



# ***PRECHAMPIONSHIP 2025-26 MANUAL***

# NCAA General Administrative Guidelines

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# Section 1 • Introduction

During the 2025-26 academic year, the Association will sponsor 92 national championships – 43 for men, 47 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, eight 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 92 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.

**Non-predetermined 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

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#### 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

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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

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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](https://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: Bylaws 12.5.4, 31.1.7 and 31.1.8 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw 17.1.10 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Bylaw 12.5.3 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:

1. 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

2. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including numbered racing bibs and warmups) 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 2-1/4 square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform and all other items of apparel shall not bear a design element similar to the manufacturer's trademark/logo that is in addition to another trademark/logo that is contrary to the size restriction.

## 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 • Religious Conflicts

*[Reference: Bylaws 31.1.4.1 and 31.1.4.2 in the NCAA Division I 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 on or before Sept. 1 of each academic year in order for it or one of its student-athletes to be excused from competing on that day. The championship schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate that institution. *(Adopted: 4/22/98, Revised: 8/11/98, 10/28/99, 5/2/13)*

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

## Section 11 • Team Replacement Policy

Division I developed a team replacement policy considering the possibility of unforeseen circumstances impacting championship fields. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the terms set forth in the policy document available [here](#) when, despite best efforts, a team within the championship field is impeded or hindered from participating in the championship for reasons beyond its control.

# Division I Men's Ice Hockey

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# Section 1 • General Administration

## Section 1•1 NCAA Tournament Operations Staff Contact Information

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**Phil Pierce** (Media Coordinator)

Assistant Director, Championships and Alliances  
P.O. Box 6222 / Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222  
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## Section 1•2 Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship Subcommittee

Current members of the committee are:

**WEST REGION (CCHA)****Luke Strand**

Head Men's Ice Hockey Coach  
Minnesota State University, Mankato

**WEST REGION (BIG TEN)****Josh Richelew**

Sport Administrator  
University of Michigan

**EAST REGION (HOCKEY EAST)****Blake James**

Director of Athletics  
Boston College

**ATLANTIC REGION (ATLANTIC HOCKEY)****Rick Gotkin**

Head Men's Ice Hockey Coach  
Mercyhurst University

**WEST REGION (NCHC)****Scott Sandelin**

Head Men's Ice Hockey Coach  
University of Minnesota Duluth

**EAST REGION (ECAC HOCKEY)****Tim Troville, chair**

Senior Associate Director of Athletics  
Harvard University

Frank D. Cole is the NCAA national officiating coordinator for ice hockey, and Jeff Fulton is the NCAA secretary-rules editor.

## Section 1•3 Important Dates

<b>Sunday, March 22</b>	Championship selections and pairings announced, 7 p.m. Eastern time (ESPNU HD).
<b>Monday, March 23</b>	Administrative conference calls with 16 participating teams. Albany Regional (Albany, NY) Loveland Regional (Loveland, CO) Sioux Falls Regional (Sioux Falls, SD) Worcester Regional (Worcester, MA)
<b>Thursday, March 26</b>	TBD regionals first rounds.
<b>Friday, March 27</b>	TBD regionals first rounds.
<b>Saturday, March 28</b>	TBD regional finals.
<b>Sunday, March 29</b>	TBD regional finals.
<b>Tuesday, March 31</b>	Administrative conference call with four semifinal teams.
<b>Thursday, April 9</b>	National semifinals (Las Vegas).
<b>Saturday, April 11</b>	National championship game (Las Vegas).

