



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III FOOTBALL COMMITTEE
AUGUST 21, 2023, VIDEOCONFERENCE

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. Championship Bracket increase.

- (1) Recommendation. To expand the Division III football championship bracket from 32 to 40 teams.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. The committee recommends adding eight pool C teams to the bracket to increase the field to 40 teams. With declining Pool C (at-large) berths, the committee addressed championship bracket expansion to provide additional championship opportunities for student-athletes. In 2023-24, the 32 pool allocations will be divided 28 automatic qualifiers, zero pool B qualifiers and four at-large qualifiers. The proposed format will add eight at-large teams to the bracket, resulting in an additional weekend to the playoff tournament (from five weekends to six weekends). The committee elected using the current selections date formula, keeping the second round games over Thanksgiving weekend. The additional round will extend the playoff tournament into January to ensure the football membership would not need to return football student-athletes back to campus a week earlier in August, adding preseason costs for each football-playing institution in the division. The timeline also guarantees conference bye weeks would remain intact.

The first round format will include 16 teams competing with 24 teams receiving byes. Teams advancing from the first round will play the highest regionally ranked teams remaining when not in conflict with the divisional bracketing principles. The second and third round formula will remain status quo.

Following the semi-final round, student-athletes will travel home for the holidays and return to campus prior to departing to the championship site.

To reduce the unnecessary travel for student-athletes to return to their hometowns following the championship game and to stay on campus for the start of second semester following the championship game, the championship game (Stagg Bowl) would be played the first full week in January, or potentially the first weekend in

January if New Years day is on a Monday or Tuesday. The committee and staff finalized discussions with the 2024 and 2025 hosts to begin the updated format as early as the 2024-25 season.

(4) Estimated budget impact.

| | Transportation | Per Diem | Total |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Adding 8 teams | \$325,671 | \$163,200 | \$488,871 |

| | Game Expenses | Site Rep Expenses | Officiating expenses | Signage/Awards | Total |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------|
| Adding 8 teams | \$80,800 | \$3,200 | \$5,750 | \$5,515 | \$95,272 |

An estimated \$585,000 will be budgeted for the addition of eight teams, which include team travel & per diem, host game expenses, awards/signage and game personnel.

(5) Student-athlete impact. The committee is confident that having experiences at predetermined final site and nonpredetermined final site will provide the best guidance for an informed decision for the student-athlete experience at this championship.

Committee Chair: JJ Nekoloff, Old Dominion Athletic Conference.

Staff Liaison(s): J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.

| NCAA Division III Football Committee August 21, 2023, Videoconference | |
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| Attendees: | |
| Jason Imperati, Lawrence University. | |
| Matt Moore, University of Northwestern, St. Paul. | |
| J.J. Nekoloff, Old Dominion Athletic Conference. | |
| John Snell, Baldwin Wallace University. | |

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| Absentees: |
| John Davis, Misericordia University. |
| Blaise Faggiano, Utica College. |
| Guests in Attendance: |
| Hunter Simms, Hardin-Simmons University. |
| NCAA Staff Support in Attendance: |
| J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances. |
| Jonathan Youngblood, Championships and Alliances. |
| Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance: |
| None. |