



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE  
JUNE 2-4, 2020, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative item.**

- **Committee composition.**

- (1) Recommendation. That the Women's Ice Hockey Committee composition requirements be revised as follows:

Bylaw 21.5.2 Ice Hockey Committee, Women's. The Women's Ice Hockey Committee shall consist of five members, *including one member from each conference that is eligible for and applies for automatic qualification into the National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Championship. There shall be a minimum of two committee members from each region.* ~~There shall be four members from Division I and one member from Division II.~~

- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2022. (Note: This date coincides with the end of the term of two current committee members, and the committee appointments at that time would be required to meet the revised composition requirements, if approved.)
- (3) Rationale. The committee reviewed the composition of the four ice hockey sport committees as well as the composition of multiple other national collegiate sport committees. The committee noted that this recommendation to include one member from each automatic qualifying conference is consistent with the composition requirements of the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee (Bylaw 21.7.6.3.1.3.12). (Note: Once the New England Women's Hockey Alliance completes its second year of conference competition in 2020-21, it will be an automatic qualifying conference and will meet the requirements to have representation as the fifth member of the committee.) The committee prefers that one of the two members from each region be a coach to ensure that the coaches in each region are represented. The committee noted that all ice hockey conferences are single-sport conferences and the commissioners and their member institutions strongly support representation of each conference on the committee. The committee further noted that with this change, the opportunity for Division II representation remains high given that five of the seven NEWHA members are Division II institutions.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None, since the recommendation does not change the size of the committee.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

## 2. Nonlegislative items.

### a. Automatic qualification.

- (1) Recommendation. That the following four conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2021 National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Championship: College Hockey America, ECAC Hockey, Hockey East Association and Western Collegiate Hockey Association. (Note: The New England Women's Hockey Alliance will be completing its second year of conference play in 2020-21).
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2020.
- (3) Rationale. All eligible conferences are being recommended.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

### b. Rating Percentage Index (RPI) – Overtime.

- (1) Recommendation. That the method for computing RPI credit for games decided in overtime be revised to award partial credit to both teams. The computation of the RPI would be adjusted to award two-thirds (~67%) of a win to the team scoring in overtime and one-third (~33%) of a win to the opponent. Corresponding adjustments will be made as applicable in the Quality Win Bonus (QWB) calculation. For games ending in a tie in overtime (or if the optional shootout is used to determine conference points), both teams will continue to be awarded 50% of a win in the computation of the RPI.
- (2) Effective date. Effective for the 2020-21 season, in conjunction with the implementation of the recently approved three-on-three overtime format.
- (3) Rationale. For the past several years, the standard overtime format in college ice hockey has been five on five for five minutes. However, if the game remained in a tie after this period, conferences had the option of then playing a three-on-three overtime for five minutes and/or conducting a shootout. If the optional three-on-three overtime period and/or shootout was used and a result was achieved, partial credit was awarded only for conference points (i.e., two points for a win and one point for a loss). Results determined after the conclusion of the five-on-five overtime were not included in the RPI calculation in Pairwise and each team was awarded 50% for a tie. Different conferences have followed different overtime formats, and a uniform overtime format has been a topic of great debate due to a lack of consensus across divisions and genders on the preferred format.

In June 2020, the NCAA Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules Committee recommended to the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel that a uniform overtime format of three on three for five minutes be implemented for college ice hockey. PROP, during its meeting in July, approved the rules committee's recommendation.

It is notable that not all women's ice hockey conferences supported the change to the three-on-three overtime format. Removing four skaters (two per team) from the ice creates a fundamentally different game than teams are used to playing in five on five. As a result, all four ice hockey sport committees are forwarding recommendations to their respective governance oversight committee for approval of awarding partial credit for a win in the three-on-three overtime period. Awarding partial credit for an overtime result in a modified format (i.e., reduced personnel on the ice) is consistent with what is done throughout the sport of ice hockey. The NHL, AHL, USHL, etc., all play a three-on-three overtime format and award partial credit to both teams due to the significant difference in the format. Awarding partial credit to both teams in overtime would bring college ice hockey in line with the rest of the ice hockey community.

This committee, as well as both the Division III Women's and Men's Ice Hockey Committees, support weighting an overtime win at 67/33 in the RPI calculation. This is consistent with how conferences traditionally award points for wins in three-on-three overtime (two points for a win and one point for a loss). Also, the committee carefully evaluated the impact on the RPI for a wide range of potential weighting calculations for overtime wins (50/50, 55/45, 67/33, 90/10 and 100/0) and agreed that the 67/33 weighting provided the appropriate amount of credit for a win earned in overtime while also acknowledging the concern from coaches that the result was achieved in a modified format (i.e., reduced playing personnel).