### CHAMPIONSHIP DATES

<b>Albany Regional (March TBD)</b>	MVP Arena
<b>Loveland Regional (March TBD)</b>	Blue Arena
<b>Sioux Falls Regional (March TBD)</b>	Denny Sanford PREMIER Center
<b>Worcester Regional (March TBD)</b>	DCU Center
<b>2026 Men's Frozen Four (April 9 and 11)</b>	T Mobile Arena

### DATE FORMULA

<b>Regionals (4)</b>	Thursday/Saturday or Friday/Sunday, two weeks before Frozen Four
<b>Frozen Four</b>	Thursday and Saturday after the first Sunday in April

### FUTURE DATES

#### 2027

<b>Regionals (March 25-28)</b>	Bridgeport, CT; Fargo, ND; Loveland, CO; and Springfield, MA
<b>Men's Frozen Four (April 8 and 10)</b>	Capitol One Arena, Washington, DC

#### 2028

<b>Regionals (March 23-26)</b>	Allentown, PA; Fargo, ND; Rochester, NY; and Sioux Falls, SD
<b>Men's Frozen Four (April 6 and 8)</b>	United Center, Chicago, IL

## Section 1•4 Equipment

NCAA Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules shall be followed.

Section 1•5 Rules

NCAA Men’s and Women’s Ice Hockey Rules shall be followed.

OFFICIATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 1. Must have participated in an NCAA conference clinic or preseason meeting.
- 2. Must be recommended by a Division I conference.
- 3. Form must go to the conference’s representative on the committee as well as the national coordinator.
- 4. It is highly recommended that officials work a minimum of 20 Division I games at the position for which they are recommended (referee or linesman).
- 5. Conference must confirm that all recommended officials are physically capable to officiate.
- 6. Eighteen (18) league games, or working quarterfinal or beyond in the conference format, consider an official to be a representative from that league. League games are between two teams in the same league. Conference championships and nonconference games assigned by a league do not count toward this number.
- 7. All officials must agree to and pass an NCAA background check.
- 8. All officials must complete the online NCAA rules exam.
- 9. All officials must complete the online NCAA rules and officiating clinic.

TIMELINE

September/October	Conference/NCAA clinics.
Sept. 1	RefQuest+ hub opens.
Nov. 1	Deadline for NCAA Background Check Form to be received at NCAA. Deadline to complete NCAA online clinic and rules test.
Jan. 16	Initial recommendations due from conferences to NCAA national coordinator and staff liaison.
Feb. 20	Final recommendations due from conferences to NCAA national coordinator and staff liaison.
March 22	Teams selected for championship; national coordinator submits recommendations to committee.
March 22	Bracket publicly announced; national coordinator notifies coordinators and officials of selections.
March 23	National coordinator confirms travel arrangements have been made and all officials have received documents with instructions for championship.
March 26-29	Division I regionals.
March 31	Men’s Frozen Four recommendations submitted to Division I committee; officials notified of assignment by national coordinator when approved.
April 8	Officials must arrive at Men’s Frozen Four site by 2 p.m. local time for pretournament meeting.
April 9 and 11	Men’s Frozen Four.

**Officials.** Officials for all championship competition are selected by the Ice Hockey Committee based on recommendations submitted by the NCAA national ice hockey coordinator of officials and NCAA conferences/associations.

**Policies.** A sports committee or games committee may not require membership in any specific officials association as a prerequisite for selection to officiate in an NCAA meet or tournament. Officials shall be selected and assigned by the sports committee or games committee, which shall ensure that officials adhere to the Association’s policies relating to gambling activities and drug and alcohol use. Furthermore, officials must conduct themselves in a manner befitting intercollegiate athletics. Failure to do so may result in termination of the officiating assignment.

**Background checks.** All officials must complete and pass the NCAA background check to be considered for assignment.

**Selection and assignment of officials.** Selection and assignment of officials for all tournament games will be made by the NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee in accordance with the following policies and procedures:

