

# NCAA WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee is providing this information to outline key actions taken by the committee during the past year, and to provide general information about the championship. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact a member of the committee or Mark Bedics, NCAA Championships and Alliances (mbedics@ncaa.org; 317-917-6541).

### 2022-23 NCAA Committee Members

Janine Oman  
Senior Deputy Director of Athletics  
The Ohio State University  
Term expires: August 2024\*

WCHA

Cara Morey  
Deputy Director of Athletics /SWA  
Cornell University  
Term expires: August 2026

ECAC  
Hockey

Bill Martinov  
Director of Athletics  
LIU  
Term expires: August 2026

NEWH

Jeremy Gibson, Chair  
Director of Athletics  
Merrimack College  
Term expires: August 2025

Hockey  
East

Britni Smith  
Head Women's Ice Hockey Coach  
Syracuse University  
Term expires: August 2026

CHA

\*Eligible for reappointment.

Moving forward the championship committee is likely to report to a sport specific governing board made up of men's and women's ice hockey coaches and administrators. This will be decided in May.

### Championship Bracket/Selection Criteria

#### **1. Selection Criteria.**

a. Selection Requirements. To be considered during the at-large selection process, teams must be at or above 50.00 in the NPI. Divisions I and II institutions that wish to be considered for selection to the National Collegiate Championship must schedule a minimum of 20 games against Divisions I and II opponents.

b. 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 3.2.4.6) 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.

c. 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 women'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 women's ice hockey championship (not necessarily in priority order):

- \*NCAA Percentage Index (NPI) [won-lost record (25%), Strength of Schedule (75%) including quality win bonus\*\*]
- Head-to-head competition; and
- Results versus common opponents.

\*If points awarded for any win lower a team's average RPI, those points will not count toward the RPI.

During the selection process, each team's full body of work will be evaluated. Each of the above criteria will carry one point, except head-to-head competition, which will carry the number of points equal to the net difference in the results of these games (e.g., if Team A defeats Team B three out of four games, Team A would receive two points in the selection process). When comparing two teams, the committee reserves the right to weight criteria differently based on relative team performance.

In situations where a high-impact player is unavailable, the committee may consider this as part of its evaluation of the above criteria.

The National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Committee does not consider outside polls as a source for selections.

### Seeding and Pairing

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 first and second round site.

For this model, the following is a basic set of priorities:

1. Once the five automatic qualifiers and six at-large teams are selected, the top four teams are No. 1 seeds and will be placed in the bracket so that if all four teams advance to the Women'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.

2. The next four are targeted as No. 2 seeds. The No. 5 overall seed will be designated as the top No. 2 seed since they get a first-round bye and would automatically play the No. 4 overall seed. The committee has determined they would like No. 4 to play No. 5 regardless of if they are from the same conference.

3. The next three teams are the other No. 2 seeds, and the last three teams will be designated as the No. 3 seeds.

4. The next step is to place the home teams. Assuming it meets the committee's hosting criteria, the highest seeded team will be given the opportunity to host the first and second round games.

5. Next step is to fill in the bracket so that first-round conference matchups are avoided, unless it corrupts the integrity of the bracket. If four or more teams from one conference are selected to the championship in the final six spots so as to play in the first-round contests, then the integrity of the bracket will be protected (i.e., maintaining the pairing process according to seed will take priority over avoidance of first-round conference matchups).

6. To complete each site, the committee assigns one team from each of the remaining seeded groups so there is a No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 at three of the sites using its priorities, while matching up the No. 4 and No. 5 overall seeds in a second-round matchup.

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### **2024 Automatic Qualifiers**

College Hockey America  
ECAC Hockey  
Hockey East Association  
New England Women's Hockey Alliance  
Western Collegiate Hockey Association

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### **Future Championship Dates and Sites**

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>Selections</u></b>	<b><u>Regionals</u></b>	<b><u>Semifinals</u></b>	<b><u>Final</u></b>
2024	March 10	March 14-17	March 22	March 24
2025	March 9	March 13-16	March 21	March 23
2026	March 8	March 12-15	March 20	March 22

### **Frozen Four Sites**

- 2024** Host: University of New Hampshire  
Site: Whittemore Center – Durham, New Hampshire
- 2025** Host: University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  
Site: Ridder Arena – Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 2026** Host: Pennsylvania State University  
Site: Pegula Arena – University Park, Pennsylvania

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### **Annual Meeting**

The national committee will meet this summer. If you have topics that you would like the committee to discuss, please forward them in writing to Mark Bedics ([mbedics@ncaa.org](mailto:mbedics@ncaa.org)) at the NCAA national office no later than Monday, May 22.

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### **Key Discussion Topics**

1. Championship Recap - Significant progress has been made the last two years with regards to signage; a half hour selection show. What are other things can we do to make it a better experience for everyone involved?
2. Timing of NCAA Tournament/Women's Frozen Four – is there a better weekend?
3. Frozen Four site selections – bids for 2027-30 will come out this fall and are due in February. What sites should we be considering? Would it be worth having a conversation with D3 about a joint championship? What about playing at the same city during Women's Final Four during the same weekend? What about playing in the same city/weekend as USA Hockey Girls Youth Nationals?
4. Officiating – we attempted to adjust the standard with regards to body contact this year and it seemed well received. Do we feel we are where we need to be? Is there anything else with regards to officiating that we should be concentrating on?
5. NPI – Do we feel the strength of schedule component should be dialed back a little? Overall did we feel it selected the best at-large teams? The same teams would have been selected using the NPI or RPI but the order would have been different.
6. Patty Kaz – There was a 30-minute made for TV show on Saturday at 11:30 am on NHL Network. It was open to the public for the first time and was right after the youth clinic to allow the youth players to come straight to the ceremony.