



REPORT OF THE
NCAA WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE
JUNE 16-17, 2025, ANNUAL MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. Selection criteria change.

- (1) Recommendation. Adopt the NCAA Power Index (NPI) as the sole selection criterion for the National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Championship (replacing PairWise).
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.
- (3) Rationale. The committee believes the NPI is the best available selection criterion for the championship. The committee has been using NPI as one of the three factors of PairWise since 2022, but many coaches have been under the impression that the committee was already using NPI instead of PairWise. The committee has engaged with Tim Danehy, creator of PairWise and NPI, over the past year to understand the differences and the potential impact on institutions. Mr. Danehy presented data indicating that this is a minor change overall, as solely using NPI would not have changed the teams selected in any of the last four years. However, Mr. Danehy is advising the change, as the current criteria could potentially have a negative impact, highlighted by a "flip" in the NPI number and PairWise comparison in 2025. While that ultimately did not impact who was selected, it did affect seeding.

The committee collaborated with the American Hockey Coaches Association (AHCA) to conduct an informational webinar regarding the NPI, and a subsequent straw poll taken at the AHCA convention showed 42 of 45 attendees supporting the change to NPI with two abstentions. Additionally, the AHCA took a formal vote after the convention on June 1, 2025, with 33 of 45 programs voting, and 32 supporting the change to NPI. With this information, along with the recommendation from Mr. Danehy, the women's ice hockey committee believes this change is needed to ensure the best available teams are selected and seeded for the championship. The committee is also aware that the men's committee is requesting a similar change this year. Finally, since the women's committee has already been using NPI, the "dials" (25% winning percentage, 75% strength of schedule, quality win base of 51.50 with a .5 multiplier, and 67/33 overtime factor) do not need to be adjusted. There is currently no home/away factor with a home win counting the same as a road win. The committee members acknowledged that they must include a new dial (minimum wins) as part of the transition to solely using NPI. When asked for a recommendation, Mr. Danehy advised 12 as the minimum number

of wins, as that would not have impacted the last four years of the championship (all teams had kept at least 12 wins). This dial will be added to the NPI if it is adopted.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Student-athletes will be provided with a better selection tool to ensure the best teams are selected and appropriately seeded during the championship, ultimately allowing them the best opportunity to win a national championship based on their regular-season body of work.

b. Automatic qualification.

(1) Recommendation. Approve the following five conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Championship: Atlantic Hockey America, ECAC Hockey, Hockey East Association, New England Women's Hockey Alliance, and Western Collegiate Hockey Association.

(2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.

(3) Rationale. Each conference meets the requirements of NCAA Bylaw 31.3.4.1 and has completed the automatic-qualification declaration form.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **2025 annual meeting report.** The committee approved the 2024 annual meeting report as submitted.

2. **Automatic qualification, pool breakdowns and regional alignment.** The committee reviewed automatic qualification forms, and conference regional alignments. Staff noted conference membership changes, which will be confirmed once the 2025-26 sponsorship information is available. Staff also noted two institutions that will begin sponsoring or becoming championship eligible next year.

3. **Access ratio and sport sponsorship.** The committee noted the membership's desire for women's ice hockey to have a 12-team bracket. The committee understands that the women's ice hockey access ratio is high and does not merit an additional team, but it did want to note the continued push from the women's ice hockey community for a 12-team bracket for a bracket that is symmetric and allows for each regional to be comprised of the same format. The committee also noted the men's ice hockey access ratio is higher than the women's and

the symmetric bracket that comes with that ratio at a 16-team bracket.

4. **Date formula.** The committee sought feedback from the membership based on a desire to help stagger regional championship games. The feedback from the membership was positive, but there were several concerns about changing the date formula for the regional round with potential conflicts of other campus events, including men's ice hockey games. The committee will continue monitoring the date formula to help increase exposure and have additional conversations with ESPN. The committee also asked staff to provide additional qualifying questions in the bid portal around regional championship game times to help stagger games when possible.
5. **Discussion with the national coordinator of officials and secretary-rules editor.** The committee met with Krissy Langley, the national coordinator of officials, and Jef Fulton, secretary-rules editor, to discuss the national coordinator's annual report, postseason assignment process, and the 2025 rules changes and the topics for the upcoming 2025-26 rules meetings.
 - a. **Officials selection process.** The committee reviewed the process used for selecting and approving officials for the 2025 championship. The committee continues to support Ms. Langley's experience and passion for the position. The committee asked Ms. Langley to work with NCAA staff to ensure the selection and assignment process is clearly outlined and transparent for the future. This includes noting eligibility requirements, conference coordinator collaboration, and the criteria being used to select the best available officials during the postseason.
 - b. **Rule changes.** Mr. Fulton's reviewed the past year's rules changes and summarized the conversation that occurred at the coaches association convention about the upcoming rules committee agenda.
6. **Hockey Commissioners Association.** The committee met with the Hockey Commissioners Association to review important topics from each group. All topics that were discussed are included in the additional informational items below. Both the committee and the Hockey Commissioners Association are pleased with the continued open lines of communication and collaboration on important items for the membership.
7. **American Hockey Coaches Association (AHCA).** The committee reviewed the feedback from the AHCA after the annual convention. The committee appreciates the relationship that has been established by the NCAA and AHCA to receive the desired feedback on championship topics.
8. **2025 championship review.**
 - a. **Selection criteria.** The committee reviewed the PairWise selection criteria and the ongoing conversation regarding the confusion of the criteria vs. NPI. The committee

worked through several meetings and email communications with the American Hockey Coaches Association to request feedback about switching the PairWise selection criteria to the NCAA Power Index, which is outlined in Action Item 2-a. The committee noted the potential desire to discuss dials in future years but ultimately tabled all dial conversation with a focus on making the change to NPI for the 2026 championship.