1. NCAA Division I conferences that sponsor ice hockey will be asked to recommend referees and linesmen believed to be capable of officiating in the NCAA tournament. All recommendations will be considered by the committee without bias; however, the committee will be the final decision-making authority as to the selection and assignment of officials for all NCAA tournament games.
2. Division I supervisors of officials (or the conference administrator responsible for ice hockey) and conference game officials are required to participate in the NCAA rules clinics conducted annually in the fall. These clinics are generally in conjunction with the conference clinics. [Note: Failure to comply with this requirement could subject a conference, institution or individual to one or more of the following: (a) no officiating assignment(s) in the NCAA tournament; (b) maximum assessment of \$500 per offense; and (c) withdrawal of automatic qualification from the involved conference, or, for independent institutions, possibly not being considered for at-large selection.]
3. The two-referee, two-linesman system shall be used in all NCAA competition. A conference that does not use this system during regular-season and conference tournament competition shall not have its officials selected for NCAA contests, unless approved previously by the NCAA Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules Committee, and the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee. Neutral conference officials will be assigned by the committee. Linesmen will be joined by conference. Referees from a neutral conference and linesmen from another neutral conference may be assigned to a game.
4. No official shall be assigned to any session unless the official agrees to refrain from entering into any officiating commitment the day before the tournament game date. The official also must agree to be at the site of the game by 4 p.m. the afternoon before the competition, remain in the immediate vicinity and be readily available to the committee representative until the completion of the assignment(s) at that site. One official from each crew must contact the Ice Hockey Committee representative immediately upon arrival and notify the representative in case of any unforeseen delay. It may be necessary for officials to travel to more than one regional in the same tournament.
5. Participating teams shall not be advised of the officials assigned to their competition until 90 minutes before the game. Accordingly, officials shall not be contacted by or make contact with the host institution or any of its representatives; all contact shall be through and with the Ice Hockey Committee representative staffing the competition or the national coordinator of officials.
6. Officials shall be responsible for making their own transportation arrangements to the site of competition and for their local ground transportation while at the site. If air transportation is used, the official must make such arrangements through the NCAA travel service, Short's Travel Management (866-821-8547). Airport parking is considered part of the officials' per diem. Parking at the hotel on-site, if needed, will be reimbursed. The Ice Hockey Committee representative shall advise officials of hotel accommodations arranged by the NCAA, and officials shall notify the representative when they arrive at the site or of any unforeseen delay in arrival. The NCAA will establish a master account with the hotel to which officials' rooms, tax and parking (if applicable) shall be charged.
7. The Ice Hockey Committee representative shall meet with the officials upon their arrival to review their responsibilities the night before competition.
8. Officials' fees and expenses shall be as follows: Referees shall receive a fee of \$565 per game (\$680 for Frozen Four); linesmen will be provided with a fee of \$285 per game (\$405 for Frozen Four). The alternate referee shall receive a fee of \$250 per game (\$270 for Frozen Four) and alternate linesmen shall receive a fee of \$135 per game (\$180 for Frozen Four). The video replay official shall receive a fee of \$160 per game (\$165 for Frozen Four). In addition, officials for the championship may claim actual transportation expenses, but they may not exceed jet coach fare or the approved NCAA rate per mile. The Video Ice Level Coordinator shall receive a fee of \$150 per game.
9. A minimum of two tickets shall be made available for officials to purchase for any tournament session in which they officiate.
10. The alternate official shall be in uniform. If transportation and housing are required, the alternate officials shall be reimbursed according to the regular tournament formula for expenses. If the alternate official officiates a game, the fee will be the same as for the replaced official.

11. Game officials shall wear an NCAA patch on their uniforms while officiating in NCAA tournament play. Conference or other association patches are not permitted.
12. Officials shall be housed in separate quarters from teams and/or their followers, and shall not fraternize or socialize with them.
13. All officials shall arrive at the game site two hours before faceoff time.
14. Officials will not participate in any tournament-related activities before, during or after the game, except officiating the contest.

**Evaluation of officials.** At each regional site, evaluations will be submitted by the NCAA evaluator, committee members and liaisons (if applicable). After each game, the head evaluator will meet with the game officials and share a critique of the performance. This will be based on the evaluation form developed by the NCAA.

Considering these evaluations and conference neutrality, the committee member, liaison and evaluator on site will assign officials for the next day's competition at the regional site. The liaison and evaluator will communicate the decision as soon as possible to the officials.

For Frozen Four selections, all evaluations during the regional round will be considered. The national coordinator will make recommendations for assignment to the committee based on evaluations and potential conference matchups at the Frozen Four. The committee will hold a conference call to discuss these recommendations and make adjustments as the committee sees fit. Officials again will be notified as soon as possible of their assignment.