(Note: This committee is aware that the Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee is recommending a 55/45 weighting for a win in the three-on-three overtime period. The women's ice hockey committee noted that the RPI numbers for a tie weighted at 50/50 and for a win weighted at 55/45 are substantially similar, and therefore believes the 67/33 weighting provides a more appropriate amount of credit awarded for a win in overtime.)

The two concepts of the new overtime format and the appropriate credit awarded for an overtime win are intertwined; however, two different oversight committees are addressing the issues separately – PROP with oversight of the change to the overtime format, and the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee to consider the recommended change to the weighting of an overtime win in the calculation of the RPI. At this point, given that PROP already approved the new three-on-three overtime format effective for the 2020-21 season, it is very important to the women's coaches that a corresponding adjustment to the credit awarded for an overtime result

earned in the significantly modified format be implemented in conjunction with the change in the overtime format (i.e., for the 2020-21 season) and that this decision not be delayed due to concerns about making changes during a year that play will be affected by the pandemic.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

**c. NCAA Percentage Index (NPI).**

(1) Recommendation. That the NPI replace the RPI in the selection criteria, maintaining the same ratio of 30% winning percentage and 70% strength of schedule.

(2) Effective date. Effective for the 2020-21 season.

(3) Rationale. In 2019, Tim Danehy, the statistician who developed the current Pairwise system used by the four ice hockey sport committees to evaluate and select teams, provided the committee an overview of the NCAA Percentage Index (NPI). The RPI is calculated based on winning percentage, opponents' winning percentage and opponents' opponents' winning percentage, and the NPI is calculated based on winning percentage and the opponent's rating itself (rather than the combination of opponents' winning percentage and opponents' opponents' winning percentage) as the measure of schedule strength. The NPI is a more accurate measure of a team's schedule strength and "cleaner math." After a comprehensive review of the RPI and NPI numbers in the Pairwise system again during the committee's 2020 annual meeting, the committee strongly supports moving to using the NPI in place of the RPI. The committee supports maintaining the same 30/70 ratio for winning percentage and strength of schedule; specifically, the RPI formula currently used by the committee is 30% winning percentage/24% opponents' winning percentage/46% opponents' opponents' winning percentage, and the recommended NPI is the same proportion (30% winning percentage and 70% strength of schedule). Corresponding adjustments will be made as applicable in the Quality Win Bonus (QWB) calculation.

The committee recognizes that strength of schedule numbers for all team sports will likely look a bit different in 2020-21 due to schedule adjustments as a result of the pandemic, and the committee will continue to discuss how to evaluate the overall impact on the selection criteria. The committee notes, however, that the recommended change from the RPI to the NPI is essentially a more straightforward method of calculating strength of schedule that will be valuable immediately, even in this atypical season, and the committee supports immediate implementation.

(Note: Pending approval of Action Item 2-b, the 67/33 overtime weighting would apply to the NPI in the same way as to the RPI.)

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Agenda and meeting schedule.** The committee reviewed the agenda and schedule for the meeting and made no adjustments.
2. **2019 annual meeting report.** The committee approved its 2019 annual meeting report as written.
3. **NCAA Division I Council/Competition Oversight Committee (COC) reports.** The committee reviewed the meeting reports from the past year, noting specific action items requested by the Women's Ice Hockey Committee and the Competition Oversight Committee's continued review of the sustainability of championships for low-sponsorship sports.
4. **Committee report for AHCA Convention.** The committee reviewed the report presented to the coaches at the convention. NCAA staff will update the report accordingly for the 2021 AHCA Convention.
5. **Review of 2020 championship.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the championship was canceled after selections and before the quarterfinal games. The committee commended the Boston University staff for their extensive planning efforts for the 2020 NCAA Women's Frozen Four and for their responsiveness and handling of all details relating to the cancellation.
  - a. Bracket. The committee reviewed the championship bracket and made no changes.
  - b. Big Ten Network (BTN). Staff noted that 2020 would have been the fourth year of the current four-year contract with BTN. The committee agreed that the BTN crew and staff are excellent partners. The committee emphasized the importance of continuing to enhance broadcasting opportunities to showcase the championship. The NCAA broadcasting staff will follow up with BTN.
6. **Plan for 2021 championship.**
  - a. Women's Frozen Four host/LOC.

