should be explored as soon as possible when more than 50% of the bracket is composed of AQs. Football has 15 AQ eligible conferences (possibly 16 if a waiver is approved for another conference) with a current bracket size of 28 (54%). There would be no change to the championship date formula as the four No. 1 seeds would no longer have byes in this model. Please note that bracket expansion for this championship is also a high priority for the membership.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. The mid-range estimate for this expansion is approximately \$545,000.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. Bracket expansion would provide a championship experience for an additional four teams, with each team consisting of a squad size of 58 individuals. These 232 student-athletes would be provided with a lifetime memory that would not otherwise be available to them if the bracket is not expanded.

**b. Postseason officiating crew sizes.**

- (1) Recommendation. Allow officiating crews in the Division II Football Championship to continue using the same number of officials as their respective conferences have used throughout the regular season. This would mean that conferences that use seven-person crews would continue to use seven-person crews in the postseason with an alternate official also being assigned, and conferences that use eight-person crews would be allowed to continue using eight-person crews, with the alternate official being included as the eighth member of the crew. There would not be an additional alternate official that would be assigned to games involving eight-person crews. In addition, the fee for the alternate official in postseason games in which the eighth official is on the field would be increased so that all on-field officials receive equal pay, with the fee increase structured as follows:

- \$125 per game fee increase for the alternate in the first three rounds (\$325 fee);
- \$135 per game fee increase for the alternate in the semifinal-round (\$335 fee); and
- \$160 fee increase for the alternate in the championship game (\$360 fee).

This adjustment is necessary to maintain consistency in officiating mechanics and to prevent disruption to the quality of officiating during the playoffs. This adjustment will not be considered when crews are selected for postseason games. It will not factor in for selections, so seven-person crews will not be penalized with fewer games only because of their on-field number. There will not be any fee increases needed for games officiated with seven on-field officials and an alternate official.

- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.

- (3) Rationale.

- (a) Consistency of mechanics across the regular season and postseason. A core consideration in officiating is the consistency of mechanics and the specific roles and responsibilities that each official has during the regular season. For crews working with seven or eight officials, these mechanics are well-established over the course of the season. By maintaining the same number of officials throughout the playoffs, this would avoid disrupting the flow of the game officials. Switching the number of officials between regular season and postseason could lead to confusion or a less-than-optimal officiating performance.

- (b) Positive precedent from the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) playoffs. Last year, the FCS playoffs implemented a similar policy without issue. Their success demonstrates that there is no significant negative impact from allowing officiating crews to use the same number of officials throughout the postseason as they did during the regular season. This precedent provides confidence that this approach will work smoothly in Division II football as well.
- (c) Mitigating the potential for inconsistency between seven- and eight-person officiating crews. One concern raised is that games with seven-person crews may feel different than games with eight-person crews, potentially creating an inconsistent experience for the student-athletes. However, it is important to note that the mechanics associated with seven-person crews, specifically the position of the umpire, already introduces a level of inconsistency across games. This variance, while real, does not seem to pose significant issues for student-athletes during the regular season. The inconsistency between seven- and eight-person crews in the postseason would therefore likely be no more disruptive than the regular-season experience, and it is far less significant than the disruptions caused by changing the number of officials between the regular season and playoffs.
- (d) Practicality and feasibility. Allowing the eighth official to be used when appropriate also makes sense from a logistical standpoint. For conferences that have established eight-person crews, the alternate official is already trained and prepared for playoff-level competition. The additional financial cost for this option is minimal and necessary to preserve the quality and consistency of officiating in postseason games.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$3,930 maximum. With the recent addition of the exceptions to budget adjustments outside of the triennial cycle, this increase is warranted. The proposed adjustment to the officiating fee structure for eight-person crews is designed to cover the additional cost of the eighth official. The increase in fees for the “alternate” that will be on the field in these playoff games is as follows:
- \$125 per game fee increase for the alternate in the first three rounds (\$325 fee);
  - \$135 per game fee increase for the alternate for the semifinal-round games (\$335 fee); and
  - \$160 fee increase for the alternate for the championship game (\$360 fee).

For a 28-team bracket, the total potential budgetary impact would be **\$3,430**. If approved, for a 32-team bracket, the total potential budgetary impact would be **\$3,930**. It is important to note that not all games will be worked by eight-person crews, meaning that the actual budget impact will most likely be lower than these worst-case projections.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. Allowing officiating crews to continue using the same number of officials in Division II playoff games as they used in the regular season ensures consistency in officiating mechanics, reduces unnecessary adjustments of officiating mechanics, and follows a proven model from the FCS playoffs. National Coordinator of Football Officials Steve Shaw supports this proposal. The financial impact is reasonable, and the benefits of maintaining consistency far outweigh any potential downsides. The committee recommends approving this proposal to maintain the integrity and quality of postseason officiating.

