



PRECHAMPIONSHIP 2026-27 MANUAL

NCAA General Administrative Guidelines

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THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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Section 1 • Introduction

During the 2026-27 academic year, the Association will sponsor 94 national championships – 43 for men, 49 for women and two for both men and women. Of the men's championships, four are National Collegiate Championships, 13 are Division I championships, 12 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. Of the women's championships, 10 are National Collegiate Championships, 12 are Division I championships, 13 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. The combined men's and women's championships are National Collegiate Championships.

The Prechampionship Manual will serve as a resource for institutions to prepare for the championship. This manual is divided into three sections: General Administrative Guidelines, Sport-Specific Information and Appendixes.

Sections one through nine apply to policies applicable to all 94 championships, while the remaining sections are sport specific.

Section 1.1 Definitions

Prechampionship Manual. Resource for institutions to prepare for the championship.

Administrative Meeting. Prechampionship meeting for coaches and/or administrators.

Appendixes. Any supplemental documents to be provided and distributed through the various resources.

Championship Manager. The NCAA staff member(s) responsible for the operational oversight of the championship.

Games Committee. The committee assigned to supervise the conduct of each championship session at a specific site. For finals sites, the games committee is typically the NCAA national committee.

NCAA National Committee. The sport committee with direct oversight responsibilities for the championship.

Nonpredetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host at the time of the participant/team selections announcement.

Playing Rules. The rules under which the competition will be conducted.

Predetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host before the participant/team selections announcement.

Preliminary Rounds. The rounds of the championship before the final or championship round.

Regional Alignment. The geographic location of institutions or regional advisory committees.

Schedule of Events. Official event schedule – includes all required activities (e.g., practices, banquets).

Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the team selection process.

Site Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the site selection process.

Squad Size. In any championship in which a squad limit has been established by the governing sport committee or by the bylaws, the number of eligible student-athletes in competitive uniform eligible to participate at the start of competition.

Tournament Physician. The physician designated by the host institution/conference to serve as the chief medical advisor for the championship event(s) to be hosted at the host venue.

Section 2 • Championship Core Statement

The championships and alliances staff strives to administer competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner so that the experience of the student-athlete is paramount.

This is attained by:

Ensuring student-athletes' optimal experience.

Executing championship events reflecting appropriate quality and values to/for stakeholders – student-athletes, coaches, administrators, member institutions, sport committees, fans, broadcast partners and corporate champions/partners.

Coordinating all aspects of the championship in an efficient, effective manner through common operating policies and practices, using internal and external resources.

Integrating championships with broadcast and corporate relationships in a manner that maintains the integrity of the championship.

Assuring effective management of the business aspects of the operation.

Enhancing the assets of the NCAA and their value by collaborating with internal and external expertise to achieve heightened exposure (e.g., community programs, fan events, banquets, anniversaries).

Section 3 • Conduct

Section 3.1 Certification of Eligibility/Availability

[Reference: Certification of Eligibility/Availability in Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20.2.4, 31.2.1.7.1, 31.2.1.7.1.2 and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaws 7.3.1.5 and 18.2.1 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Division II Championships Committee Policy and Bylaws 31.2.1.5, 31.2.1.5.2, and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

Only student-athletes eligible under Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 may compete in NCAA championships. Member institutions are required to certify the eligibility of their student-athletes before the beginning of each academic year and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from all intercollegiate competition.

Member institutions are reminded to notify the NCAA national office before the selection date for each championship of any student-athlete who may have participated in regular-season competition but subsequently is determined to be ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition.

DISCOVERY OF INELIGIBILITY OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE AFTER SELECTION

If an institution fails to report an ineligible student-athlete and the omission is not discovered until after the institution is selected to participate in the championship, necessitating the institution's withdrawal from the championship, that withdrawal shall be considered as one of the years of ineligibility, provided another institution participates in the championship in place of the disqualified institution. If the discovery of the ineligible student-athlete occurs so near the beginning of the championship that the governing sport committee does not have a reasonable period of time to replace the disqualified institution in the bracket, that fact shall be taken into consideration in determining the number of years the disqualified institution shall be ineligible to participate.

Section 3.2 Drug Testing

As part of preparation and planning to participate in championship events, member institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable policy and legislative requirements pertaining to banned substances, drug testing and related eligibility requirements with their student-athletes. Student-athletes who compete in NCAA championships may be subjected to drug tests in accordance with legislation and may be determined to be ineligible as a result thereof. Only student-athletes who have consented in writing to such testing are initially eligible for these championships; and thereafter, student-athletes who are tested shall remain eligible only if they test negative.

Section 3.3 Honesty and Sportsmanship

Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.

Section 3•4 Misconduct/Failure to Adhere to Policies

MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in an NCAA championship is any act of dishonesty, unsportsmanlike conduct, unprofessional behavior or breach of law, occurring from the time the championship field is announced through the end of the championship, that discredits the event or intercollegiate athletics. Each games committee shall hold an administrative meeting with the representatives of participating institutions to review and explain the policies related to misconduct.

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A governing sport committee may assess a financial penalty against an institution for failure of any of its representatives to adhere to the policies and procedures governing the administration of the competition. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to comply with the procedures and deadlines for submitting scores, score sheets, schedules, rosters and entry/march-in forms for qualification and other materials necessary for the efficient administration of the competition. [Click here](#) to see the full misconduct/failure to adhere to policies and procedures online.

Section 3•5 Sports Wagering Policy

Sports wagering includes placing, accepting or soliciting a wager (on a staff member's or student-athlete's own behalf or on the behalf of others) of any type with any individual or organization on any intercollegiate, amateur or professional team or contest. Examples of sports wagering include, but are not limited to, the use of a bookmaker or parlay card; internet sports wagering; mobile betting; auctions in which bids are placed on teams, individuals or contests; and pools or fantasy leagues in which an entry fee is required and there is an opportunity to win a prize.

The current NCAA legislation against sports wagering prohibits NCAA student-athletes, member institutions' athletics staff and non-athletics staff with athletics responsibilities, and conference office staff from participating in sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activities concerning intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics practice or competition in a sport in which the NCAA conducts championship competition, in bowl subdivision football and in emerging sports for women.

A wager is any agreement in which an individual or entity agrees to give up an item of value (e.g., cash, shirt, dinner) in exchange for the possibility of gaining another item of value.

STUDENT-ATHLETES

A student-athlete found in violation of the prohibition against knowingly participating in any sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activity that involves intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics competition shall be ineligible for further intercollegiate competition, subject to appeal to the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of eligibility.

POSTSEASON

In championships in which a bracket format is used, student-athletes, coaches and administrators may not participate in bracket competitions where there is both a required entry fee and an opportunity to win a prize. Student-athletes and administrators may participate under current NCAA rules in bracket contests where there is no entry fee but a possibility of winning a prize. Some NCAA member schools, however, have chosen to ban student-athletes from participating in these types of bracket contests.

HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES

It is permissible for NCAA championships to be conducted at locations in states that permit sports wagering.

Section 3•6 Student-Athlete Experience Survey

During the NCAA championships, the student-athlete experience is paramount. NCAA staff and hosts dedicate themselves to planning the best experiences for all involved. As part of our commitment to getting better, following the championship, participants will receive a survey to provide feedback on their experience and input on how

championships can be improved for future NCAA student-athletes. Institutional administrators and coaches will receive an email containing a link to the survey and will be asked to forward the survey to student-athletes. Additionally, this survey will be accessible via QR code found on the back of NCAA-issued championship credentials.

We also understand that sometimes certain circumstances or conditions occurring during the events may require real-time consideration. When this is the case, student-athletes may reach out to their site representative or NCAA national office staff on-site.

Section 4 • Elite Scholar-Athlete™ Award

The Elite Scholar-Athlete award was created to recognize the true essence of student-athletes by honoring individuals who have reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in their sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among their peers. The award is presented in every sport, every division, and goes to the student-athlete who has the highest cumulative grade-point average of all student-athletes competing at the finals site. One student-athlete per championship will receive the award, and the announcement of the winner will be made at the finals site.

Institutions that wish to nominate a student-athlete must do so through an online nomination process. For more information or to access the online form and submit a nomination, [click here](#).

Section 5 • Fan Travel

Through support from Marriott International as the Official Hotel Partner of the NCAA, NCAA championships are pleased to provide easy and affordable accommodations for family and fans to follow their favorite student-athlete(s) and team(s) as they participate in NCAA championships competition. Travel arrangements completed through Marriott and NCAA Travel help support NCAA student-athletes. Please direct your fans to ncaa.com/travel to search and book online hotel reservations.

Section 6 • Health and Safety

As part of preparation and planning to host and/or participate in championship events, member institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable health and safety policy and legislative requirements and guidance including, among others, those relating to concussion management, catastrophic injury prevention, inclement weather and independent medical care. These requirements and related information can be found in applicable division manuals, sports playing rules and the materials located on the [Health, Safety & Performance website](#). In addition, a summary of some of the key health and safety considerations related to traveling to championship events can be found in the [NCAA's Guidance for Medical Care and Coverage for Student-Athletes at Away Events](#).