- (1) Championship planning overview. In 2021, Mercyhurst University and the Erie Sports Commission will host the championship for the second time. The hosts provided an excellent championship experience in 2011, and the committee is confident they will provide a memorable experience again next year. Host calls have begun and NCAA staff provided an update to the committee on planning activities completed to date. Due to the pandemic, a site visit in the fall will be conducted virtually.
  - (2) Facility. The championship will be held in Erie Insurance Arena in Erie, Pennsylvania.
  - (3) Hotels. The headquarters and team hotels have been contracted by Anthony Travel and the committee is confident these properties will provide an outstanding championship experience for the participating teams.
- b. Game times. The 2020 semifinal games were scheduled at 4 and 7 p.m. Eastern time on Friday and the championship game was scheduled at 4:30 p.m. Eastern time on Sunday. NCAA staff will consult with key internal and external stakeholders to confirm game times for the 2021 championship as soon as possible.
  - c. Sport sponsorship. The committee reviewed the 2019-20 sport sponsorship and conference alignment information and noted that one institution (Long Island University – Division I) added women's ice hockey this year. The committee also noted that Stonehill College (Division II) has announced that it will add women's ice hockey in 2021-22. The committee will continue to monitor reports of institutions that are adding, or are interested in adding, women's ice hockey.

The committee noted that the New England Women's Hockey Alliance completed its first year of conference competition in 2019-20. The committee discussed the potential impact of a fifth automatic qualifier on the championship field of eight teams, noting that current legislation requires a sport committee to reserve 50% of the championship field for at-large teams. The committee discussed the recommendation from the NCAA Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group that play-in games be eliminated, which would require each sport committee to determine how AQ berths are awarded when the number of automatic-qualifier conferences exceed 50% of the field. The committee discussed potential methods and determined that the automatic qualifying teams with the four highest Pairwise rankings should be awarded the four AQ berths for the championship. Per the legislation, the remaining four berths will be reserved for at-large selections.

## **7. Championship format.**

- a. Automatic qualification. The committee reviewed the automatic-qualification applications for 2020-21 and recommended that four conferences receive automatic qualification to the

2021 championship (see Action Item 2-a).

- b. Field size. The committee discussed the need to encourage Division I and Division II institutions to add women's ice hockey and to work to eliminate barriers for Division III institutions that sponsor women's ice hockey and may want to reclassify. The committee recognizes that increasing sport sponsorship is necessary for an expanded field size to be approved.

## 8. Selections.

- a. Rating Percentage Index (RPI) – Overtime. After several years of discussion and debate about overtime formats in the college ice hockey community, a uniform overtime policy of three on three for five minutes was recently approved by the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel. As a result, all four ice hockey sport committees are recommending to their respective governance oversight committee an adjustment to the credit awarded for a win earned during overtime (see Action Item 2-b). Awarding partial credit for an overtime result in a modified format (i.e., reduced playing personnel on the ice), which is a significantly different game than five on five, is consistent with what is done throughout the sport of ice hockey. The NHL, AHL, USHL, etc. all play a three-on-three overtime format and award partial credit to both teams due to the significant difference in the overtime format. Awarding partial credit to both teams in overtime would bring college ice hockey in line with the rest of the ice hockey community.
- b. NCAA Percentage Index (NPI). For the past two years, the committee has discussed a potential transition from the RPI, which is calculated based on winning percentage, opponents' winning percentage and opponents' opponents' winning percentage, to an NCAA Percentage Index (NPI), which is calculated based on winning percentage and the opponent's rating itself (rather than the combination of opponents' winning percentage and opponents' opponents' winning percentage) as the measure of schedule strength. After a comprehensive review of the RPI and NPI numbers in the Pairwise system again during this year's annual meeting, the committee strongly supports moving to using the NPI in place of the RPI (see Action Item 2-c). The committee supports maintaining the same 30/70 ratio for winning percentage and strength of schedule.
- c. Selection policies and procedures. The committee reviewed policies and procedures and did not recommend changes at this time.

## 9. Officials.

- a. National coordinator report. The national coordinator of officials for women's ice hockey provided an annual report to the committee.

- b. Selection of officials. The committee reviewed the process of selecting officials and discussed the priorities of confirming the best officials available, using neutral crews and minimizing travel expenses. The importance of communication between the national coordinator of officials and the committee leading up to the confirmation of the assigned officials is critical. The national coordinator, NCAA staff and committee will continue to review the process leading up to the 2021 championship and will make modifications if necessary.
- c. Recommendation form. The committee reviewed the format and content and provided feedback regarding potential updates to the recommendation form that is completed by conference supervisors of officials to rank the officials they recommend for the postseason. The committee confirmed that the conference supervisors should submit the form four times during the season (e.g., Nov. 15, Dec. 15, Feb. 1 and after conference tournaments). The committee confirmed that the conference supervisors should copy both the conference commissioner and the championship manager each time they submit the form to the national coordinator of officials and the committee would like to review the submitted forms.
- d. Evaluation form. The committee reviewed the evaluation form that the national coordinator completes as he observes officials at games throughout the season. The committee also discussed with the ice hockey conference commissioners the format of the evaluation forms that they use for their leagues during the season. NCAA staff will work with the national coordinator and the commissioners to develop a standard format for an evaluation form to be used for Division I women's ice hockey.