**c. Bracketing principles and priorities.**

- (1) Recommendation. If the Division II Football Committee receives approval from the Division II Championships Committee to expand the championship bracket to 32 teams, the bracketing principles will need to be revised as recommended below.

Following the NCAA Division II Football Committee's selection of eight teams from each of four Super Regions, all pairings will be made using the following principles:

- The teams awarded the #1 seed in each of four Super Regions shall be placed in the appropriate positions in the bracket in their selected Super Region (in each Super Region bracket, seeds #1 and #4 in the upper half with two unseeded teams; and seeds #2 and #3 in the lower half with two unseeded teams).
- Teams that are selected in the #5, #6, #7 and #8 spots in each Super Region will be considered 'unseeded' and can be paired with any #1, #2, #3 or #4 seeded team in the first round. Unseeded teams may be placed in any Super Region if doing so reduces the number of flights in the first/second round.
- Teams that reach the field via automatic qualification and are not ranked in the top eight of the final ranking on the day of selections will be paired with a #1 seed in the opening round in their home Super Region (unless preliminary round flights can be reduced by being paired with a #1 seed in an alternate Super Region). If multiple teams earn berths in the field via automatic qualification and are not ranked in the top eight in the final rankings on the day of selections, the following principles will be applied. If multiple AQs are ranked outside the top eight, the lowest-ranked AQ in the region will be paired with the #1 seed first. Subsequent AQs outside the top eight may be placed based on their rank and the integrity of the bracket.
- All 32 teams will play first-round games and there will not be any byes. Seeds #1, #2, #3 and #4 in each Super Region will be paired with any unseeded team using the pairing priorities listed below.

Teams will be placed on the bracket using the following priorities with the consideration that the NCAA Division II mileage threshold for mandatory team travel via ground is 600 miles. (1) Priority 1: Unseeded teams will be placed into the bracket to maximize reduction of first-round flights. (2) Priority 2: Unseeded teams will be placed into the bracket in a fashion that will reduce the likelihood of second-round flights. (3) Priority 3: Repeating regular-season matchups 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). (4) Priority 4: Teams shall be paired accordingly based on what their seed would have been prior to being listed as 'unseeded.'

Please note that the 2025 Division II membership survey results will address such topics as bracketing priorities and regionalization. Once the priorities of the membership are established and further strategic direction is provided to sport committees, the Division II Football Committee would like the ability to revisit the aforementioned bracketing priorities during the 2026 annual meeting.

- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship if the bracket expansion recommendation is approved.
- (3) Rationale. This policy aims to create a fair and consistent approach for determining playoff matchups when an automatic qualifier is ranked outside the top eight teams in a given super region. It ensures that the overall integrity of the playoff seeding is maintained while also acknowledging the unique situation of automatic qualifiers.

This pairing is intended to ensure that any AQ team ranked outside the top eight does not unfairly disrupt the balance of the bracket, while still respecting the automatic qualification process. By placing the lowest ranked AQ against the #1 seed, the integrity of the playoff bracket is preserved and ensuring that the highest-ranked teams are appropriately challenged.

This policy ensures that automatic qualifiers who are not ranked in the top eight are placed in a way that maintains fairness within the playoff bracket. By pairing the lowest-ranked AQ with the #1 seed, the integrity of the competition is preserved, and all teams have a clear and equitable path in the championship.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. This will provide a better student-athlete experience, as it will ensure that the lowest-ranked AQ team if outside of the top eight teams in the final super region rankings will be paired against a #1 seed in the first round.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **2024 annual meeting report.** The committee reviewed and approved the 2024 annual meeting report as submitted.
2. **2024-25 Division II Championships Committee actions.** The committee reviewed action and informational items applicable to Division II football since the committee's 2024 annual meeting.
3. **2025 American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Convention.** Committee members and NCAA staff who were at the convention reviewed issues from the Division II football coaches who attended.
4. **Championship date formula.** The committee discussed the proposed modification of the current championship date formula that would result in playing the NCAA Division II Football Championship game the first week of January.

The committee agreed not to submit a final recommendation on this matter until after reviewing the results later this spring from an upcoming Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) survey that will be distributed to current Division II football student-athletes regarding the championship date formula. As of now, the committee unanimously supports keeping the current championship date formula, and this includes keeping week zero and playing the championship game in December before the holiday break. The reasoning is as follows:

- Survey results. The 2024 Division II Football Championship Date Formula Survey results showed that the preferred format of the membership was to maintain legislation to permit a game in week zero; and the championship game in December (i.e., status quo). This was based on the overall feedback from conference commissioners, directors of athletics, and head football coaches from those Division II institutions sponsoring football. The survey results are attached.
- Unnecessary financial burden placed on institutions playing in the championship game. Although there are only two institutions impacted by moving the game to January, the logistics and financial implications of housing and feeding their student-athletes is of great concern. It should be noted that most programs would want their entire squad, not just the 58-person squad size allowed for the championship game, to remain on campus over the holiday break in order to facilitate practices. Housing and feeding the student-athletes would place a significant strain on these valuable campus resources and has the potential to cause a divide among campus and athletics in the areas of dining services and residence life.