Section 7 • Logo Policy

[Reference: Bylaw 22.4.1 in the NCAA Division I Manual, 17.1.10 Bylaw in the NCAA Division II Manual and 12.5.3 Bylaw in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (e.g., celebrations on the court, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met: (Revised: 1/11/94, 1/10/95, 1/9/96 effective 8/1/96)

(a) Athletics equipment (e.g., shoes, helmets, baseball bats and gloves, batting or golf gloves, hockey and lacrosse sticks, goggles and skis) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public; and (Revised: 1/10/95)

(b) The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including numbered racing bibs and warm-ups) and all other items of apparel (e.g., socks, head bands, T-shirts, wrist bands, visors or hats, swim caps and towels) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed four square inches in area (i.e., rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. (Revised: 1/11/94, 1/10/95, 7/21/26 effective 8/1/26)

Section 8 • Research

In order to avoid inappropriate and unnecessary participant distraction and disruption of championship events, it is expected any data collection or other research efforts conducted at or during championship events will be coordinated through the national office, with notice and a description of any research proposal to be submitted to the NCAA research staff at least six weeks before the championships event begins.

Section 9 • Travel Party

Please refer to the NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. NCAA Travel policies are updated annually and can be found online [here](#). Please reference Appendix A of the travel policies for reimbursable travel party numbers. The travel policies supersede all other documents.

Section 10 • Division III

Section 10•1 Division III Philosophy

The Division III championships philosophy is to field the most competitive teams within a regular-season that emphasizes regional competition and minimizes missed class time; and to provide representation in NCAA championship competition by allocating berths to eligible conferences and at-large teams.

Section 10•2 Commencement Conflicts

[Reference: Bylaw 31.1.4.5 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

If an institution's commencement conflicts with participation in the championship, it shall inform the NCAA championship manager in writing one week before the selection date for the governing sport committee to consider an accommodation and a change to the championship schedule.

The following guidelines apply to commencement requests:

- Applies to team sports only.
- The governing sport committee, in consultation with participating institutions, may reschedule the game on the nearest possible date.
- Does not apply to predetermined finals sites.
- The governing sport committee shall make a good-faith effort to accommodate participating institutions in non-predetermined preliminary-round contests with multiple teams participating at the same site.

Section 10•3 Gameday the DIII Way

Division III promotes an atmosphere that is a respectful and engaging educational environment through athletics, for everyone through Gameday the DIII Way. Gameday the DIII Way establishes an expectation for championship hosts, coaches, student-athletes and spectators to focus on the common standards of safety, responsiveness, dignity and experience while participating or attending a championship event. We ask that each participant and attendee be personally accountable for their actions and do their part to ensure this event is a positive reflection of Gameday the DIII Way.

Section 10•4 Religious Conflicts

[Reference: Bylaws 31.1.4.1 and 31.1.4.2 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

Institutional Policy. If a participating institution has a written policy against competition on a particular day for religious reasons, it shall inform the NCAA national office before May 1 of the preceding academic year to be excused from competing on that day. The notification shall be valid for a period of two years. The championship schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate that institution, and such adjustment shall not require its team or an individual competitor to compete before the time originally scheduled.

Individual Championships. In individual championships, a student-athlete must compete according to the institution's policy regarding Sunday competition (i.e., if the institution has no policy against Sunday competition, the student-athlete shall compete Sunday if required by the schedule).

Division III Football

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Section 1 • General Administration

Section 1•1 NCAA Tournament Operations Staff Contact Information

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Associate Director, Championships and Alliances
P.O. Box 6222 / Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
317-917-6761 / jpwilliams@ncaa.org

CJ Sowards

Assistant Coordinator, Championships and Alliances
P.O. Box 6222 / Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
317-917-6001/ csowards@ncaa.org

Section 1•2 National Committee

Current members of the committee are:

REGION I

Mike Cebrosky

Head Football Coach
King's College (Pennsylvania)

REGION II

Portia Hoeg

Executive Director
Centennial Conference

REGION III

Hunter Sims, chair

Director of Athletics
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

REGION IV

Mark Shook

Director of Athletics
Hanover College

REGION V

Michael Zapolski

Director of Athletics
Augustana College (Illinois)

REGION VI

Keith Buckley

Director of Athletics
Pacific University (Oregon)

Section 1•3 Important Dates

Monday, Oct. 12	First published ranking.
Monday, Oct. 19	Second published ranking.
Monday, Oct. 26	Third published ranking.
Monday, Nov. 2	Fourth published ranking.
Monday, Nov. 9	Deadline for potential preliminary-round hosts to submit budget information. Fifth published ranking.
Wednesday, Nov. 11	Mandatory potential host call, 1 p.m. Eastern time.
Sunday, Nov. 15	Selection and notification of teams for championship. Final published ranking.

CHAMPIONSHIP DATES

2026-27 Championship Dates

First Round	Saturday, Nov. 21, on campus, noon local time, ESPN +
Second Round	Saturday, Nov. 28, on campus, noon local time, ESPN +
Third Round	Saturday, Dec. 5, on campus, noon local time, ESPN +
Quarterfinals	Saturday, Dec. 12, on campus, noon local time, ESPN +
Semifinals	Saturday, Dec. 19, on campus, TBD, ESPN+
Championship	Sunday, Jan. 3, 8 p.m. Eastern time, ESPN. Salem Stadium, Salem, Virginia; Old Dominion Athletic Conference and City of Salem, hosts.

DATE FORMULA

First Round (8)	Next-to-last Saturday in November
Second Round (16)	Last Saturday in November (Thanksgiving weekend)
Third Round (8)	First Saturday in December
Quarterfinals (4)	Second Saturday in December
Semifinals (2)	Third Friday/Saturday in December
Championship	Between Jan. 2 and Jan. 10

FUTURE DATES

2027-28 Championship Dates

Selections	Sunday, Nov. 14
First Round	Saturday, Nov. 20, on campus
Second Round	Saturday, Nov. 27, on campus
Third Round	Saturday, Dec. 4, on campus
Quarterfinals	Saturday, Dec. 11, on campus
Semifinals	Saturday, Dec. 18, on campus
Championship	TBD, Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium, Canton, Ohio; Ohio Athletic Conference and Visit Canton, hosts.

Section 1•4 Division III Commencement Conflict Policy

If an institution’s commencement conflicts with participation in the championship, it shall inform the NCAA championship manager in writing one week before the selection date for the governing sports committee to accommodate a request to alter the championship schedule.

The following guidelines apply to commencement requests:

- Applies to team sports only.
- The governing sports committee, in consultation with participating institutions, would reschedule the game on the nearest possible date if a participating school has a conflict.
- Does not apply to predetermined finals sites.

The governing sports committee shall make a good-faith effort to accommodate participating institutions in non-predetermined preliminary-round contests with multiple teams participating at the same site.

Section 1•5 Division III Philosophy

The Division III championships philosophy is to field the most competitive teams possible while minimizing missed class time; to emphasize regional competition in regular-season scheduling; and to provide representation in NCAA championship competition by allocating berths to eligible conferences, independent institutions and a limited number of at-large teams, realizing that this may be done at the expense of leaving out some championship-caliber teams.

Section 1•6 Ethical Behavior by Coaches

Members of the coaching profession have certain inherent obligations and responsibilities to the profession, to the student-athletes and to all those with whom they come into contact. Coaches are expected to be role models who conduct themselves with integrity and high ethical standards at all times.

The words and actions of a coach carry tremendous influence, particularly on the young people under their direction. Therefore, it is imperative that they demonstrate and demand high principles of sportsmanship and ethical behavior.

Section 1•7 Equipment

All equipment provided to one team by the host should be provided for both teams. However, it is not the responsibility of the host to provide equipment that is not required or listed in this manual and/or the preliminary host operations manual. For example, we do not require the host to provide a stationary bicycle.

FOOTBALLS

Football Models: The Wilson F1002 (GST - Red), F1003 (GST - Tan), F10053 (Omega), F10060 (NFL Cut) and F10094 (GRT) footballs are the official balls for the championship and will be used in all rounds of competition. Institutions will be allowed to choose the model of Wilson football they wish to use while on offense throughout the championship.

After selections, each designated team will receive 12 Wilson footballs which may be used throughout the duration of the preliminary rounds. It is the expectation that the 12 Wilson balls, provided by Wilson, will last through the duration of the preliminary rounds.

Please note, however, that institutions may use their own regular season footballs so long as it is one of the approved Wilson ball models. Finals sites will be required to use the championship branded football.

BENCHES

Visiting teams should be provided equal seating to what the home team is given. A minimum of four benches is recommended on each side.

COACHES' BOOTHS

The host institution must provide a coaches' booth for the visiting team that is protected from the elements, capable of accommodating a minimum of three coaches, and comparably equipped to the home team's coaching booth. A separate and private area must be provided in the press box for the home and visiting coaches. If two comparably equipped booths are not available, the visiting team shall be provided with the better of the two booths.

FIELD TELEPHONES

Each team will be responsible for providing its own field telephone. Teams may use as many phones as they wish but are responsible for providing their own phones and making sure they are in good working order.

