



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS COMMITTEE  
JUNE 5-6, 2023, ANNUAL MEETING**

**PLEASE SEE THE REPORT ITEMS FROM THE AUGUST MEETING OF THE  
COMPETITION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (COC) AS THEY PERTAIN TO THE ACTION  
ITEMS BELOW IN RED.**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Reimbursement for preliminary rounds.** The committee requests that institutions receive reimbursement for preliminary rounds. (See Action Item 2-a.)
2. **Increase to 18 competing student-athletes.** As roster sizes continue to grow, the committee recommends increasing the number of allowable competing athletes from 15 to 18. (See Action Item 2-b.)
3. **Staggered event start.** To allow for improved broadcast and in-venue fan viewership, the committee will implement a staggered event start during competition, which adds only approximately 10 minutes to the overall length of the meet. (See Informational Item 12.)

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **Legislative items.**

- None.

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

a. **Reimbursement for preliminary rounds.**

- (1) Recommendation. That institutions are reimbursed for competing in the preliminary rounds.
- (2) Effective date. 2024-25 season.
- (3) Rationale. Currently, teams participating in preliminary rounds do not receive reimbursement for travel. Providing reimbursement for expenses would enhance the travel experience for student-athletes. Additionally, it would be a fair accommodation for gymnastics compared to other sports that do receive some reimbursement for preliminary rounds. The committee emphasizes that while women's gymnastics is considered an individual sport, as identified by the awarding of financial aid under Bylaw 15, it in fact functions more like a team sport that has additional individual competitors. Three out of the five championship days involve team competition only.

The championship generated revenue of \$220,433.89 forwarded to the NCAA and the committee believes this is a reasonable rationale for allocating additional funds to team travel at the preliminary rounds.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$1,098,000 to reimburse all participants for regional travel and per diem. Currently for individual sports, a flat number of per diem days is paid to each team and individual, regardless of how long they remain in the tournament. Therefore, a team eliminated in the first round will be paid the same number of days per diem as teams that make it all the way through the regional final. The Committee recommends this policy be amended to reimburse teams based on the number of days they remain in the championship.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Reimbursement would enable teams to provide an elevated travel experience for their student-athletes. It also provides greater equity across the institutions qualifying to the championship because it would alleviate the financial impact for schools that only qualify to the regional rounds where they pay out-of-pocket expenses. With reimbursement only provided to teams at the finals site, financial assistance is often limited to only the most competitive and highest-ranked teams.

**Reimbursement for preliminary rounds.** The COC agreed to table the request from the women's gymnastics committee to reimburse institutions that compete in the preliminary rounds (currently, participants in preliminary rounds do not receive reimbursement for travel). The COC noted that this would not be consistent with the current policy for individual/team sports, and because of the significant budget impact it should be tabled for discussion with other requests for the 2024-25 budget cycle.

**b. Increase to 18 competing athletes.**

- (1) Recommendation. Increase the number of allowable competing athletes from 15 to 18, while keeping the number of athletes reimbursed in the travel party at 15.
- (2) Effective date. 2023-24 season.
- (3) Rationale. This recommendation brought forth from the coaches association would enable teams to include athletes who are competing in their lineup throughout the regular season to also be included in lineup at the championship. Roster sizes have continued to increase over recent years. From 2017 to 2022 the average team size has grown from 17.8 to 20.6 across Division I, from 18.7 to 22 across Division II, and from 20.6 to 22.6 across Division III. Increasing the number of allowable competing athletes is consistent with this trend.

A maximum of 18 competing student-athletes aligns with the policy applied in the Southeastern, Big Ten, Mid-American and Atlantic Coast Conferences. Other conferences do not have a limit on the number of competing athletes, including the Midwest Independent, Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic, and National Collegiate Gymnastics Association East. Conferences including the Big 12 and Mountain Pacific Sports Federation allow 15 competing athletes because they align their number with the NCAA policy.

With this change, the corral size will remain at 25 individuals. Teams will have the flexibility to select their 25 so long as no more than 18 individuals are designated as competing athletes. The committee emphasizes that this does not include an increase of the reimbursable travel party size, which will remain at 15 athletes. Teams will continue to have the option to purchase additional awards after the championship.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The limit of 15 competing student-athletes has resulted in student-athletes being stripped of an opportunity to compete in/on an event/apparatus that they have consistently competed throughout the regular season. This change would provide more student-athletes with the opportunity to compete in the championship. It will also enable coaches to make fair and safe decisions about the athletes selected to compete in the lineup.