- Potential to lose personnel, both student-athletes and coaching staff, to the transfer portal/early signing period, academics, and end-of-the-year staffing changes/opportunities. The threat of these issues is essentially nonexistent under the current championship date formula. Unlike the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), Division II does not have an early signing period; however, moving the game to January has the potential to impact rosters of championship teams just as it has for many bowl and playoff teams at the FBS and FCS levels. Competing over two academic semesters/quarters poses danger for student-athletes should they become ineligible due to their performance in the classroom in the fall and thus prohibited from competing in a championship game. Finally, with the coaching carousels kicking into high gear in December, the potential to lose coaching staff to other institutions is a real possibility.
  - Broadcast competition. Despite current bowl games and the new College Football Playoff (CFP) championship games starting prior to the holiday break and many airing the same day as the current Division II Football Championship game, broadcast competition continues into the first week of January with CFP playoff games, FBS bowl games, and FCS championship games with increased relevance. This is in addition to NFL football (playing on Saturdays) and NCAA basketball being in full swing. Although the current ESPN contract ensures the Division II Football Championship to be played on their linear network (i.e., ABC, ESPN, ESPN2, or ESPNU), the likelihood of the Division II Football Championship game being a lower priority than the aforementioned games and played on ESPNU is strong.
  - Potential to lose host site of McKinney, Texas. In the most recent championship game bid process (2026 and 2027) that was awarded to the Lone Star Conference and the McKinney Independent School District (McKinney ISD), in their bid they reserved the right to possibly not host the event if it was moved to January. The committee believes this is a real possibility if the game was moved to January and felt it would be difficult to find a replacement facility of equal quality and a local organizing committee as hospitable as the Lone Star Conference and McKinney ISD.
  - Burden placed on the Division II Football Committee and the NCAA staff by forcing them to spend what is typically much needed down time preparing for the championship game. The final weeks of the regular season and four weeks of playoff games leading up to the championship game are highly stressful and requires numerous hours of work to successfully facilitate and administer the championship. The current structure allows the committee and NCAA staff to take a well deserved break and enjoy their holiday with family and friends without the championship game hanging over their heads.
5. **Football rules.** NCAA National Coordinator of Football Officials and Football Secretary-Rules Editor Steve Shaw joined the meeting and updated the committee on possible football rules topics that are being discussed for the 2025 season. The Football Rules Committee will meet

in late February 2025 and will review player health and safety matters and overall playing rules related to football strategy.

## 6. Officiating.

- a. **Update from Mike Burton.** The committee received an update from Division II Director of Football Officials Mike Burton on initiatives to increase the level of officiating across Division II. After Mr. Burton's report, the committee thanked him for his outstanding service in this role, as he recently announced his plans to retire. The committee also then discussed next steps in the search process for a new Division II Director of Football Officials, with a goal of having this person determined by the end of May 2025.
- b. **Assignment history.** The committee reviewed the officiating assignment history for the championship dating back to the 1999 season. The committee continued to agree that all conferences sponsoring the sport should ideally be assigned at least one playoff game in either the first and/or second round of the championship.
- c. **Instant replay.** The committee noted that sideline instant replay has been approved for the 2025 NCAA Division II Football Championship. Any preliminary-round host will be required to provide sideline instant replay with at least two cameras with a wide and tight angle for the first-round, second-round, and quarterfinal-round games. This will be required as part of the championship bid requirements. Hosts will absorb all costs associated with sideline instant replay for the 2025 season and beyond as part of hosting a first-round, second-round, or quarterfinal-round game. In addition, instant replay with an instant replay booth official will continue to be provided for both semifinals and the national championship game.
- d. **Video evaluators.** Mr. Burton suggested the new Division II Director of Football Officials continue to assign a video evaluator to evaluate each game during the 2025 championship.
- e. **Conference evaluations/grades.** NCAA staff will send a memorandum on behalf of Mr. Burton and the committee to the relevant conference commissioners informing them how their officiating crew(s) performed during the recent championship. The memorandum will accompany the assignment history and include a document related to the characteristics of a good officiating crew and another document on how to make an alternate official be part of the game and feel they assisted the crew.
- f. **Eight-person crews.** The committee noted that there were five conferences that used eight-person crews during the 2024 regular season. During the championship, there are currently seven officials assigned to each playoff game with one alternate official. As previously noted, the committee voted to submit a recommendation to the Division II Championships Committee for their consideration on this topic (see Action Item 2-b above). It is common practice in the Division I Football Championship Subdivision that if a conference uses



seven-person crews in the regular season, that should continue in the postseason. The committee feels this is the approach that would also better serve the Division II Football Championship.

7. **Selection criteria.** The committee discussed the current criteria used for rankings and selections and noted no changes are needed. The committee also listened to a presentation about the results-based metric of the Kevin Puga Index (KPI) data from the 2024 season.