HEATERS

The host institution will be responsible for providing two sideline heaters if requested by the visiting team, and any associated rental fee will be reimbursed to the host institution as a championship budget expense. The host should ask the visiting team this question on the Monday call so proper arrangements can be made. It is NOT allowed for visiting teams to bring their own heaters.

LIFTS

If a lift is provided, it must accommodate both teams for videotaping. Before the game, the site representative, along with the host institution, needs to confirm that the weather permits the use of the lift. If there is any hesitation due to inclement weather about the safety of those on the lift, the lift should not be used by either team. The host will need to locate the next best place for videotaping.

LOCKER ROOMS

Locker rooms must be of adequate size to accommodate the squad size, with working showers and water, and must be available for both teams. Restrooms, marker boards or chalkboards, and chairs or benches to accommodate the entirety of the visiting team's roster also must be provided. If the distance to the locker room warrants it, a secondary location should be established for teams to use during pregame, halftime and postgame.

PLAY CLOCKS

Fully functional play clocks that can be set to both 40 and 25 seconds are required for all Division III championship playoff games.

Section 1•8 Rules

[Reference: Bylaw 31.1.6 in the NCAA Manual.]

Per NCAA Bylaw 17.30, member institutions shall conduct all of their intercollegiate competition in accordance with the playing rules of the Association in all sports for which the NCAA develops playing rules. For those sports in which the Association follows rules that are developed by other governing bodies and modified by the governing sports committee, the adopted playing rules shall be used. The governing sports committee will not consider any results for selection purposes that are not played in accordance with the NCAA rules, or those rules adopted by an outside organization.

NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations will be followed. Questions regarding rules interpretations should be addressed to: **Matthew Young, Secretary-Rules Editor, NCAA Football Rules Committee**, matt.young.ncaa@gmail.com.

Section 1•9 Uniforms

The host institution team will be the home team and will wear dark jerseys in preliminary-round games. The visiting team will wear white jerseys. For the championship game, the home team will be decided by the Division III Football Committee. The game officials will enforce uniform requirements as prescribed in the NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations.

LOGOS

[Refer to General Administrative Guidelines, Section 7.](#)

Section 2 • Determination of Championship Participation

Section 2.1 Championship Format

The championship provides for a maximum field of 40 teams. The 40 teams will be placed in four competition brackets, each consisting of ten teams.

Geographic proximity takes precedence when placing teams on the bracket. Play will continue in second-round, third-round quarterfinal, semifinal and final competition. The first five rounds will be played on the campus of one of the competing institutions or at an alternate site approved by the Division III Football Committee. The championship will be played in Canton, Ohio. The championship bracket is listed in [Appendix A](#).

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS/START TIMES

Arrival Times at Playoff Sites. Institutions participating in all preliminary contests may arrive the day of the game, but not later than two hours before the scheduled start of the contest. However, the head coach and at least one other institutional administrator must attend the prechampionship meeting scheduled by the Division III Football Committee in conjunction with the host institution.

Teams participating in the national championship game shall arrive not later than 10:30 a.m. three days prior. The participating head coaches and select players at the Stagg Bowl are required to attend media day.

Exceptions to arrival times at competition sites must be approved by the Division III Football Committee.

Order of Events. All first-, second-, third- and quarterfinal-round games will start at noon local time. Semifinal and championship games will be televised on an ESPN platform and are subject to change from the noon starting time. Any other starting time must be approved by the Division III Football Committee.

Suggested Pregame Schedule

10 a.m.	Field open for stretching and walk-through. No footballs.
10:30 a.m.	L shape in front of own bench.
11 a.m.	Officials' meeting with timer, ball persons and chain gang.
11:20 a.m.	45-45 allow 10-yard buffer for officials and game representative.
11:40 a.m.	Teams leave field – introduction of players.
11:45 a.m.	Officials notify teams in locker rooms.
11:50 a.m.	Teams return to field; visitors first, then home (go directly to team sidelines).
11:55 a.m.	National anthem.
11:58 a.m.	Coin toss.
Noon	Kickoff.

It is understood that this schedule could be modified to accommodate television or special activities associated with the game.

Warmup. Teams participating in the championship may begin pregame warmups a maximum of 90 minutes before kickoff. If the host permits teams to do so, they may warm up on the field 120 minutes before kickoff, however, footballs are not allowed until 90 minutes before kickoff.

Two Suggested Pregame Warmup Areas

Diagram #1

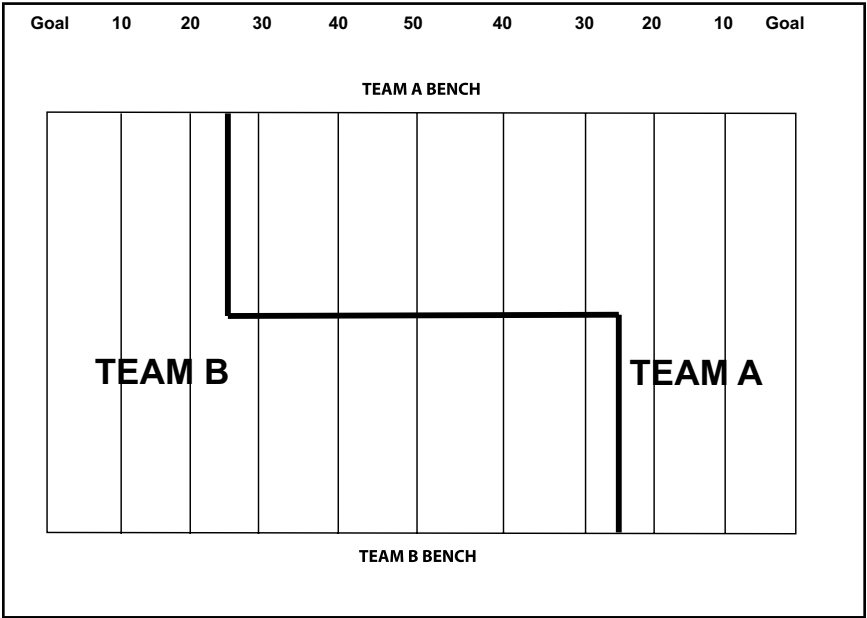
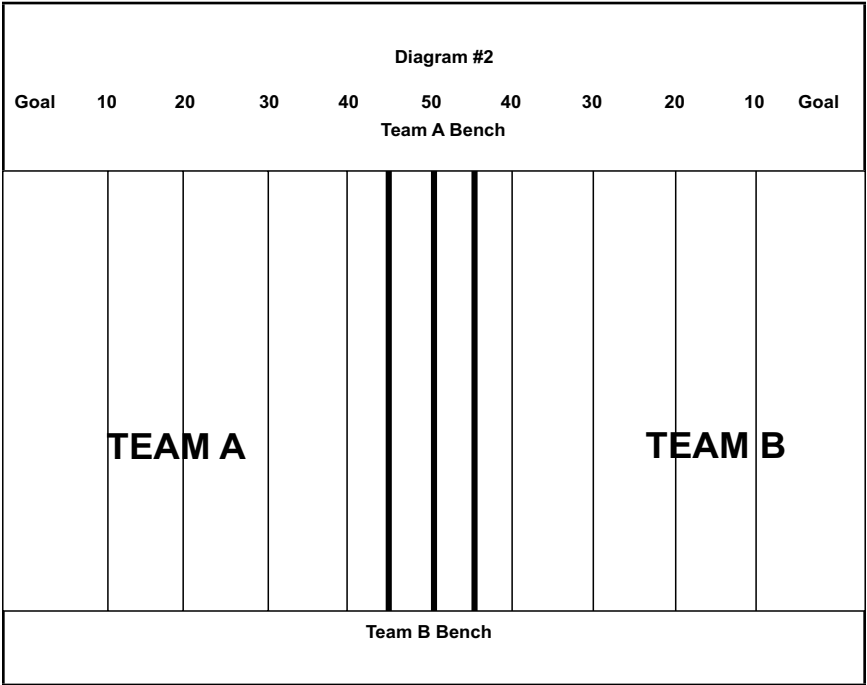


Diagram #2



SQUAD SIZE/TRAVEL PARTY

[Reference: Bylaw 31.1.5 in the NCAA Manual.]

Please refer to the NCAA Travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. Travel policies can be found online at ncaa.org/championships/travel.

Transportation and per diem expenses will be provided for the official traveling party of 68 (including a maximum of 58 players in uniform). Replacements are permitted up to 10 minutes before game time; after this time, no replacements shall be permitted for any reason (see Certification of Eligibility/Availability in the Division III General Section).

The number of student-athletes in competitive uniform (58) shall not exceed the prescribed number during pregame practice or at the start of the contest. An institution that is advised it is in violation of this regulation and does not conform to it promptly shall automatically forfeit the competition. There shall be no inordinate delay of the competition to allow the institution to conform to the rule.

Section 2•2 Results

SCORE REPORTING

For Division III football, schools should submit all schedules and results to the NCAA statistics site (stats.ncaa.org/login).

This information will be used by the sports committee for selection purposes. Specific instructions and reporting deadlines will be communicated to SIDs in a memo from the media coordination and statistics staff. For questions regarding the reporting process or NPI, please contact Trae Straziscar at tstraziscar@ncaa.org.

