



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III FOOTBALL COMMITTEE
APRIL 22, 2026, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

• **Automatic qualification.**

- a. Recommendation. Approve the following 29 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 championship: American Rivers Conference, American Southwest Conference, Centennial Conference, Collegiate Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin, Commonwealth Coast Football, Empire 8, Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference, Landmark Conference, Liberty League, Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association, Middle Atlantic Conference, Midwest Conference, Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, New England Small College Athletic Conference, New England Women's & Men's Athletic Conference, New Jersey Athletic Conference, North Coast Athletic Conference, Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference, Northwest Conference, Ohio Athletic Conference, Old Dominion Athletic Conference, Presidents' Athletic Conference, Southern Athletic Association, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, Upper Midwest Athletic Conference, USA South Athletic Conference, Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

The anticipated pool allocations are as follows with the addition of the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference: Automatic Qualifier – 29; At-Large – 11.

- b. Effective date. Immediately.

- c. Rationale. All recommended conferences meet the criteria for automatic qualification eligibility.

- d. Estimated budget impact. None.

- e. Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Welcome and introductions.** The videoconference participants introduced themselves and welcomed new committee members.

- 2. Automatic qualifiers.** The committee reviewed an updated list of the automatic qualifiers and new information the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference provided for its bid to receive an

automatic qualifier for the 2026 championship. The committee noted concerns about conferences accepting affiliate members that do not intend to compete against conference opponents throughout the regular season to only achieve earning an automatic qualifier in the conference postseason.

- 3. Coach-to-player communication.** The committee reviewed language for coach-to-player communication best practices and policies for the 2026 championship.

Committee Chair: John Snell, Baldwin Wallace University, Ohio Athletic Conference
Staff Liaison: J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances

Division III Football Committee April 22, 2026, Videoconference
Attendees:
Keith Buckley, Pacific University (Oregon).
Portia Hoeg, Centennial Conference.
Hunter Sims, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.
John Snell, Baldwin Wallace University.
Michael Zapolski, Augustana College (Illinois).
Absentees:
Michael Cebrosky, King's College (Pennsylvania).
Guests in Attendance:
Chad E. Eisele, Hampden-Sydney College.
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:
J.P. Williams.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
CJ Sowards.