8. **Review of the 2024 polls process.**

- a. **Weekly rankings.** The committee had no issues with the weekly rankings. Some committee members used videoconferencing while others used traditional conference calls for this process. The committee mentioned that there were some regional advisory committee (RAC) members who needed to be reminded about remaining objective during these calls. The committee plans to address this in the upcoming RAC orientation call before the start of the 2025 rankings process and inform all RAC members of the expectations for this role.
- b. **Online score reporting.** The committee reported no issues with the online score reporting system after the KPI rank number and KPI percentage rank were added in the same column of information on the online score reporting form.

9. **Review of the 2024 championship.**

- a. **Videoconferences with championship game participants.** The committee conducted a videoconference with both teams that competed in the national championship game (Ferris State University and Valdosta State University). Representatives of both institutions were complimentary, consistently mentioning how the experience from start to finish featured a national championship atmosphere. They also commended the hospitality of the local organizing committee [Lone Star Conference and the McKinney Independent School District (McKinney ISD)]. Both teams liked being assigned to the team hotel that they had previously been assigned when they played in the championship game. Both teams also liked participating in the championship celebration with only their own team members as opposed to having both teams at this site at the same time, and they recommended keeping this format in future years.

In addition, the teams also thoroughly enjoyed the BirdieBox team gifts and the police escorts that were provided. They thought the community engagement was a very memorable experience. It was also suggested perhaps the two participating teams could be provided with more structure and knowledge of the run-of-show at the elementary schools for this community engagement event at least one day in advance from a planning perspective (e.g., pre-assign student-athletes to various classrooms; and also inform the student-athletes if they want them to read in the classroom, play games during recess, field questions from the elementary school students, etc.). Finally, Ferris State representatives

noted that officiating in the playoffs was nothing short of incredible. They also noted that the committee may want to consider increasing the squad size in the championship in the future to a higher number, such as 65. Valdosta State representatives noted that they liked the additional security at the fan fest event at Tupps Brewery the night before the championship game.

- b. **Championship recap and survey results from various groups.** The committee reviewed the championship recap prepared by NCAA staff and the survey evaluations from both the championship and preliminary rounds and noted no issues of concern.
- c. **Media feedback and credentials for the championship game.** The committee will plan to continue with the virtual pre-championship press conference in advance of arrival at the championship site with the head coaches of both teams. The virtual press conference format for the 2024 championship game attracted more media participation than the in-person press conference at the championship site in previous years before moving to this current virtual format. There was also an issue with the statistics not being able to be displayed correctly on the ribbon board inside McKinney ISD Stadium. This has been an ongoing problem that needs to be addressed in the future. Finally, there were no issues with the number of credentials issued for all rounds of the 2024 NCAA Division II Football Championship. No changes are necessary to credentialing for the 2025 championship.
- d. **Television and broadcasting discussion.** The committee reviewed the television ratings from the NCAA broadcast staff and met with ESPN representatives. The ratings for the championship game were down compared to the 2023 championship game (total of 120,348 viewers). The total reach; however, was up 56 percent, reaching 1.3 million unique viewers on ESPN2. In addition, ESPN representatives were pleased with all preliminary rounds of the championship being aired on ESPN+. The unique viewers were up 81 percent, and the total minutes watched was up 97 percent for the entire Division II Football Championship. Finally, ESPN representatives asked to consider if the postgame awards presentation stage size could be expanded in the future to allow for more room for the sideline reporter and the Division II Football Committee chair to present the championship trophy and conduct postgame interviews. The Division II Football Committee also informed ESPN that they would desire to have the 2025 championship game on ABC, ESPN, or ESPN2 in a similar early afternoon kick-off time as the 2024 championship game.

As for the preliminary rounds, the biggest concern was obtaining the transmission of the game feed to ESPN headquarters. ESPN also needs assistance on gameday from the participating host institutions to troubleshoot any issues that may arise. ESPN plans to address these issues by obtaining both a transmission contact and a gameday point-of-contact from preliminary-round hosts in the 2025 NCAA Division II Football Championship.

- e. **Hotels.** The committee believes the two hotels used this year were excellent. There should continue to be an increased security presence at both team hotels after the championship game to deal with larger crowds at whichever hotel is hosting the winner.

As for the preliminary rounds, the committee did not express any issues of concern.