FORFEITS

For the purpose of selection to NCAA championships in Division III, there is no forfeit of a contest until the referee or other appropriate contest official has assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules. When a team does not appear (e.g., due to weather conditions, accidents, breakdown of vehicles, illness or catastrophic causes), a forfeit is not recorded. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract. Such instances shall be considered a “no contest.”

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Trae Straziscar at the NCAA national office.

Section 2•3 Selections Information

[Reference: Bylaws 31.01.2, 31.01.3 and 31.3 in the NCAA Manual.]

At-large teams will be selected using the NCAA Power Index (NPI), the system that houses the division’s statistical data and objectively applies the selection criteria to the data based on the sport committee’s established weighted criteria. NPI is a combination of the following: winning percentage; strength of schedule; home-away multiplier; quality win bonus; and overtime results (when applicable). Teams will be selected not later than Sunday, Nov. 15.

NPI will determine the at-large teams selected to the championship after the Automatic Qualifiers (AQ) have been designated.

ALLOCATION OF BERTHS

The 40-team field will consist of two selection pools: AQs and at-large berths. AQ berths will be allocated to automatic qualifying conferences. The criteria for receiving automatic qualification are outlined in Bylaw 31.3.4 of the NCAA Division III Manual. At-large berths will be reserved for all remaining institutions not receiving an AQ.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

The 29 conferences that will receive automatic-qualifying berths are:

American Rivers Conference	New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference
American Southwest Conference	New Jersey Athletic Conference
Centennial Conference	North Coast Athletic Conference
College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin	Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference
Conference of New England	Northwest Conference
Empire 8	Ohio Athletic Conference
Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference	Old Dominion Athletic Conference
Landmark Conference	Presidents' Athletic Conference
Liberty League	Southern Athletic Association
Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference	Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference
Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association	Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference
Middle Atlantic Conference	Upper Midwest Athletic Conference
Midwest Conference	USA South Athletic Conference
Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference	Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference
New England Small College Athletic Conference	

AT-LARGE SELECTION

Bylaw 31.3.3.1 – Countable Competition. For NCAA team-championship selection purposes, competition is countable only when the teams played are varsity intercollegiate teams of four-year, degree-granting institutions that conduct a majority of their competition in that team sport against varsity intercollegiate teams (see Constitution 3.2.4.4) of United States four-year, degree-granting institutions. Competition against service teams, professional teams, semiprofessional teams, amateur teams, two-year colleges and club teams shall be excluded.

IN-REGION COMPETITION

To be considered during the at-large selection process, an institution must play at least 70% of its competition against Division III in-region opponents, unless a waiver has been approved by the Division III Championships Committee.

PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

When requested, the host institution or sponsoring agency shall make the field available two hours before kickoff, weather permitting. Teams should only utilize one half of the field in the event that both teams choose to take the field for practice once the facilities are made available. The appropriate committee representative, after consultation with the competing coaches, shall establish practice locations and schedules.

Banners, Cheerleaders, Mascots and Bands. Cheerleaders, dance team members and mascots shall be admitted, if in uniform, via the gate list furnished to the host institution by the competing schools' directors of athletics. A maximum of 12 cheerleaders plus one mascot and one cheerleader coach may be admitted. All other institutional representatives will be admitted only upon presentation of a ticket.

All cheerleading squads must conform to the guidelines set by the American Association of Cheerleader Coaches and Advisors (AACCA). This includes all guidelines and prohibitions pertaining to partner stunts in indoor facilities (see Appendix A in the Division III General Requirements Handbook)

Neither the NCAA nor the host institution shall be responsible for supervising or monitoring routines performed by cheerleaders at championship events. Except as noted in this section, supervision of cheerleading squads and their activities, yells and stunts is solely the participating institution's responsibility. The participating institution shall ensure that the squad has sufficient training, supervision and equipment for any and all routines its squad may choose to perform.

Tournament managers must inform participating institutions if the host facility has more stringent requirements. If so, the director of athletics at each institution must apprise his or her cheerleading squad of such requirements and ensure compliance.

Band members who are in uniform and performing at the championship will not be charged admission to the competition. Bands, or any component thereof, are not allowed to play after the ball has been declared ready for play by the referee. Bands are allowed to play during timeouts and before and after the competition. Bands are not allowed to play during the game once the ball is spotted and the umpire backs away from the ball. Halftime activities are the responsibility of the host; however, the visiting team may request an opportunity to participate.

The display of banners is subject to the approval of the games committee.

Game Management. Games conducted during the NCAA Division III Football Championship shall be administered in accordance with the general policies established by the NCAA Division III Championships Committee and shall be under the control, direction and supervision of the NCAA Division III Football Committee and its designated representatives.

The NCAA representative and the host institution are responsible for controlling artificial noisemakers. An institution will not be allowed to have artificial noisemakers (i.e., sirens and cannons) sound during any championship game that may be heard from inside the stadium that is purposefully activated throughout the game.

Game management procedures are outlined in this handbook and in host manuals provided by the NCAA.

Halftime. The intermission will be 20 minutes. Fifteen minutes will be allotted for the halftime entertainment, with the understanding that the field must be cleared five minutes before the start of the second half. Under no circumstances will the intermission be extended for entertainment.

The host institution or sponsoring agency must reserve a minimum of six minutes of the halftime entertainment time for each competing team's band.

If a competing team's band is not available, the time reserved for that band may be used by the host institution or sponsoring agency. A competing institution must inform the sponsoring agency not later than noon Monday before the game whether its band will be available to perform during the intermission.

Media/Microphones. The placement of microphones on a team coach or in team huddles and bench areas is prohibited at all NCAA championships.

Media/Post-Competition Interviews. For all preliminary-round games, the visiting team will be the first team interviewed at the conclusion of the cooling-off period. An interview area will open to all certified members of the news media 10 minutes after the conclusion of the game; any coach and student-athletes requested by the media will be available for interviews. If a team or individual is participating in an awards ceremony, they will report to media immediately following the ceremony.

Regardless of any regular-season radio or television contract(s), the coach is obligated to the entire covering media during the championship and must report to the interview room 10 minutes after the conclusion of the game. The coach cannot delay a post-competition interview with the covering media to conduct a program for a single newspaper, radio or television reporter unless requested to remain for a short interview (not to exceed four minutes) by the television entity that has been granted television rights by the NCAA.

The NCAA championships have an "open locker room policy," which is administered by the media coordinator on site. The open locker room policy applies to the formal post-competition press conference and to special interview requests for coaches and/or student-athletes not involved in the press conference. The special interviews include those during the open locker room period after the competition.

All coaches and student-athletes must be made available for post-competition interviews 10 minutes following the conclusion of the game. This not only applies to formal press conferences, but also to any interview requests made to coaches and/or student-athletes not involved in the press conference. Failure to do so may result in a possible misconduct, as determined by the respective sport committee.

A plan by the host needs to be established to ensure that media remain at the 6-foot broken line from the 20-yard line to the end zone.

DIVISION III FOOTBALL

Meetings. A meeting of the head coaches, directors of athletics or designated institutional administrator (this cannot be the coach or sports information director serving in dual roles), and sports information directors of the competing teams with the game officials and representatives from the sponsoring agency, and the NCAA committee representative will be held the Friday night before the game or at a time scheduled by the football committee.

[Reference: Misconduct in Bylaws 31.02.3 and 31.1.10 in the NCAA Manual.]

It is mandatory that all head coaches and athletics directors (or their designee) attend the meeting or videoconference to review all game arrangements. In addition, if the game is televised, representatives from the televising network must be in attendance. There will be a \$300 fine issued to any institution that does not have an administrator present at the pregame videoconference.

The pregame meeting will include information on the provisions of Bylaw 31.1.10, which prescribes conditions under which a student-athlete or representative may be disqualified from further participation in the championship for reasons of misconduct. The pregame meeting shall be separate from any social activity.

All meetings involving administrative personnel, game officials and participating teams and coaches must be authorized by the Division III Football Committee.

National Anthem. The national anthem is to be played before every preliminary-round and championship game. In following with the pregame warmup schedule, the national anthem is played prior to the coin toss. It is mandatory that both teams and coaches' staffs are present for the national anthem. Failure to do so will result in a misconduct.

Team Area Passes. Players in uniforms do not need to have credentials. Teams will be allowed 20 sideline credentials.

VIDEO AND STILL PHOTOGRAPHS

[Reference: Bylaw 31.6.4.3 in the NCAA Manual.]

Institutions are permitted to film championship competition by their teams or their individual student-athletes for archival, coaching or instructional purposes. Each institution is permitted to use two cameras and may videotape only that portion of the competition in which it participates.

Championship Video Policy. It is the responsibility of each athletics director at the participating institutions to assure that his or her institution/coach follows the championship video policy and schedule. Any delay in sharing film will be immediately communicated to the athletics director and coach of the participating teams. If a resolution cannot be obtained, the athletics director should communicate his or her concerns and issues to the Division III Football Committee for action. Not adhering to this policy may result in misconduct and penalties being assessed.