## Section 1•6 Uniforms

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Each participating institution should be prepared to bring both home and away uniforms to the site of the competition. The home team shall wear light or white jerseys.

### LOGOS

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

### Division I Additional Requirements

The logo restriction on student-athletes' apparel set forth in 12.5.4 shall apply during the NCAA championships to all personnel (e.g., coaches, trainers, managers) who are on the team bench for practices and games or who participate in news conferences. Also, the logo restriction on student-athletes' apparel as set forth in 12.5.4 shall apply to commercial logos on uniforms worn by band members, cheerleaders, dance team members and the institution's mascot during NCAA championship events.

# Section 2 • Determination of Championship Participation

## Section 2•1 Championship Format

NCAA member institutions that sponsor Division I men’s ice hockey are eligible for the Division I championship. The Division I championship will include 16 teams.

The championship playoff format involves four predetermined regional sites with four teams assigned to each site. Regional competition will be conducted March 26-29.

The four regional winners advance to the Men’s Frozen Four, which will be conducted April 9 (semifinals) and April 11 (final). The entire championship will use a single-elimination format.

### START TIMES

Game times for the regionals are:

<b>Albany</b>	March TBD: TBD Eastern time	March TBD: TBD Eastern time
<b>Loveland</b>	March TBD: TBD Central time	March TBD: TBD Central time
<b>Sioux Falls</b>	March TBD: TBD Central time	March TBD: TBD Central time
<b>Worcester</b>	March TBD: TBD Eastern time	March TBD: TBD Eastern time

All regional games will be broadcast live on an ESPN network (television and/or online).

**Regionals.** There shall be three hours, 30 minutes between the start times of the games. A game will not start before its originally scheduled time. There shall be a minimum of 53 minutes between each game.

**Semifinals.** There shall be three hours, 30 minutes between the start times of the games. A game will not start before its originally scheduled time. There shall be a minimum of 53 minutes between each game.

The national semifinals will start at TBD Eastern time (live on TBD), Thursday, April 9.

The national championship game (live on ESPN2 HD) will start at TBD Eastern time, Saturday, April 11.

Times and sequences of games are tentative and are subject to change by the NCAA.

### TRAVEL PARTY

Transportation expenses and per diem will be provided for an official travel party of 37. Please refer to the NCAA Travel Policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. Travel policies can be found on the NCAA website at [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org). The NCAA is not responsible for the expenses of persons beyond these limits.

Participating teams are limited to 19 skaters plus not more than three nor fewer than two goalies on the bench for competition. Participating teams are limited to a squad size of 24 eligible student-athletes. Replacements are permitted up to the starting time of the game; after the game begins, no replacements shall be permitted for any reason. The bench size is 28.

## Section 2•2 Results

The RPI will be posted on [ncaa.com](http://ncaa.com) beginning in mid-February.

## Section 2•3 Selection Information

**Selection Requirements.** To be considered during the at-large selection process, a team must have an overall won-lost record of .500 or better. Division I institutions that wish to participate in the Division I championship must schedule a minimum of 20 games against Division I opponents.

**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 3.2.4.5) 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.

### AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

The Division I Championships/Sports Management Cabinet approved one automatic berth each for the Atlantic Hockey Association, Big Ten Conference, Central Collegiate Hockey Association, ECAC Hockey, Hockey East Association and National Collegiate Hockey Conference. The committee will complete the bracket by selecting 10 at-large teams.

Institutions are encouraged to watch the selection announcement, Sunday, March 24.

*NOTE: Information regarding the broadcast will be available via [ncaa.com](http://ncaa.com).*

For information regarding the geographical boundaries of the East and West regions, please refer to [Appendix B](#).

## Section 2•4 Selection Criteria

The following criteria shall be employed by a governing sports committee in selecting participants for NCAA championships competition [Bylaw 31.3.3; Criteria for Selection of Participants]:

- Won-lost record;
- Strength of schedule; and
- Eligibility and availability of student-athletes for NCAA championships.