- f. **Practice facilities.** The committee believes the practice facilities provided to both teams were fine.
- g. **Security.** The committee noted that McKinney ISD improved on-field security for the 2024 championship game.
- h. **Championship week schedule and itinerary.** The committee thought the schedule for the week worked well and no changes are needed.
- i. **Thursday night championship celebration and format.** The committee was pleased again with the Thursday night celebration at Main Event. The committee agreed that both teams should continue to be hosted separately at this event in the future.
- j. **Starting times.** The committee believes that a 1 p.m. local time start for the first three rounds of the playoffs works well, with the possibility for a one-hour variance if approved by the committee. The ESPN representatives and the committee also noted that the semifinals starting times of noon Eastern time and 3:30 p.m. Eastern time should remain the same in the future.
- k. **Seeding of semifinalists.** The committee believes that seeding the semifinalists once again achieved a positive result.
- l. **Drug testing.** The committee noted that there were not any issues with the drug testing that took place in conjunction with one of the preliminary rounds of the 2024 NCAA Division II Football Championship.
- m. **In-game tablets and use at the championship game via SkyCoach.** The committee noted that the NCAA should consider working with SkyCoach to provide the set-up and on-site support for the in-game tablets for the 2025 championship game.
- n. **Review of various manuals for other changes that should be implemented.** The committee suggested the following additional edits to the various manuals or the pre-championship administrative meeting PowerPoint:
  - (1) Prepare and provide talking points and/or the slides in advance to the various speakers at the pre-championship administrative meeting so that they are more prepared.

(2) Add both the institutional logos to the “L-shaped” diagram for the pre-championship administrative meeting for the championship game and also list the team locations for pregame warm-ups and sideline designations.

(3) The committee voted that the head football coach should still be required to attend the pre-championship administrative meeting for the semifinal-round game, except if there are extenuating circumstances approved by the Division II Football Committee. The head football coach will be required to also attend the pre-championship administrative meeting for the championship game.

(4) Sideline instant replay requirements for the first three rounds of the championship needs to be added to the applicable manuals.

**10. Regional alignment/sport sponsorship.** The committee reviewed the anticipated changes for the 2025 season in each of the four super regions related to the institutions in each respective conference.

**11. Automatic qualification.** The committee reviewed the conferences eligible for automatic qualification for the 2025 championship based on the recent legislative change at the 2025 NCAA Convention to move away from earned access and noted that a recommendation would be submitted for the Championships Committee’s June meeting.

- Automatic Qualification Waiver Request. The committee provided an advisory opinion to the Division II Championships Committee on an automatic qualification waiver that the Division II Championships Committee will review February 24-25, 2025.

**12. Legislative issues.** NCAA staff updated the committee on several legislative matters that were addressed relevant to Division II football at the 2025 NCAA Convention, as well as other issues that will be reviewed in the future. The annual deadline for Division II legislative proposals to be submitted by the membership is July 15.

**13. Division II governance updates.** Members of the NCAA governance staff joined the meeting and discussed topics of interest to the Division II Football Committee. The committee was also shown the new Division II public service announcement that will be shown on social media and possibly other platforms starting later this spring.

**14. Review of national and regional advisory committees.** The committee reviewed the super region co-chair assignments for the 2025 season and confirmed the accuracy of the national committee roster.

**15. Annual meeting dates.** The committee will meet for two days between February 10-12, 2026, in Indianapolis. If the committee meets on February 10-11, the travel day would be February 9. If the committee meets on February 11-12, the travel day would be February 10. The

ultimate dates that are selected will be based on which days provide the best availability of NCAA staff and guests to participate in the meeting. The committee would like to mirror the 2025 annual meeting schedule in 2026, with the exception that the committee would like to have the celebratory committee dinner on day one of the meeting begin one hour earlier at 6:30 p.m. Eastern time.

- 16. Committee chair.** If the one-year term extension request for Brett Gilliland, director of athletics at the University of West Alabama, to remain on the committee is approved, the committee elected Mr. Gilliland to serve as the chair for 2025-26. If the term extension request is not approved, the committee elected David Sharp, director of athletics at Ouachita Baptist University, to serve as the chair for 2025-26. The committee also thanked Dennis Francois, director of athletics at Central Washington University, for serving as the chair for both 2023-24 and 2024-25. Mr. Francois did an admirable job as the committee chair.
- 17. Strategic plan.** The committee reviewed the NCAA Division II Football Committee strategic plan and noted that there were slight modifications that are needed and directed NCAA staff to make these changes.
- 18. Division II Football Committee – 2025-26 timeline/calendar.** The committee reviewed the timeline for the 2025-26 academic year and adjusted meeting times as necessary.
- 19. Division II Football Coaches Connection.** The committee reviewed both the charge of the coaches connection program and the existing roster of coaches representing each conference sponsoring Division II football. Any head football coach on the national committee who is not part of the coaches connection roster has been allowed to serve as an ex-officio member.
- 20. Division II Championships Committee referrals.** The committee reviewed the following items referred by the Division II Championships Committee. This discussion took place with Chris Colvin, Conference Carolinas commissioner and the Division II Championships Committee liaison to the Division II Football Committee, and Division II Championships Committee staff liaisons (Karen Kirsch and Micaela Liddane):

  - a. Bracket policy changes, allowing for bracket increase conversation. The additional exceptions to the championship triennial budget cycle were reviewed, and it was noted that a championship bracket adjustment could be recommended, provided a championship policy has been triggered.
  - b. Bracketing/NCAA Power Index (NPI) review updates. It was noted that sport committee feedback on the NPI is needed by the Division II Championships Committee's June 2025 meeting. A meeting with the football committee to review the NPI will be scheduled between March and May 2025. The committee suggested conducting this meeting on May 6, 2025.