Video should be:

1. Exchanged via the online digital video system;
2. Of complete games (numerical two-deep team roster and game play-by-play included);
3. Master copy or first generation (imaging);
4. Professional and equitable quality;
5. Reviewed by the head coach or athletics director before being uploaded to the digital video system (Hudl);
6. Obtained only from the two competing institutions;
7. Include end-zone imaging;
8. For wide (press box side) imaging, the camera should start with the offensive huddle break, or seven seconds before the snap of the ball for no-huddle teams, and must include all 22 players at all times during the play;
9. For end-zone imaging, the camera should show two yards outside of the end player on either side of line;
10. On the sideline image, down and distance should be shown between each play (yardsticks). The scoreboard should be displayed after each series; and
11. Exchanges must include wide and end-zone shots of each play and full-game intercut continuous play.

Every effort should be made to exchange same quality film.

Please know that if there are any concerns regarding the safety of the video camera operator, spectators, student-athletes, etc., please always err on the side of safety. For example, if a school is unable to use the scissor lift/scaffolding to tape from the end zone because of safety issues with the wind (as agreed upon by tournament director, site reps, and coaches), then neither team will receive a videotape that includes taping from the end zone.

The exchange of film must adhere to the following schedule:

Sunday, Nov. 15. First-round opponents must post via digital system copies of the last three regular-season games by the conclusion of the selection announcement.

Sunday, Nov. 22. Noon Eastern time. Deadline for the home teams of first-round games to have posted via digital system copies of the first-round playoff game (and communicate information to the winning team if the visiting team won). The winning team must provide information for obtaining its first-round game and its last two regular-season games to the opposing coach of the second-round game.

Sunday, Nov. 29. Noon Eastern time. Deadline for the home teams of second-round games to have posted via digital system copies of the second-round playoff game (and communicate information to the winning team if the visiting team won). The winning team must provide information for obtaining its first- and second-round games and its last regular-season game to the opposing coach for the quarterfinal-round game.

Sunday, Dec. 6. Noon Eastern time. Deadline for the home teams of third-round games to have posted via digital system copies of the second-round playoff game (and communicate information to the winning team if the visiting team won). The winning team must provide information for obtaining its first-, second- and third-round games and its last regular-season game to the opposing coach for the quarterfinal-round game.

Sunday, Dec. 13. Noon Eastern time. Deadline for the home teams of quarterfinal-round games to have posted via digital system copies of the quarterfinal-round playoff game (and communicate information to the winning team if the visiting team won). The winning team must provide information for obtaining its first-, second- and quarterfinal-round games to the opposing coach for the semifinal-round game.

Sunday, Dec. 20. Noon Eastern time. Deadline for the home teams of semifinal-round games to have posted via digital system copies of the semifinal-round playoff game (and communicate information to the winning team if the visiting team won). The winning team must provide information for obtaining its second-, quarterfinal- and semifinal-round games to the opposing coach for the championship game.

SCOUTING/PROFESSIONAL SCOUTS

Live scouting is prohibited during all rounds of NCAA championship play. No professional scouts shall be allowed in the press box, and no complimentary tickets are to be issued to professional football scouts.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Institutions submitting bids must make preliminary contact with hotels and make tentative arrangements for visiting team lodging. The host tournament director will reserve 40 rooms for the visiting team. It is suggested that at least 30 of the rooms be double-doubles and that one of the rooms be upgraded for the head coach to a one-bedroom suite at the same rate.

The team rooms should be reserved beginning the night before the competition. It is possible that a team may arrive two nights before competition and every effort should be made to have the team rooms available for occupancy.

If a team prefers to stay at a hotel other than the one to which it has been assigned, it must: (1) obtain from the hotel general manager a written release of the reserved rooms, or (2) use the rooms for persons accompanying the official party. A copy of written release of these rooms must be filed with the host. If an institution fails to make satisfactory arrangements with the assigned hotel for use of the original reserved rooms, full charges for these rooms will be the visiting institution's responsibility.

The host institution or sponsoring agency, when selected, shall make local reservations for the competing teams and advise them of the arrangements. Each competing institution is obligated to confirm or cancel the accommodations.

Section 2•4 NCAA Power Index (NPI)

NPI

Division III team sports have adopted the use of the NCAA Power Index (NPI). NPI is a system that houses the division's statistical data and objectively applies the selection criteria to the data based on the sport committee's established weighted criteria. NPI is a combination of the following: winning percentage; strength of schedule; home-away multiplier; quality win bonus; and overtime results (not used for Division III Football).

The NPI weights for DIII Football:

Win%/SOS	H/A Win/Loss	QWB	QWB Multiplier	Overtime	Minimum Wins
40/60	1.1/0.9	54.00	0.250	100/0	5.0

See [Appendix C](#) for further explanation of the NPI Weights.

BRACKETING PRINCIPLES (PAIRINGS)

The following bracketing principles were adopted as policy beginning with the 2026-27 championships.

1. Protection of top-eight seeded teams in the bracket.

In brackets greater than 32 teams, teams will be protected based on the seed lines of No. 1s and No. 2s (based on NPI ranking at the time of selection).

- a. NPI rank 1-4 will be No. 1s. NPI rank 5-8 will be No. 2s.
 - b. No. 1s and No. 2s will be bracketed based on quarterfinal matchups providing a possibility that the top eight (8) teams could each advance to the round of eight.
 - c. No. 1s and No. 2s will be bracketed in the quarterfinals based on current bracketing principles (i.e., geographic proximity is maintained) EXAMPLE: No. 1 could face No. 5, No. 2 could face No. 6 in quarterfinal round, etc.
2. Remaining teams will continue to be grouped in clusters according to natural geographic proximity. Teams shall then be paired according to geographic proximity. A team may be moved to numerically balance the bracket if geographic proximity is maintained. Teams shall be paired and eligible according to geographic proximity (within 500 miles). An exception may be granted when there are not enough teams within the 500-mile radius to fill the region. Geographic proximity shall take precedence over seeding for teams below the top-8 seeds.
 3. Teams from the same conference shall not play one another in the first round.
 4. The highest-seeded team that meets all selection criteria shall be selected as the host institutions, provided that geographic proximity is maintained and they meet all site selection criteria.

RANKINGS

There will be a total of six published rankings for the season. The first ranking is on Oct. 12. For more information, see the important dates page in [Section 1.3](#).

PAIRINGS AND SITE SELECTION

Once automatic qualifiers are identified and the at-large teams are selected, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Once selected, teams will be grouped in clusters according to natural geographic proximity. Teams will then be paired according to geographic proximity. A team may be moved to numerically balance the bracket, if geographic proximity is maintained. Teams should be paired and eligible sites should be selected according to geographic proximity (within 500 miles).
- Teams from the same conference may not play each other in the first-round of competition.

DIVISION III SITE-SELECTION CRITERIA

The Division III Championships Committee has prioritized the site-selection criteria in the following order for Division III championships:

1. Protection of top eight ranked teams in the bracket.
2. Quality and availability of the facility and other necessary accommodations.
3. Geographical location (including such factors as rotation of sites, weather conditions, accessibility and transportation costs).
4. Attendance history and revenue potential, which shall be considered necessary to assure fiscal responsibility.

FORFEITS

For the purpose of selection to NCAA championships in Division III, there is no forfeit of a contest until the referee or other appropriate contest official has assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules. When a team does not appear (e.g., due to weather conditions, accidents, breakdown of vehicles, illness or catastrophic causes), a forfeit is not recorded. An institution shall not, for statistical purposes, declare a forfeit for nonfulfillment of a contract. Such instances shall be considered a “no contest.”

Section 2•5 Site Selection

Any institution interested in hosting preliminary-round competition of the Division III Football Championship must submit a proposed budget, respond to sport-specific questions, and ensure the institution’s key contacts and facility information are up to date via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal. To submit a bid, first search for the desired championship under “championships available for bid” and select “add bid.”

This process allows all member institutions to regularly and easily access their profiles by visiting championships.ncaa.org. For profile issues, user access or to reset a password, please email championshipbid@ncaa.org or contact the respective championship manager.

CHAMPIONSHIP BID AND HOST PROFILE PORTAL

The Championships Bid and Host Profile portal can be accessed at championships.ncaa.org. The deadline to submit materials for preliminary round competition is Monday, Nov. 9.

As a reminder, prospective hosts’ budgets should include committee/site representative’s lodging, game officials’ lodging expenses, state and city taxes/fees, if applicable, and any ticket fees that may apply. Committee/site representative’s per diem, mileage and luggage fees will be paid by the NCAA instead of the host institution. Game officials will be reimbursed via RefQuest for their game fees, per diem, mileage and luggage fees, and thus should not be included in the host budget.

FACILITY PROFILE

Institutions interested in hosting preliminary-round competition of the Division III Football Championship must add (or ensure accuracy of) facility information for the applicable competition venue. This information is located at championships.ncaa.org. Any supporting information – e.g., facility diagram, pictures – may be uploaded and attached to that facility’s profile. This information will be made available to the sport committee to aid in their deliberations of prospective host sites. If inclement weather is probable, an alternate site may be submitted as part of an institution’s bid. Any change to the location of competition must be approved by the Division III Football Committee.

KEY CONTACTS

Each institution should list and then maintain its key contacts associated with each sport and the institution. Individuals can be added via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal at championships.ncaa.org.

SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN

Each facility profile should include the safety and security plan for that facility. This information can be uploaded and attached to the profile by visiting championships.ncaa.org.

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

A final financial report from each championship site must be submitted via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal under the “budget” tab not later than 60 days after the event.

COACH TO PLAYER COMMUNICATION AND SIDELINE VIDEO REVIEW

Coach to player communication and sideline video review are permissible for the 2026 NCAA Division III Football postseason. These systems are not required to serve as a preliminary-round host. For more information on the policies and best practices for these systems, please see [Appendixes B](#) and [C](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

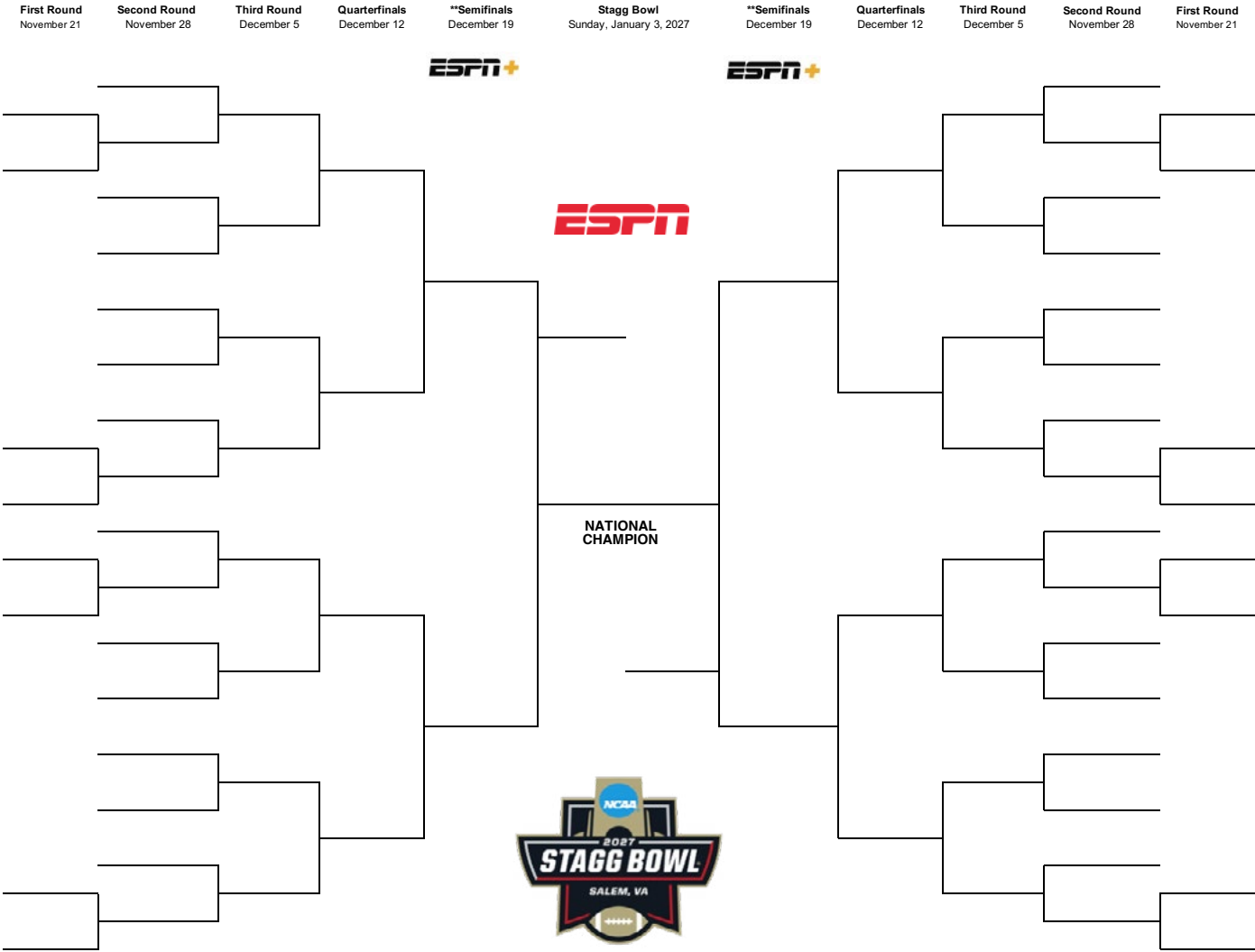
If you have any questions regarding the bid process, please contact J.P. Williams at 317-917-6761 or jpwilliams@ncaa.org, or email us at championshipbid@ncaa.org.

Appendixes

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Appendix A • Bracket



First-round, second-round, third-round and quarterfinal games will be played at noon local time on the campus of competing institutions or at a site approved by the Division III Football Committee.

**Semifinal rounds will be played at a time determined by TV and the Division III Football Committee.

* denotes host

Appendix B • Coach-to-Player Communication Policies



2026 NCAA Division III Football Postseason Policies and Expectations for Game Management: Coach-to-player (C2P) Communications

A. Game Management Details Regarding Coach-to-player Communications

1. C2P must follow all NCAA Football Playing Rules as stated in Rule 1-4-11-b.
2. Use of C2P is each team's choice. If a team opts out of using C2P, the opposing team may utilize C2P.
3. Teams can select their preferred vendor of choice.
4. Helmet liability remains in the institution's control.
5. The C2P designee green dots will be the exact same shape and size and produced by one vendor for all FBS conferences and teams. **Division III conferences and institutions are permitted to use their preferred vendor of choice.**
6. Each team will be allowed up to 10 active C2P devices on gameday. Each team will travel with their own C2P devices. Any active player is eligible to be a C2P designee. Players who have or may have C2P components in their helmets must be listed by name and jersey number (including alternate numbers for special teams) in the Coach-to-Player Communication form submitted to the Conference Office no later than Conference administered pregame meeting and shared with the assigned game officials. Only the players submitted as C2P designees on the form may wear the C2P components in their helmets. C2P designees are allowed to enter the game in a non-C2P helmet and not count as the C2P designee. No changes will be permitted after the submission of this form. All C2P designees must have a green decal adhered on the midline of the rear of the helmet. **A team is prohibited from having two or more players on the field at the same time wearing helmets that contain C2P device** (module, speakers, and battery), even if only one of the helmets is "live" and able to receive communication.
7. Both competing teams must use one (1) cutoff device that controls both teams' C2P system.
8. The C2P Cutoff Operator should be hired, assigned, and managed by the host institution. When a GSC C2P team plays at a CoachComm C2P team, host game management should hire, assign, & manage the C2P Cutoff Operator, but a GSC technician must be on-site to set-up, teach, and assist home game management with the GSC cutoff device. Host game management responsibilities should be identified well in advance of the contest, including responsibility of the cutoff procedure. **In Division III competition, the home team is required to provide or arrange for the cutoff operator, even if the home team does not use C2P.**
9. The C2P Cutoff Operator is recommended to be seated next to the Game and Play Clock Operators. Institutions must seek approval from their respective Conference Office if the institution cannot seat the C2P Cutoff Operator beside the clock operators. **The location of the cutoff operator will be confirmed and communicated to the visiting team at the pregame meeting.**
10. Both competing teams shall work together to confirm C2P systems will function together through one cutoff device with the home team providing reasonable requests to support the visiting team C2P system. Games including two C2P vendors, all efforts must be made to have one-cutoff device. If those efforts should fall short, one cutoff operator shall control both cutoff devices. A failure to provide cutoff switch equipment by either team will result in the team that

failed to provide the necessary equipment not being able to use C2P. This situation does not enact the equity rule.

11. Should one of the competing teams elect to not use C2P, the team using C2P would be required to abide by all C2P rules.
12. For the Stagg Bowl, the GSC C2P team or the home team, will be required to provide the C2P cutoff switch, unless mutually agreed upon by each participating team.
13. Home game management is permitted to credential C2P on-site technicians and those individuals are NOT included in the team's 25 support bench credentials.
14. In the event of TOTAL C2P communication failure of EITHER team, C2P on-site support representative(s) and games committee shall be notified. The other team may continue to use their C2P communication devices.
15. All C2P on-site support representatives should wear an article of clothing that is possible to see.
16. At least one C2P on-site support representatives must attend the pregame meeting.
17. It is not permissible to have instant replay review a play to see if multiple players on one team had more than one C2P designee on the field of play.
18. Both teams shall confirm their C2P plan during the administrative videoconference preceding the upcoming game.
19. Prior to each game, there will be a required C2P pregame test to verify the C2P equipment is functioning correctly. This test is recommended to take place 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) prior to the game, but at a minimum must take place prior to the pregame meeting (105/110-minute) meeting. The following personnel are required to attend the meeting: team personnel, C2P on-site technicians including the cutoff operator and the head official. Each team should have all speakers, helmets, radios, and communication belt packs present for the test. The on-site C2P technicians will work with the equipment managers to confirm all team C2P equipment (helmet speakers & modules and coaches' radios) is working properly. Also, C2P technicians will verify the cutoff device is working properly with all team C2P equipment. After the completion of the test, home game management should provide a C2P update at the pregame (105/110-minute) meeting.
20. Any violation above and beyond any in-game penalty may be subject to misconduct and/or a fine and will be reviewed by the NCAA Division III Football Committee.

