



**NCAA DIII WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY COACHES CONNECT
CONFERENCE CALL MINUTES
Sept. 16, 2026**

Ann Ninnemann (AHCA) welcomed all to the call. Also in attendance were Ryan Richardson (NCAA Championship Manager), Corey Berg (NCAA GMS), and Jason Doviak (NCAA DIII Champs Committee). Conferences not in attendance: Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, State University of New York Athletic Conference.

NCAA Champs Update – Ryan Richardson

Ryan gave the following updates:

- Coaches Connect overview:
 - History of DII's coaches connect program and the future of DIII's. DIII is adding women's soccer (fall), men's basketball (winter), and men's golf (spring) for the 2026-27 academic year. The format will stay the same: NCAA updates, NCAA GMS updates, AHCA updates, other topics.
 - Discussed feedback received via the 2025-26 survey, which was the NCAA (liaison) needing to do a better job distributing the meeting reports to all groups: coaches, ADs, and commissioners. The 2026-27 reports will be distributed in the following manner:
 - NCAA liaison will email the report to the participants on the call, the conference commissioners, and the NCAA sport committee.
 - The conference commissioners will email the report to their conference directors of athletics.
 - The coaches on the call will email the report to their fellow conference coaches.
- Championship Updates:
 - 13-team bracket: 9 AQs, 4 at-large.
 - Two new AQs in 2026-27 for Little East and MASCAC.
 - Site visit to Plattsburgh will be next week.
 - NPI Ranking Schedule: Jan. 11, 18, 25; Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22; Mar. 1 and Mar. 7 (selections).
 - First push is Jan. 11 (Mondays only). Daily pushes begin February 22.
 - Division II and III NPI webinars coming soon.
 - DIII Champs Committee meeting in Indianapolis with sport committee chairs next week.

NCAA Governance and Member Services (GMS) Update – Corey Berg

Corey gave the following update:

- The deadline for proposals for 2027 NCAA Convention was Sept. 15. There were five total proposals in Division III.
- Corey went into detail about the age-based eligibility model, which is one of the membership-sponsored proposals.

- **What does “five for five” mean?** This is not a five-season guarantee. Seasons don’t technically exist in this model. Student-athletes have a five-year window that begins with the earliest of either your initial full-time enrollment at any college or university OR the academic year after you turn 19. Student-athletes will do what they can within that window. Hardship waivers and extension waivers would go away.
 - Similar to Divisions I and II, there will be a similar window for potential hardship waivers for those that may meet criteria for one prior to the official rule change.
- If adopted in January, the rules would go into effect immediately. **How would it be applied?** 2026-27 student-athletes continuing or exhausting eligibility can choose which model benefits them the most. For student-athletes starting in 2027-28, the age-based model is their only option.
- The list of proposals is currently in the amendment period where suggested changes to the proposal can be reviewed and applied. There is a possibility an amendment is suggested to make the proposal “division-based,” which requires a 2/3 vote for the proposal to be approved. Division III does not have to do this.
- Corey answered a question to clarify rules around a coach’s interactions with club teams. Corey referenced Bylaw 13.11.3.4 that says an institution’s coach or administrator to be involved in any capacity with club sports teams. Corey recommended coaches still practice caution with wearing university apparel during those interactions and limit the cross-over between the club and institution. All other recruiting rules still apply despite the flexibility with this rule.

AHCA Update – Ann Ninnemann

Ann gave the following updates:

- Ann encouraged the group to attend the next NCAA rules seminar with national women’s coordinator of officials, Krissy Langley on October 6. Recordings of both sessions will be available for those who cannot attend.
- AHCA dues are staying the same in 2026-27. AHCA Convention will be April 28-30, 2027.
- There will be an AHCA Zoom call on Sept. 30 for DIII women’s coaches only. Please suggest discussion topics for that call.

Other business:

- [Link to NCAA.org D3 WIH Page](#)
- Question for Corey: Is DIII monitoring the potential “Team USA Act” circulating within the U.S. government to limit NCAA rosters to 20% international students or lost financial aid funding? The simple answer is “yes,” but until the full details of the bill are released and the probability of it passing is known, DIII is not taking any action at this time.

Future meeting schedule.

- December 16, 2026 (midseason before holidays).
- March 3, 2027 (before postseason).
- June 16, 2027 (post-championship, NCAA annual meetings and AHCA convention).

The meeting ended at 11:52 a.m.

NCAA Division III Women's Ice Hockey Coaches Connect Sept. 16, 2026, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Chris Baudo, Nazareth University, United Collegiate Hockey Conference.	
Josh Funk, Hood College, Middle Atlantic Conference.	
Tracy Johnson, St. Olaf College, Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.	
Jodi McKenna, Wesleyan University (Connecticut), New England Small College Athletic Conference.	
Rob Morgan, Keene State College, Little East Conference.	
Ann Ninnemann, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.	
Melissa Paluch, Trine University, Women's Northern Collegiate Hockey Association.	
Kelly Rider, Curry College, Conference of New England.	
Absentees:	
Kevin Houle, Plattsburgh State University of New York, State University of New York Athletic Conference.	
Eliza Kelley, Worcester State University, Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference.	
Division III Championships Committee in Attendance:	
Jason Doviak, Alfred State University, Division III Championships Committee.	
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:	
Ryan Richardson, Championships and Alliances.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Corey Berg, Governance and Member Services.	