- c. Championship date formula review update and the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) survey process. The committee was informed that the SAAC would be forwarding the championship date formula survey to all current Division II football student-athletes to complete later this spring. The committee plans to meet on May 6, 2025, to review the results of this survey and provide a final recommendation to the Division II Championships Committee on the championship date formula. As stated previously, as of now, the committee unanimously supports keeping the current championship date formula, and this includes keeping week zero and playing the championship game in December before the holiday break.
- d. Triennial budget process for 2027-2030. The Division II Football Committee was informed it should obtain coaches connection feedback on possible budgetary items during one of its upcoming meetings in the spring of 2025. The committee will need to compile any possible budgetary items by October 1, 2025, and provide any items to the Division II Championships Committee for review. Also, any possible recommendations to increase the squad size would need to also come with a corresponding travel party increase recommendation.

**21. Outgoing committee members.** NCAA staff thanked all committee members for their service during the 2024-25 year. The terms of both Dennis Francois of Central Washington and Brett Gilliland of West Alabama are scheduled to expire on August 31, 2025. A one-year term extension request has been submitted on behalf of Mr. Gilliland, who only received a three-year term initially.

*Committee chair: Dennis Francois, Central Washington University, Lone Star Conference*  
*Staff Liaisons: Randy L. Buhr, Championships and Alliances*  
*Jay Jay Rackley, Championships and Alliances*

NCAA Division II Football Committee February 11-12, 2025, Meeting	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Jas Bains, Western Colorado University.	
Dennis Francois, Central Washington University.	
Brett Gilliland, University of West Alabama.	
Jim Givens, University of Findlay.	
Andy McKenzie, Assumption University.	
Meghan Mulcahy, Northeastern State University.	
David Sharp, Ouachita Baptist University.	
John Wilson, Jr., Virginia State University.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	

None.
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>
Tony Annese, Ferris State University.
Steve Brockelbank, Ferris State University.
Mike Burton, Division II Director of Football Officials.
Trinidad Chambliss, Ferris State University.
Chris Colvin, Conference Carolinas.
Kurt A. Dargis, ESPN.
Jim Donatelli, Faktor Sports.
Michael J. Feinberg, ESPN.
Troy Katen, Valdosta State University.
Daniel Kole, ESPN.
Shawn Murphy, ESPN.
Kevin Pauga, Faktor Sports.
Steve Shaw, National Coordinator of Football Officials and Football Secretary-Rules Editor.
Mel Tjeerdsma, Division II Football Coaches Connection Liaison.
<b>NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support if subcommittee) in Attendance:</b>
Randy L. Buhr, Championships and Alliances.
Jay Jay Rackley, Championships and Alliances.
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>
Jeremy Christoffels, Academic and Membership Affairs.
Terri Steeb Gronau, Division II Governance.
Ty Halpin, Championships and Alliances.
Maritza Jones, Division II Governance.
Ryan Jones, Division II Governance.
Karen Kirsch, Championships and Alliances.
Micaela Liddane, Championships and Alliances.
Jarom McLiver, Championships and Alliances.
Becca Medel, Division II Governance.
Phil Pierce, Championships and Alliances.
Amy Skiles, Championships and Alliances.



DIVISION II

**MAKE IT *YOURS***

## 2024 Division II Football Championship Date Formula Survey Results

### Methods

- The purpose of this survey was to obtain feedback on the championship date formula for the NCAA Division II Football Championship from Division II directors of athletics, head coaches and conference commissioners to inform discussions by the NCAA Division II Football Committee.
- The survey was designed to take no more than 5-10 minutes and was administered online through the Qualtrics survey software.
- The survey was open from November 6 to November 24, 2024.
- The survey was distributed to 330 Division II head coaches and directors of athletics with a 2025-26 Division II football program along with 16 Division II Football conference commissioners. Of the 346 possible participants there were 209 responses (60 percent response rate).
- Of the 163 Division II Football institutions 132 programs responded (81 percent response rate).



