



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III FOOTBALL COMMITTEE
JANUARY 22-23, 2024, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- **None.**

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Automatic qualification.**

- (1) Recommendation. That the following 28 conferences be approved for automatic qualification for the 2024 championship: American Rivers Conference, American Southwest Conference, Centennial Conference, Collegiate Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin, Commonwealth Coast Football, Eastern Collegiate Football Conference, 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 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: Pool A – 28; Pool B – 0; Pool C – 4.

- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. All recommended conferences meet the criteria for automatic qualification eligibility.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Minutes from 2023 annual meeting.** Minutes from the committee's January 2023 annual meeting were approved as submitted.

2. **Governance update.** Governance staff discussed topics related to Division III football, including current financial status, budget and webcasting updates from the 2023 NCAA Convention.
3. **Legislative review.** AMA staff discussed action and informational items from 2023-24, particularly those applicable to Division III football.
4. **2023 Championship review.**
 - a. **Championship travel.** NCAA travel and insurance staff joined the committee to discuss results from the pilot program involving charter flights, specifically relating to budget ramifications dependent on available seats purchased at a fixed ticket cost. NCAA travel staff reported that pilot program results were positive for year one and staff will continue to monitor results through year two to determine if the program can be implemented permanently.
 - b. **Championship site.** The City of Salem staff reviewed topics related to the 2023 championship game, noting that the team banquets are well received and will continue in 2024.
 - c. **Future hosts.** The committee discussed the 2024 and 2025 championship site visit timelines for Houston, TX, and Canton, OH, respectively. The group discussed potential date changes for future hosts if the recommendation to increase the bracket from 32 teams to 40 is approved.
 - d. **Broadcasts.** NCAA staff discussed television ratings, noting that overall, the championship game's rating was up from the previous year. The committee discussed suitable kickoff dates and times and again settled on Friday night as the desired time for the championship game. Staff will work with the television partner and relay the preferred time for the championship and will provide more information to the committee if needed.
 - e. **Schedule.** The committee discussed changing the event schedule, possibly eliminating the team banquet in favor of a less formal activity with team meals that would allow teams to interact and build camaraderie. Staff will explore options during the summer site visit.
7. **Automatic qualification.** The committee reviewed automatic qualification and will finalize AQ and at-large ratios during its summer videoconference.
8. **Bracket expansion.** The committee discussed its recommendation of adding eight Pool C teams to the bracket to increase the field to 40 teams. As discussed at the 2022-23 annual meeting, 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 again be composed of 28 Pool A qualifiers, zero Pool B qualifiers and four Pool C qualifiers. The proposed format would add eight at-large teams to the bracket, resulting in an additional weekend to the tournament (from five weekends to six). The committee prefers using the current selection date formula, keeping the second-round games over Thanksgiving weekend. The additional round would extend the tournament into January to ensure the football membership would not need to bring football student-athletes back to campus a week earlier in August, thus 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 would include 16 teams competing with 24 teams receiving byes. Teams advancing from the first round would play the highest regionally ranked teams remaining when not in conflict with the divisional bracketing principles. The second- and third-round formulas would remain status quo.

Following the semifinals, student-athletes would 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 home following the championship game and 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 when New Year's Day is on a Sunday, 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.

9. **Selection criteria.** The committee discussed topics related to selection criteria database (Pairwise/NPI) modifications including nonconference strength of schedule, win/loss percentage and other dials used to calibrate an accurate reading. Staff updated the committee regarding a timeline for the database to be rolled out to the membership. The committee was informed that the championships staff and the Division III Championships Committee were reviewing alternate selection criteria/process models as well.
10. **Preliminary rounds.** The committee looks to improve student-athlete experiences by maintaining neutrality during preliminary-round games.
11. **Bench Size.** The committee discussed increasing bench size from 78 to 85. Following the Division III Championships Committee's recommendation to allow additional student-athletes beyond those included in the squad size to dress, the committee received feedback that even with the increase, institutions were still leaving team members at home. Costs would be covered by institutions if they elected to bring additional team members.
12. **2024 American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) convention.** The AFCA and staff reviewed issues related to the selection criteria database recommendation and bracket expansion.

13. **Rules.** The committee discussed playing rules and feedback to pass along to the NCAA Football Rules Committee for its upcoming session. The committee was informed that the rules committee plans to schedule a videoconference to discuss the federated timing rules and Division I and II game duration data from the past year and how the new timing rules might affect Division III programs.
14. **Officiating.** The coordinator of Division III football officials discussed the state of Division III football officiating and improvements to be made through the evaluation process. The committee discussed officials' game fees. The committee again discussed using an alternate official from the officiating crew's home league. Currently, the alternate comes from the host league and is only paid a game fee and is not reimbursed for travel or meals.
15. **Committee chair appointment.** The committee elected John Snell, associate athletics director at Baldwin Wallace University, as committee chair. Mr. Snell's knowledge and experience as an administrator and football coach will provide strong direction and properly represent the membership as committee chair.
16. **Annual meeting dates.** The committee tentatively agreed to conduct its 2025 annual meeting January 25-26 in Indianapolis.

Committee Chair: Matt Moore, University of Northwestern, St. Paul.
Staff Liaison(s): J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.

Division III Football Committee January 22-23, 2024, Meeting	
Attendees:	
John Davis, Misericordia University.	
Blaise Faggiano, Utica College (via videoconference).	
Jason Imperati, Lawrence University.	
Matt Moore, University of Northwestern, St. Paul.	
Hunter Sims, Howard Payne University.	
John Snell, Baldwin Wallace University.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Mark Baltz, NCAA Division DIII Football Coordinator of Officials.	
Carey Harveycutter, City of Salem, VA.	
John Shaner, City of Salem, VA.	
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:	
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.	

Jonathan Youngblood, Championships and Alliances.

Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:

Nate Flannery, Bill Regan.