In addition to Bylaw 31.3.3, the Men's Ice Hockey Committee has received approval from the Division I Competition Oversight Committee to consider the following criteria in the selection of at-large teams for the Men's Ice Hockey Championship (not necessarily in priority order):

- Rating Percentage Index (RPI) [win percentage (25%) and strength of schedule (75%)];
- Overtime won/lost weighting;
- Home/away weighting; and
- Quality wins bonus.

### SEEDING AND PAIRINGS

The following steps are taken during the selection meeting:

In setting up the tournament, the committee begins with a list of priorities to ensure a successful tournament on all fronts, including competitive equity, financial success and the likelihood of a playoff-type atmosphere at each regional site. For this model, the following is a basic set of priorities:

1. Once the six automatic qualifiers and 10 at-large teams are selected, the next step is to develop four groups from the committee's rankings of 1-16. The top four teams are No. 1 seeds and will be placed in the bracket so that if all four teams advance to the Men's Frozen Four, the No. 1 seed will play the No. 4 seed and the No. 2 seed will play the No. 3 seed in the semifinals. The next four are targeted as No. 2 seeds. The next four are No. 3 seeds and the last four are No. 4 seeds. The committee may adjust matchups within a band (i.e., 1 seeds = teams 1 - 4; 2 seeds = teams 5 - 8; 3 seeds = teams 9 - 12; and 4 seeds = teams 13 - 16) by no more than two spots when there is minimal separation in the Pairwise total, in order to create better attendance/atmosphere at a regional site.

2. Step two is to place the home teams. Host institutions that qualify will be placed at home.
3. Step three is to fill in the bracket so that first-round conference matchups are avoided, unless it corrupts the integrity of the bracket. If five or more teams from one conference are selected to the championship, then the integrity of the bracket may be protected (i.e., maintaining the pairing process according to seed will take priority over avoidance of first-round conference matchups). To complete each regional, the committee assigns one team from each of the remaining seeded groups so there is a No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 seed at each regional site.

*NOTE: The seeding and pairings criteria are subject to change per the policies of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee.*

## CONFERENCE CALL SCHEDULE

A series of four regional conference calls will be conducted on Monday, March 23, with the participating teams, directors of athletics, coaches, sports information directors, local organizing committees and the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee to review the administration of regional competition.

A similar conference call will be conducted at 10 a.m. Eastern time, Tuesday, March 31, with the semifinalist teams and institutional personnel as noted above to review the administration of the championship competition.