Appendix C • Sideline Video Review Policies



NCAA Division III Football *Sideline Video Review - Policies and Procedures*



1. Requirements for sideline video review.
 - a. Instead of a replay booth, the referee, with assistance from the **appointed official**, will be the final decision-maker on all Sideline Replay Reviews. The back judge is recommended to serve as the appointed official for sideline replay. The side judge and field judge may be appointed as well.
 - b. The sideline video review equipment must be located outside the limit lines on the sideline or end zone, and it must be completely outside the team area. (20 to 20).
 - c. The referee and appointed official must be provided a separate, secure location, and they must be sheltered from view from the team area, fans, and any personnel on the sideline with a tent (or other portable structure).
 - d. By rule, all targeting fouls called on the field must be reviewed immediately. The only other method to stop a game for a sideline replay is through a head coach's challenge.
 - e. Rule 12-2-1-b states for any non-conference game, if the home team is using sideline video review, the visiting team **does not have** the option of declining its use. If the home team is not using sideline video review, it is not required (for the home team) to honor a request by the visiting team that sideline video review be used.
2. Equipment.
 - a. A computer, tablet or iPad should be used for video review. Smartphones are not to be used.
 - b. Sideline video review equipment should be in a secure location near the field to shelter the computer/tablet/iPad and to provide privacy during video reviews. As a reminder, the sideline replay equipment must be located outside the limit lines on the sideline or the end zone, and it must be completely outside the team area. For protection of the equipment, the NCAA Division III Football Committee recommends a tent, or other portable structure.
 - c. A table for the computer/tablet/iPad, or an iPad stand, in the secure video review location.
 - d. A power source (outlet or extension cord) for each of the locations that the equipment will be located (press box camera, endzone camera, tent for computer/tablet/iPad viewing location, etc.). It is recommended that you plan for three extension cords and three power strips at each equipment location to ensure a power source can be reached.
 - e. Each institution should determine the best location for the secure video review tent or portable structure. It shall be away from the team area, but quickly accessible by the

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Sideline Video Review - Policies and Procedures

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officials. Once the site has been selected, please notify the conference office and Jim Corpora.

- f. Coaches' may have access to the live stream in coach's suites/boxes in the stadium (but not on the field) during the game, as long as this technology is made available to both teams and is equal in quality (e.g., same size screen for both teams receiving the stream).
- g. Video of the previous play shall be immediately ready for the referee and appointed official to view when they arrive at the location of the computer/tablet/iPad.
- h. Operators should be consistent in following the game action on the field. Quality video review can be achieved if a quality video system is used and camera operators are properly trained. Training and accountability for game film operators are important to the success of sideline video review.
- i. It is imperative that each Institution does its best to ensure that the referee's microphone is working properly throughout the game. Having the referee's microphone working properly is **critical to the sideline video review process.**

3. Pre-game testing.

- a. No later than 45 minutes prior to kickoff, sideline video review must be set up in its secure location near the field.
- b. After the sideline video review set-up is complete, and no later than 45 minutes prior to kickoff, the film operators will perform a test recording of two warm-up plays for the referee to confirm that the plays are properly loading on the computer/tablet/iPad.
- c. During pregame, confirm the referee's microphone and official to official radios are working.

4. NCAA sideline video review process.

- a. The sideline video review process operates under the fundamental assumption that the ruling on the field is correct. The referee may overturn a ruling if, and only if, there is clear and obvious evidence **beyond all doubt** which convinces the referee that the ruling was incorrect. Without such clear and obvious evidence, **the referee must uphold the ruling on the field. The only exception is a called targeting foul.**
- b. The use of this sideline video review must be done in full compliance with NCAA rule 12 except as described herein.

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Sideline Video Review - Policies and Procedures

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- c. There are two methods to stop the game to review a ruling or a play on the field.
 - (1) If the officials call a targeting foul on the field, the game will automatically be stopped, and the foul will be immediately reviewed by the referee. The referee will make a ruling after viewing the targeting call from the sideline video review.
 - Secretary Rules-Editor **Interpretation: the call of targeting will be upheld as called on the field if there is a targeting foul called on the field and sideline video review is not functioning.**
 - (2) The head coach challenges the call on the field after the play is over and before the next snap. For the head coach to challenge a ruling or play:
 - (a) The team must have a team time out **available**.
 - (b) The head coach must have a challenge remaining.
 - (c) The ruling or play must be reviewable per the list provided in section V below.
 - (d) The head coach may challenge a play not called targeting on the field, but he must have a time out **available and** a challenge to use).
- d. Head Coach Challenges.
 - (1) Each head coach will begin the game with **two** challenges.
 - (2) The head coach is responsible for initiating the challenge by taking a team time out and by informing the officials during the team timeout that he is challenging the ruling on the previous play.
 - (3) **The head coach has two replay challenges per game. A coach is awarded a third challenge if they are successful with either of their first two challenges.**
 - (4) If the challenge is successful, the head coach will not be charged a time out.
- e. After review of the challenged play or targeting call, the referee will make an announcement indicating the result of the sideline video review.
- f. If the play for a targeting call or a coach's challenge is not available for review because of an equipment failure or camera operator malfunction (e.g., doesn't send play to the replay system), the ruling on the field will **be upheld**, and the team will not lose its challenge, nor will it be charged a timeout. A targeting call not available for review in

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the 1st half because of an equipment failure or malfunction will be reviewed by the referee at halftime.

- g. If the play for a coach's challenge is available for review, but the play angle is bad, the result is inconclusive, or the play is outside the screen view of the camera(s), the ruling on the field will **be upheld**, the team will lose its challenge and be charged a timeout.
- h. A maximum of **three** challenges are available to a team, including extra periods.
- i. By rule, the on-field officiating crew may not initiate a sideline video review on their own, except for a called targeting foul.

5. Reviewable Plays - Coach Challenges per NCAA Rule 12 Section 3.

- a. All targeting fouls are automatically reviewed. All other reviews must be initiated by the head coach.
- b. Scoring plays.
 - (1) A potential touchdown or safety.
 - (2) Field goal attempts. It may not be reviewed if the ball is higher than the top of the uprights as it crosses the end line.
- c. Passes.
 - (1) Pass ruled complete, incomplete, or intercepted.
 - (2) Forward pass touching the ground, a player (eligible or ineligible), or an official, including where the touching is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.
 - (3) Forward pass or forward handing when a ball carrier is or has been beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - (4) Forward pass or forward handing after a change of team possession.
 - (5) Pass ruled forward or backward.
 - (6) Location of the ball **in relation to the goal line** when there is a ruling of intentional grounding.
- d. Dead ball and loose ball.

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- (1) Loose ball by potential passer ruled fumble.
 - (2) Loose ball by passer ruled incomplete forward pass when there is clear recovery, or the ball goes out of bounds in the immediate continuing action after a loose ball.
 - (3) Live ball not ruled dead in possession of ball carrier.
 - (4) Loose ball ruled dead or live ball ruled dead in the possession of the ball carrier, when the clear recovery of a loose ball in the immediate continuing football action.
 - (5) Ball carrier's forward progress, spot of fumble, or spot of out of bounds backwards pass, with respect to a first down or goal line.
 - (6) Catch or recovery of a fumble by a player of the possessing team, other than the fumbler, before any change of possession during fourth down or a try.
 - (7) Ball carrier in or out of bounds. The play is not reviewable unless it involves a potential scoring play or involves the recovery of a loose ball if a ball carrier is ruled out of bounds.
 - (8) Catch, recovery or touching of a loose ball by a player inbounds or out of bounds, or an eligible receiver who had been out of bounds and returned inbounds.
 - (9) A loose ball touching on or beyond a sideline, goal line, or end line, touching a pylon, or breaking the plane of the goal line.
 - (10) Catch or recovery of a loose ball in the field of play or end zone.
 - (11) Forward fumble that goes out of bounds with respect to a first down.
- e. Kicks.
- (1) Touching of a kick.
 - (2) Player is or has been beyond the neutral zone when kicking the ball.
 - (3) Kicking team player advancing the ball after a potential muffed kick/fumble by the receiving team.
 - (4) Scrimmage kick crossing the neutral zone. Blocking by players of the kicking team before they are eligible to touch the ball on an on-side kick

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- (5) A player touching or recovering a kick or loose ball who is or has been out of bounds during the kick. Receiving team advancing after a fair catch signal.
 - (6) **Spot where a kick that has touched the ground in the field of play crosses the sideline.**
- f. Targeting.
- Called targeting plays will be automatically reviewed by the referee. The referee must confirm all elements of the foul during their review for a player to be disqualified for targeting. The referee must overturn the targeting foul if any element of targeting cannot be confirmed during the review.
- g. Timing.
- Clock adjustments, based on available sideline video review evidence, are permitted.
- h. Miscellaneous.
- (1) Position of the ball in relation to the goal line.
 - (2) Number of players on the field for either team during a live ball.
 - (3) Correcting the number of a down. The correction may be made at any time within that series of downs or before the ball is legally put in play after that series concludes.
 - (4) Any person who is not a player interfering with live-ball action on the field of play.
 - (5) **Fouls that carry five yard and ten yard penalties are not enforced if the ruling is overturned and the foul occurs after the video review reversal point. Personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls are always enforced.**