**10. Rules.** The committee met with the Ice Hockey Rules Committee to review the 2020 rules survey results and sport statistical trends.

- a. Overtime format. The ice hockey rules and sport committees have been discussing overtime formats for several years. The rules committee gathered feedback from each of the four ice hockey sport committees to inform its overtime recommendation(s) to the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel.
- b. Rules book. The rules committee noted it was considering expanding the portion of the rules book that is specific to women's ice hockey.
- c. Rules video. The two committees agreed that the women's ice hockey rules video is a valuable tool and the quality and benefit of the video improves each year as additional video clips become available to illustrate what is and is not a penalty.
- d. Sport statistical trends. The committee reviewed the season statistical trend data.



## 11. Committee updates.

- a. National and regional advisory committee appointments and vacancies. The committee recognized outgoing member Abbey Strong, assistant athletics director – compliance and camps at the University of Minnesota Duluth, for her service and leadership during her tenure on the committee. NCAA staff noted that Josh Berlo, the director of athletics at the University of Minnesota Duluth, will begin his term on September 1. Staff will follow up to confirm two new regional advisory committee members (one from ECAC and one from College Hockey America) for 2020-21.

The committee discussed whether to continue using regional advisory committees, given that regional rankings essentially mirror the Pairwise rankings. (Note: The Division I Men's Ice Hockey Committee and the Division III Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Committees do not use RACs.) The committee noted that with the pandemic and the anticipated scheduling adjustments resulting in teams playing primarily conference opponents in 2020-21, which likely will impact strength of schedule numbers, feedback from RAC members could be particularly helpful this year and RACs should be maintained.

- b. National committee composition. The committee reviewed the composition of the four ice hockey sport committees and also discussed the composition of multiple other national collegiate sport committees. The committee supports revising its composition requirements legislated in Bylaw 21.5.2 to remain at five members but require a representative from each of the women's ice hockey conferences receiving automatic qualification, which is consistent with the committee composition requirements of the Division I men's ice hockey committee (see Action Item 1). The committee further recommends that the committee includes at least two members from each region (East and West), with a preference that one of those two members be a coach to ensure a coach representative from each region.
- c. Committee timeline. The committee updated the timeline for the 2020-21 year.
- d. Confirmation of committee chair. The committee approved that Kate McAfee, associate commissioner of Hockey East, serve as the committee chair, effective Sept. 1. Ms. McAfee will be in her third year on the committee and brings great experience as an institutional and conference administrator with oversight of ice hockey and a former host of the NCAA Women's Frozen Four. Ms. McAfee will replace Ms. Strong, who will complete her four-year term on the committee Aug. 31.
- e. Annual meeting dates. The 2021 annual committee meeting will be conducted virtually June 1-3.

**12. Site selection and 2022-26 bid process.** The committee discussed the critical success factors that will be used to evaluate potential sites and hosts for the 2022-26 bid process and began its initial review of the bid materials. Additional virtual committee meetings will be scheduled to

continue discussions and finalize the committee site recommendations, which are due by July 31.

**13. Conference commissioners.** The committee met with the ice hockey conference commissioners to discuss key issues pertaining to the championship and the current state of the sport. Specifically, the committee and commissioners discussed the impact of the pandemic, potential adjustments to conference schedules (e.g., consideration of multiple options for the start date for the season, decreasing the number of contests against non-conference opponents, etc.), considerations for return-to-play guidelines and creating a standardized form to use to evaluate officials.

**14. Championships Finance Review Working Group.** The committee completed the membership survey as requested by the working group.

*Committee Chair: Abbey Strong, University of Minnesota Duluth, Western Collegiate Hockey Association*

*Staff Liaison: Jan Gentry, Championships and Alliances*

<b>NCAA Women’s Ice Hockey Committee June 2-4, 2020, Videoconference</b>
<b>Attendees:</b>
Anita Brenner, Cornell University.
Katie Crowley, Boston College.
Paul Flanagan, Syracuse University
Kate McAfee, Hockey East Association.
Abbey Strong, University of Minnesota Duluth.
<b>Absentees:</b>
None.
<b>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</b>
Jan Gentry, Championships and Alliances.
Paige Newman, Championships and Alliances.
<b>Other Guests in Attendance:</b>
Tim Danehy, College Hockey Stats.
Robert DeGregorio, College Hockey America and New England Women’s Hockey Alliance.
Tom DiFusco, NCAA Women’s Ice Hockey National Coordinator of Officials.
Jennifer Flowers, Western Collegiate Hockey Association.
Stephen Hagwell, ECAC Hockey.
Steve Metcalf, Hockey East Association.