**Increase to 18 competing athletes.** The COC also agreed to table the sport committee's request to increase the squad size from 15 to 18 student-athletes. The COC has committed to reviewing squad sizes across all sports every two years, with the next opportunity coming in January 2024. Accordingly, the COC agreed to revisit the matter at that time, noting that if there is no budget impact for the requested increase (as the sport committee reasons, since institutions would be responsible for paying for the three additional student-athletes) it could be implemented for the 2024 championships if supported. However, if the recommendation should warrant a budget increase, it would need to be considered with 2024-25 budget requests.

**c. Elect coach as 2023-24 committee chair.**

- (1) Recommendation. To elect Guard Young, head coach at Brigham Young University, as committee chair for the coming year. Should BYU qualify to the national championship, Cindy Harris, Senior Associate Athletics Director at Illinois State University will serve as chair during competition.
- (2) Effective date. 2023-24 season.

- (3) Rationale. The committee recognized the benefit of a coach serving in a leadership role the past two years as Kasey Crawford, head coach at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, served as the chair. As a current coach, Kasey was capable of answering questions and providing information to NCAA staff and the committee effectively and efficiently. The committee would like to maintain this communication and administrators recognized that they may not be capable of providing the same insight.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. A coach is well-suited to provide insight into the best interests of the student-athletes who will therefore benefit from the coach's service as chair of the committee.

**Waiver to allow head coach as chair.** The COC approved a waiver to allow Guard Young, head coach at Brigham Young University, to serve as committee chair for the coming year. (Note: Should Brigham Young qualify to the national championship, committee member Cindy Harris, senior associate athletics director at Illinois State University, will serve as chair during competition.)

#### INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Approval of 2022 meeting report.** The committee approved the 2022 report.
- 2. 2023 women's gymnastics playing rules proposals.** The committee reviewed the proposals included in the rules report.
- 3. Review of Women's Collegiate Gymnastics Association (WCGA) proposals.** The Committee discussed each of the proposals the WCGA approved. Proposals that require approval by the Competition Oversight Committee are included in this report as Action Items 2-a through 2-c above.
- 4. Review of the selection process and timeline.** The committee reviewed the selection process and timeline for the championships and recommended clarifying the language in the selection criteria, including indicating that the current criteria may be considered in no particular order, that each team's NQS at the time of selections will be maintained throughout the championship for seeding purposes, and separating the criteria for how teams are seeded and how individuals are seeded. Further, the committee intends to include an example of bracket seeding in the selections section of the pre-championships manual.
- 5. Review score verification coordinators and responsibilities.** The committee agreed that the updated score verification coordinator assignment and process worked well this year. Each score verifier was held accountable for reviewing scores within their respective region and communicated any questions or concerns to the championship manager. There were no

complaints from teams about the integrity of the score verification system this year as there were last year.

6. **Review AAI equipment for championship.** The Pro-Elite (Birch) floor (46' x 46') will be added to the equipment list as optional for regionals and required at nationals. The new floor maintains a flatter and stronger surface, reduces warping and breakage, and provides a balance between impact and rebound for the gymnast. The floor includes corner safety pads and mitigates the risk of injury by reducing "gaps" in the floor foam which create inconsistent bounce for the gymnast.
7. **Review of Road to Nationals and the services provided.** The committee was satisfied with the services provided by the Road to Nationals scoring system and website.
8. **Review of Beavercreek Scoring System.** The committee expressed a desire to explore other scoring system options for the championships. In particular, the committee and ESPN would prefer to use a system that is digital without the need for paper and human runners. The committee met with Virtius, a new scoring system company, and would also like to explore options provided by ProScore.
9. **Review of 2023 Championships.**
  - a. **Competitor numbers.** The committee expressed satisfaction and received positive feedback regarding the removal of competitor numbers as adhesives on leotards and instead using competitor numbers as signage. The plan is to add competitor last names to the signage for 2024 so teams can more accurately select the number to display and so athletes can take the signage as a keepsake.
  - b. **Committee liaisons.** Assigning a committee member to a championship team at the finals site to serve as a liaison for questions and assistance was well-received by the committee and coaches.
  - c. **Regional hotels.** By committee request, OnLocation has agreed to block rooms for an additional two teams and six individuals per regional site that wish to stay on site for additional nights regardless of whether they qualify. This will alleviate the financial burden of teams who may otherwise be forced to rebook same- or next-day flights. The committee supports a review of the current championship-wide penalty policy for teams that opt out of staying at the assigned hotel.
10. **Review of 2023 championship manuals.** The committee will assist in reviewing manual language to ensure consistency and clarity of information.
11. **Preview of the 2024 regional host sites.** The committee acknowledged the future regional sites of Arkansas, California, Florida, and Michigan.