Appendix D • Sport Sponsorship

REGION I

Conference of New England (6)

Curry College	University of New England
Endicott College	Nichols College
Husson University	Western New England University

AQ - Regular Season

New England Small College Athletic Conference (10)

Amherst College	Middlebury College
Bates College	Trinity College (Connecticut)
Bowdoin College	Tufts University
Colby College	Wesleyan University (Connecticut)
Hamilton College	Williams College

AQ - Regular Season

New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (7)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology	U.S. Coast Guard Academy
Norwich University (affiliate member)	U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (affiliate member)
Salve Regina University	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Springfield College	

AQ - Regular Season

Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (10)

Bridgewater State University	University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (affiliate member)
Dean College	Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Fitchburg State University	Plymouth State University (affiliate member)
Framingham State University	Westfield State University
State University of New York Maritime College	Worcester State University

AQ - Regular Season

Middle Atlantic Conference (10)

Albright College	King's College (Pennsylvania)
Alvernia University	Lebanon Valley College
Delaware Valley University	Misericordia University
Eastern University	Stevenson University
Fairleigh Dickinson University, Florham	Widener University

AQ - Regular Season

REGION II

Centennial Conference (8)

Carnegie Mellon University (affiliate member)
Dickinson College
Franklin & Marshall College
Gettysburg College

Johns Hopkins University
McDaniel College
Muhlenberg College
Ursinus College

AQ - Regular Season

Empire 8 (8)

Alfred State College (affiliate member)
Alfred University
State University of New York at Brockport (affiliate member)
State University of New York at Cortland (affiliate member)

Hartwick College
Morrisville State College (affiliate member)
St. John Fisher College
Utica College

AQ - Regular Season

Liberty League (8)

Buffalo State, State University of New York (affiliate member)
Hilbert College
Hobart College
Ithaca College

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
University of Rochester
St. Lawrence University
Union College (New York)

AQ - Regular Season

New Jersey Athletic Conference (8)

Christopher Newport University (affiliate member)
Kean University
Montclair State University
The College of New Jersey

Rowan University
Salisbury University (affiliate member)
Vermont State University Castleton (affiliate member)
William Paterson University of New Jersey

AQ - Regular Season

Landmark Conference (7)

Catholic University
Juniata College
Lycoming College
Moravian College

Susquehanna University
Western Connecticut State University (affiliate member)
Wilkes University

AQ - Regular Season

Presidents' Athletic Conference (12)

Allegheny College
Bethany College (West Virginia)
Case Western Reserve University (affiliate member)
#Geneva College
Grove City College
Hiram College

^Saint Francis (reclassifying 2028-29)
Saint Vincent College
Thiel College
Washington and Jefferson College
Waynesburg University
Westminster College (Pennsylvania)

AQ - Regular Season

REGION III**American Southwest Conference (6)**

East Texas Baptist University
 Hardin-Simmons University
 Howard Payne University

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
 #McMurry University
 Schreiner University

AQ - Regular Season

Old Dominion Athletic Conference (8)

Averett University
 Bridgewater College (Virginia)
 Ferrum College
 Guilford College

Hampden-Sydney College
 Randolph-Macon College
 Shenandoah University
 Washington and Lee University

AQ - Regular Season

Southern Athletic Association (8)

Berry College
 Centre College
 Maryville College (Tennessee)
 Millsaps College

Rhodes College
 University of the South
 Southwestern University (Texas)
 Trinity University (Texas)

AQ - Regular Season

USA South Athletic Conference (8)

Belhaven University
 Brevard College
 Greensboro College
 Huntingdon College

LaGrange College
 Methodist University
 North Carolina Wesleyan College
 Southern Virginia University (affiliate member)

AQ - Regular Season

Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (6)

Austin College
 Centenary College (Louisiana)
 Gallaudet University (affiliate member)

Hendrix College
 Lyon College
 Texas Lutheran University (affiliate member)

AQ - Regular Season

REGION IV

Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference (7)

Anderson University (Indiana)	Manchester University
Bluffton University	Mount St. Joseph University
Franklin College	Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Hanover College	

AQ - Regular Season

Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (8)

Adrian College	Hope College
Albion College	Kalamazoo College
Alma College	Olivet College
Calvin University	Trine University

AQ - Regular Season

North Coast Athletic Conference (10)

Denison University	Ohio Wesleyan University
DePauw University	Wabash College
John Carroll University	Washington University in St. Louis (affiliate member)
Kenyon College	Wittenberg University
Oberlin College	The College of Wooster

AQ - Regular Season

Ohio Athletic Conference (9)

Baldwin Wallace University	Muskingum University
Capital University	Ohio Northern University
Heidelberg University	Otterbein University
Marietta College	Wilmington College (Ohio)
University of Mount Union	

AQ - Regular Season

REGION V**American Rivers Conference (8)**

Buena Vista University
 Central College (Iowa)
 Coe College
 University of Dubuque

Loras College
 Nebraska Wesleyan University
 Simpson College
 Wartburg College

AQ - Regular Season

College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (9)

Augustana College (Illinois)
 Carroll University (Wisconsin)
 Carthage College
 Elmhurst University
 Illinois Wesleyan University

Millikin University
 North Central College
 North Park University
 Wheaton College (Illinois)

AQ - Regular Season

Midwest Conference (11)

Beloit College
 University of Chicago (affiliate member)
 Cornell College
 Grinnell College
 Illinois College
 Knox College

Lake Forest College
 Lawrence University
 Luther College
 Monmouth College (Illinois)
 Ripon College

AQ - Regular Season

Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference (9)

Aurora University
 Benedictine University (Illinois)
 Concordia University Chicago
 Concordia University Wisconsin
 Eureka College (affiliate member)

Lakeland University
 Rockford University
 St. Norbert College
 Wisconsin Lutheran College

AQ - Regular Season

REGION VI

Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (10)

Augsburg University	Hamline University
Bethel University (Minnesota)	Macalester College
Carleton College	Saint John's University (Minnesota)
Concordia College, Moorhead	St. Olaf College
Gustavus Adolphus College	The College of St. Scholastica

AQ - Regular Season

Northwest Conference (8)

George Fox University	Pacific University (Oregon)
Lewis & Clark College	University of Puget Sound
Linfield University	Whitworth University
Pacific Lutheran University	Willamette University

AQ - Regular Season

Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (8)

^Azusa Pacific University (reclassifying 2028-29)	University of La Verne
California Lutheran University	Pomona-Pitzer Colleges
Chapman University	University of Redlands
Claremont McKenna-Harvey Mudd-Scripps Colleges	Whitter College

AQ - Regular Season

Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (6)

Crown College (Minnesota)	University of Minnesota, Morris
#Greenville University (affiliate member)	#University of Northwestern-St. Paul
Martin Luther College	Westminster College (Missouri) (affiliate member)

AQ - Regular Season

Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (8)

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire	University of Wisconsin-River Falls
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse	University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh	University of Wisconsin-Stout
University of Wisconsin-Platteville	University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

AQ - Regular Season

* Not Eligible for Championship - Provisional.
^ Not Eligible for Championship - Reclassify.
Competes in the National Christian College Athletic Association.

Appendix E • Strength of Schedule Calculation



NCAA POWER INDEX

DIII Football

NPI WEIGHTS					
Win%/SOS	H/A Win/Loss	QWB	QWB Multiplier	Overtime	Minimum Wins
40/60	1.1/0.9	54.00	.250	100/0	5.0

Rationale.

- Winning Percentage/Strength of Schedule.**
 The committee set the Win%/SOS dial to 40/60 to balance the strength of win percentage and strength of schedule. With a significant number of undefeated teams annually, this weight balances strong scheduling with a high number of wins.
- Home/Away – Win/Loss Weights.**
 The committee valued data that proves it is more difficult to win games played as the visiting team vs. games played at home and elected to use a 1.1 /0.9 to reward those wins.
- Quality Win Base.**
 The committee set the QWB at 54.00 with the intent of the setting resulting near or equal to the number of ranked teams the committee evaluated during regional rankings, which is roughly 20% of sponsoring teams. This also gives the committee a manageable number of teams competitive teams in the membership (around 100).
- Quality Win Base Multiplier.**
 The committee settled on a QWB multiplier of .250 to encourage teams to schedule the most competitive teams while also not penalizing teams that play a low number of non-conference games.
- Overtime Weight.**
 The committee values an overtime win the same as a win in regulation time and did not place additional weight to the overtime metric.
- Minimum Wins.**
 The committee set the dial to 5 wins. The committee experimented with multiple minimum wins numbers and noticed a majority of teams near the at-large cut line needed to keep 5 or more wins in order to have enough data to evaluate and count. Also, they discussed 5 was the appropriate number to allow some teams to drop a game based on the strength of the bottom of their conference.

Resources.

- [NPI Frequently Asked Questions and Reference Guide.](#)
- [NPI Webinar - NCAA DIII Football](#)