# Appendixes

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# Appendix A • Bracket



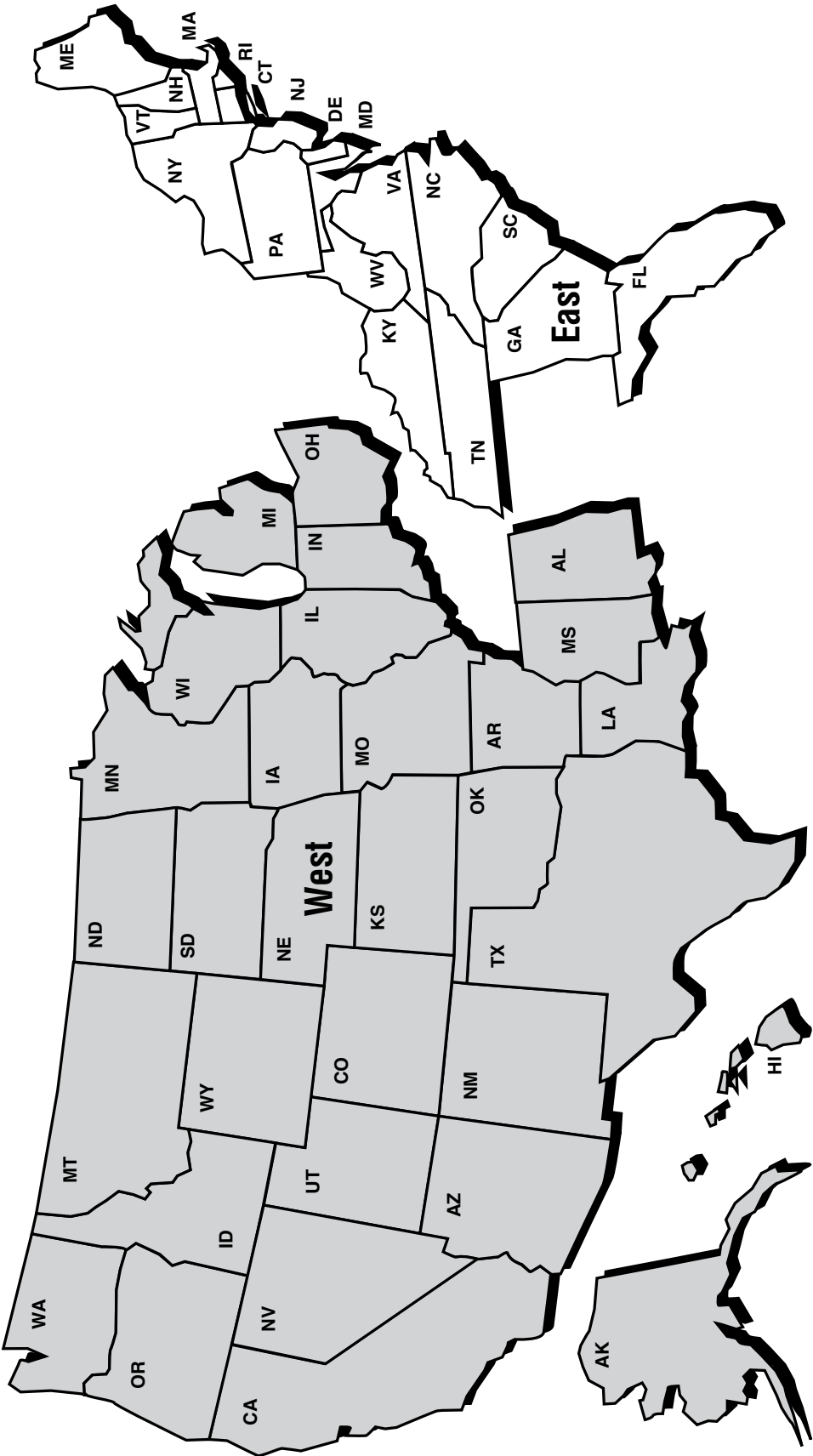
## 2026 NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Championship



All times are Eastern time.  
Information subject to change.

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Appendix B • Regions



## Appendix C • Sport Sponsorship

### EAST REGION

#### Atlantic Hockey Association (11)

American International College  
Bentley University  
Canisius College  
College of the Holy Cross  
Mercyhurst University  
Niagara University

Robert Morris University  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Sacred Heart University  
U.S. Air Force Academy  
U.S. Military Academy

AQ - Conference Tournament

#### ECAC Hockey (12)

Brown University  
Clarkson University  
Colgate University  
Cornell University  
Dartmouth College  
Harvard University

Princeton University  
Quinnipiac University  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
St. Lawrence University  
Union College (New York)  
Yale University

AQ - Conference Tournament

#### Hockey East Association (11)

Boston College  
Boston University  
University of Connecticut  
University of Maine, Orono  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst  
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Merrimack College  
University of New Hampshire  
Northeastern University  
Providence College  
University of Vermont

AQ - Conference Tournament

## WEST REGION

### Independent (6)

University of Alaska Anchorage  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Arizona State University

\*Lindenwood University  
Long Island University  
\*Stonehill College

### Big Ten Conference (7)

University of Michigan  
Michigan State University  
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  
University of Notre Dame

Pennsylvania State University  
The Ohio State University  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

AQ - Conference Tournament

### Central Collegiate Hockey Association (9)

Augustana College  
Bemidji State University  
Bowling Green State University  
Ferris State University  
Lake Superior State University

Michigan Technological University  
Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Northern Michigan University  
\*St. Thomas University (MN)

AQ - Conference Tournament

### National Collegiate Hockey Conference (8)

Colorado College  
University of Denver  
Miami University (Ohio)  
University of Minnesota Duluth

University of Nebraska Omaha  
University of North Dakota  
St. Cloud State University  
Western Michigan University

AQ - Conference Tournament

*\*Not eligible - reclassifying.*