**12. Discussion and plans for the 2024 championship.** To accommodate a reasonable request from ESPN for improved broadcast viewership, the committee intends to move the semifinals sessions start times closer together so there is only 90 minutes between the end of session one and the beginning of session two. To accommodate this change flooring will be set up in a back gym in the arena for open stretch. This initial update has been communicated with hosts and AAI Equipment.

To allow for improved broadcast and in-venue fan viewership, the committee will implement a staggered event start during competition. Competitors on vault and beam will begin at the same time and be the only two individuals competing in the arena. When both are finished, competitors on bars and floor will begin. This will extend the length of the meet by approximately 10 minutes. Both the committee and ESPN agree this will be well-received by teams and fans.

Due to a few equipment shortfalls and required adjustments at regionals, the committee will require that an equipment representative conduct an inspection at each regional site prior to the championship week. AAI has offered to send representatives to do so.

To enhance the formality and prestige of the regional championship, hosts will be asked to provide volunteer judges, rather than local volunteers or university staff, to serve as flag judges and timers. The judges association has agreed to work with the hosts to assign these individuals.

The committee has requested the hosts conduct a buyout with Dickies Arena so that teams may bring their own food into the arena instead of being required to use the on-site caterer.

The committee intends to host the banquet in the same location as 2023 and add new enhancements.

The committee brainstormed new ideas including recognizing the championship anniversary team, providing "10.0" signage at regionals, doing a red carpet entrance for student-athletes, and adding an in-venue DJ.

To alleviate the number of buses leaving a hotel at the same time at nationals, the committee will assign teams to each hotel based on their assigned competition session.

The committee has requested police escorts for team buses to the arena. The host will review this request and its affordability.

The committee would like to name the championship preliminary rounds as Round One, Round Two, Super 16, and name the championship final rounds as Great Eight and Four on the Floor. NCAA staff will take the recommendation to the NCAA branding staff for next steps.

*Committee Chair:* Kasey Crawford, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference  
*Staff Liaison(s):* Noël Couch, Championships and Alliances  
 Linda Godby, Championships and Alliances

<b>NCAA Women's Gymnastics Committee June 5-6, 2023, Annual Meeting</b>
<b>Attendees:</b>
Kasey Crawford, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.
Cindy Harris, Illinois State University.
Erin Kido, Eastern Michigan University.
Jeff Konya, San Jose State University.
Lauren Procopio, University of Pennsylvania.
Jenny Rowland, University of Florida.
Guard Young, Brigham Young University.
<b>Absentees:</b>
None.
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>
Heath Aucoin, Fort Worth Sports Commission.
Catherine "Cookie" Batsche, National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges President.
Chrystal Chollet-Norton, Rules Interpreter.
Lois Colburn, National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges National Collegiate Assigner.
Ken Cysewski, AAI.
Jannette Doucette, Incoming Rules Interpreter.
Jason Fredericks, Road to Nationals.
Melanie Hall, Women's Collegiate Gymnastics Association President.
Kate Jackson, ESPN.
Preston Kirk, Knight Eady.
Alex Pintchouk, Virtius.
Dan Margulis, ESPN.
Daniel Smith, Knight Eady.
Ambert Yeung, Virtius
<b>NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support if subcommittee) in Attendance:</b>
Noël Couch, Championships and Alliances.
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>
Ben Brownlee, Playing Rules and Officiating.
Natalie Steger, ESPN/Broadcast.