<b>Title</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Possible</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Conference Commissioner	15	16	94%
Directors of Athletics	94	167	56%
Head Coach	100	163	61%
<b>Total</b>	209	346	60%

1. Please select your conference affiliation.

Answer	Overall		Conference Commissioner		Director of Athletics		Head Coach	
Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference	10%	10	7%	1	16%	6	6%	3
Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference	10%	10	7%	1	13%	5	8%	4
Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association	9%	9	7%	1	8%	3	10%	5
Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association	9%	9	7%	1	11%	4	8%	4
Great American Conference	8%	8	7%	1	5%	2	10%	5
Great Lakes Valley Conference	8%	8	7%	1	8%	3	8%	4
Mountain East Conference	8%	8	7%	1	5%	2	10%	5
Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference	7%	7	7%	1	5%	2	8%	4
Great Midwest Athletic Conference	6%	6	7%	1	3%	1	8%	4
Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference	5%	5	7%	1	3%	1	6%	3
Lone Star Conference	5%	5	7%	1	5%	2	4%	2
South Atlantic Conference	5%	5	7%	1	8%	3	2%	1
Conference Carolinas	4%	4	7%	1	8%	3	0%	0
Gulf South Conference	4%	4	7%	1	3%	1	4%	2
Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference	2%	2	7%	1	0%	0	2%	1
Independent	1%	1	0%	0	0%	0	2%	1
Northeast-10 Conference	1%	1	0%	0	0%	0	2%	1
Total		102		15		38		49

107 respondents did not indicate their conference affiliation.

2. Please select your school affiliation.

Answer	Percentage	Count
Albany State University (Georgia)	1%	2
Allen University	1%	2
Anderson University (South Carolina)	<1%	1
Angelo State University	1%	1
Ashland University	1%	2
Assumption University	1%	2
Augustana University (South Dakota)	1%	2
Bemidji State University	1%	2
Benedict College	1%	2
Black Hills State University	0.5%	1
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	1%	2
Bluefield State University	0.5%	1
Bowie State University	1%	2
Carson-Newman University	0.5%	1
Catawba College	1.0%	2
Central State University	1.0%	2
Central Washington University	0.5%	1
Chadron State College	1.0%	2
Chowan University	0.5%	1
Clark Atlanta University	1.0%	2
Colorado Mesa University	0.5%	1
Colorado School of Mines	1.0%	2
Colorado State University Pueblo	1.0%	2
Concord University	1.0%	2
Concordia University, St. Paul	0.5%	1
Davenport University	0.5%	1
Delta State University	0.5%	1
Edward Waters University	1.0%	2

Elizabeth City State University	1.0%	2
Emory & Henry University	1.0%	2
Erskine College	1.0%	2
Fairmont State University	1.0%	2
Fayetteville State University	0.5%	1
Ferris State University	1.0%	2
Ferrum College	1.0%	2
Fort Hays State University	0.5%	1
Fort Lewis College	0.5%	1
Fort Valley State University	1.0%	2
Franklin Pierce University	0.5%	1
Frostburg State University	1.0%	2
Gannon University	0.5%	1
Glenville State University	1.0%	2
Grand Valley State University	0.5%	1
Harding University	0.5%	1
Hillsdale College	1.0%	2
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	0.5%	1
Johnson C. Smith University	0.5%	1
Kentucky State University	1.0%	2
Kentucky Wesleyan College	0.5%	1
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania	1.0%	2
Lake Erie College	0.5%	1
Lemoyne-Owen College	0.5%	1
Limestone University	0.5%	1
Lincoln University (Pennsylvania)	0.5%	1
Mars Hill University	1.0%	2
McKendree University	0.5%	1
Michigan Technological University	0.5%	1
Midwestern State University	0.5%	1

Miles College	1.0%	2
Millersville University of Pennsylvania	1.0%	2
Minnesota State University Moorhead	0.5%	1
Minnesota State University, Mankato	1.0%	2
Minot State University	0.5%	1
Mississippi College	0.5%	1
Missouri Southern State University	0.5%	1
Missouri University of Science and Technology	0.5%	1
Missouri Western State University	1.0%	2
Morehouse College	1.0%	2
Newberry College	1.0%	2
North Greenville University	0.5%	1
Northern Michigan University	0.5%	1
Northern State University	0.5%	1
Northwest Missouri State University	1.0%	2
Northwestern Oklahoma State University	1.0%	2
Northwood University	0.5%	1
Ohio Dominican University	0.5%	1
Oklahoma Baptist University	0.5%	1
Ouachita Baptist University	0.5%	1
Pennsylvania Western University Clarion	1.0%	2
Pennsylvania Western University, California	1.0%	2
Pittsburg State University	1.0%	2
Quincy University	1.0%	2
Savannah State University	1.0%	2
Seton Hill University	1.0%	2
Shaw University	1.0%	2
Shepherd University	0.5%	1
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania	0.5%	1
Shorter University	1.0%	2

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania	0.5%	1
South Dakota School of Mines & Technology	0.5%	1
Southern Connecticut State University	0.5%	1
Southern Nazarene University	0.5%	1
Southwest Baptist University	0.5%	1
Southwest Minnesota State University	1.0%	2
Southwestern Oklahoma State University	1.0%	2
Spring Hill	0.5%	1
Texas A&M University-Kingsville	1.0%	2
The University of Virginia's College at Wise	0.5%	1
Thomas More University	1.0%	2
Tiffin University	0.5%	1
Truman State University	0.5%	1
Tusculum University	1.0%	2
Tuskegee University	1.0%	2
University of Arkansas, Monticello	0.5%	1
University of Central Missouri	1.0%	2
University of Central Oklahoma	0.5%	1
University of Charleston (West Virginia)	1.0%	2
University of Findlay	1.0%	2
University of Indianapolis	0.5%	1
University of Mary	0.5%	1
University of North Carolina at Pembroke	0.5%	1
University of Sioux Falls	0.5%	1
University of Texas Permian Basin	0.5%	1
University of West Alabama	0.5%	1
University of West Florida	0.5%	1
Upper Iowa University	0.5%	1
Valdosta State University	1.0%	2
Virginia State University	0.5%	1

Virginia Union University	0.5%	1
Walsh University	0.5%	1
Wayne State College (Nebraska)	1.0%	2
West Chester University of Pennsylvania	0.5%	1
West Liberty University	1.0%	2
West Virginia State University	0.5%	1
West Virginia Wesleyan College	1.0%	2
Western Colorado University	0.5%	1
Western New Mexico University	1.0%	2
Wheeling University	0.5%	1
William Jewell College	0.5%	1
Wingate University	1.0%	2
Winona State University	0.5%	1
Winston-Salem State University	1.0%	2
<b>Total</b>		194*

*A total of 132 schools responded: 62 schools had two responses (i.e., a response from both an AD and a coach) and 70 schools had one response (i.e., a response from either an AD or a coach).*

*\*(62 x 2) + 70 = 194 responding ADs and head coaches.*

3. How important is it for the NCAA Division II Football Championship Game to be on a linear network (e.g., ESPN2, ESPNU)?

Answer	Extremely Important + Important	Extremely Important	Important	Slightly Important	Slightly Unimportant	Unimportant	Not Important at all	Count
Head Coach	83%	54%	29%	11%	2%	4%	0%	98
Director of Athletics	75%	34%	40%	16%	3%	6%	0%	94
Conference Commissioner	33%	13%	20%	27%	13%	20%	7%	15

*Two head coaches did not respond to this item.*

4. Do you believe the need for a week 12 in the regular season football schedule outweighs any real or perceived negative consequences of moving the championship game to the first full weekend in January?

Answer	Overall		Conference Commissioner		Director of Athletics		Head Coach	
Yes	57%	117	80%	12	55%	51	55%	54
No	44%	90	20%	3	45%	42	45%	45
Total		207		15		93		99

*One AD and one head coach did not respond to this item.*



5. Would you support moving the championship game to January, even if that meant a new championship host may need to be secured?

Answer	Overall		Conference Commissioner		Director of Athletics		Head Coach	
Yes	71%	148	87%	13	69%	65	70%	70
No	29%	61	13%	2	31%	29	30%	30
<b>Total</b>		209		15		94		100

6. In Division II per NCAA Bylaw 17.02.18, there is a required legislative winter break. If the championship game was moved to January, would you support an exception for the two teams participating in the championship game to be able to participate in countable athletically related activities during the winter break?

Answer	Overall		Conference Commissioner		Director of Athletics		Head Coach	
Yes	80%	168	87%	13	72%	68	87%	87
No	20%	41	13%	2	28%	26	23%	13
<b>Total</b>		209		15		94		100

7. If the championship game was moved to January, would you support this game being played on a day of the week other than a Saturday?

Answer	Overall		Conference Commissioner		Director of Athletics		Head Coach	
Yes	84%	174	93%	14	82%	76	84%	84
No	16%	34	7%	1	18%	17	16%	16
<b>Total</b>		208		15		93		100

*One AD did not respond to this item.*

8. What day(s) of the week would you support playing the championship game if it was moved to January?

Answer	Overall		Conference Commissioner		Director of Athletics		Head Coach	
Saturday	90%	157	100%	14	91%	69	88%	74
Friday	85%	148	93%	13	88%	67	81%	68
Thursday	61%	107	86%	12	66%	50	54%	45
Monday	33%	58	57%	8	41%	31	23%	19
Sunday	32%	56	64%	9	46%	35	14%	12
Wednesday	30%	52	43%	6	36%	27	23%	19
Tuesday	28%	48	43%	6	34%	26	19%	16
<b>Total*</b>		174		14		76		84

*\*Respondents who selected 'Yes' to Question 7*

9. Overall, which is your preferred format for the Division II football season?

Answer	Overall		Conference Commissioner		Director of Athletics		Head Coach	
Maintain legislation to permit a game in week 0; championship game in December (i.e. status quo)	38%	78	20%	3	34%	32	43%	43
Maintain legislation to permit a game in week 0; move championship to January (i.e. 13-week regular season)	29%	60	60%	9	26%	24	27%	27
Undo legislation to permit a game in week 0; move championship to January (i.e. 12-week regular season)	28%	57	20%	3	32%	30	24%	24
Undo legislation to permit a game in week 0; championship game in December (i.e. 11-week regular season)	6%	12	0%	0	8%	7	5%	5
<b>Total</b>		207		15		93		99

*One AD and one head coach did not respond to this item.*