- b. **Selection call.** The committee discussed the selection timeline for 2025. The committee was pleased with the technology and number of potential hosts, as well as staff preparation on potential brackets using the bracketing principles.
- c. **Selection show.** The committee was pleased with the show being on ESPNU for the first time but asked staff to continue engaging with ESPN about how they can assist with preparation for the show to ensure it highlights the student-athletes and the accomplishment of making it to the NCAA postseason.
- d. **Preliminary rounds.** The committee reviewed preliminary-round feedback and discussed hosting expectations. The committee wants to continue to ensure hosts understand what is expected to host a preliminary round. The committee was pleased with the addition of custom dasher boards for the first time but asked staff to remind hosts of the installation options. The committee was also pleased with the new hotel standards provided by the Sports Oversight Committee to mitigate issues with preliminary-round lodging throughout the week.
- e. **Dual-site hosts (men's and women's).** The committee noted the potential of a site having NCAA women's postseason hockey and men's conference postseason hockey and the impacts for both sports. The committee encouraged continued communication with hosts to understand when conflicts may arise and potential limits for the host.
- f. **Practice times.** The committee will continue offering teams 90 minutes of practice the day before the competition and 60 minutes the day of competition at all rounds of the championship.
- g. **Video exchange policy.** The committee asked staff to continue with the video exchange policy modification that allows all participating teams at the site to tape each game at the site to reduce the potential delay of uploading. The winning team should continue to upload the film to the exchange after the game.
- h. **Signage.** The committee was pleased with the enhanced signage at the championship and thought it added to the experience for the student-athletes and the fans in attendance.
- i. **Hotels.** The committee was pleased with the team hotels for the finals. The committee was pleased with the new guidelines the SOC released on preliminary-round hotels, allowing hosts to adhere to public standards.
- j. **Broadcasting/streaming.** The committee was pleased with the broadcasting of the

national championship weekend and appreciated that all preliminary-round games were available on ESPN networks. The committee thanked ESPN for the continued exposure of women's ice hockey and looks forward to growing the game together in the future. The committee continues to work with ESPN to understand the best windows and game times for the greatest possible exposure.

- k. **Preliminary-round broadcasts.** The committee asked staff to work with internal broadcast staff to understand minimum requirements for ESPN+ and what enhancements each sport may suggest to assist host-produced broadcasts be the best possible product for NCAA postseason.
- l. **Team locker rooms.** The committee asked staff to codify in the host manual that if the host team makes the Frozen Four they will remain in their home locker room regardless of their seed.
- m. **Team hotel lounges and ancillary events.** The committee noted the success of the hotel lounges and encouraged staff to continue investing in this idea, depending on host capability. The committee acknowledged the budget allocated to this aspect of the championship may impact some additional ancillary events but was supportive due to the success of the enhancement in 2025.
- n. **Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award Celebration.** The committee was pleased with the partnership with USA Hockey and the hosts to execute the 2025 Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award celebration. Members hope that the AHCA all-American announcement can continue to be integrated into the ceremony.
- o. **Survey review.** The committee reviewed the survey results and discussed them throughout the agenda.
- p. **Semifinal game time.** The committee acknowledged the discussion around the order of the Women's Frozen Four semifinal game times at the championship. The committee asked staff to highlight in the prechampionships manual that this decision will remain under the committee's discretion in conjunction with ESPN. The committee also discussed this topic with ESPN, which asked to be involved in the decision to ensure potential viewing numbers are considered for their streaming platform. The committee noted the reasoning behind the decision will continue to emphasize what is best for the student-athlete experience, the fan experience, the viewing experience at home, and growth of the sport. The committee will adjust the practice order selection time on Thursday and Saturday to ensure the highest seed remaining has the ability to pick the best time for their schedule.
- q. **Internal team review.** The committee heard presentations from each internal team member and made suggestions for the 2026 championship. The committee commended the internal team's work and the changes implemented based on feedback and is encouraged by the team's responsiveness to new ideas in 2025.

9. 2026 championship.

a. **2026 committee timeline.** The committee affirmed the timeline for 2025 worked well and will hope to use a similar timeline in 2026 with minor changes but ultimately waited on confirming meeting dates until the new Division I governance structure is finalized.

b. **2026 host site.** The committee noted the enthusiasm shown by the 2026 host during the initial planning process.

10. Committee structure and roster. The committee noted the webinars stemming from the Decision-Making Working Group on the new committee structure for Division I and National Collegiate championships. The committee noted there were more questions than answers and decided to discuss the potential changes once more information is available and final.

11. Bid timeline. The committee reviewed the potential dates for the next bid cycle.

12. Committee roster. The committee reviewed the committee roster and upcoming term expirations.

13. Committee chair. The committee unanimously approved Janine Oman, senior deputy director of athletics at The Ohio State University, to remain as committee chair.

14. Manuals review. The committee reviewed the various manuals and instructed staff to make the appropriate updates for 2025-26.

15. 2026 annual meeting. The committee agreed to meet June 15-16, 2026.

*Committee Chair: Janine Oman, The Ohio State University, Western Collegiate Hockey Association
Staff Liaison(s): Caleb Kolby, Championships and Alliance*

NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee June 16-17, 2025, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Brittany Kane, Boston University.	
Dean O'Keefe, Stonehill College.	
Janine Oman, The Ohio State University.	
Britni Smith, Syracuse University.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Tim Danehy, NPI.	

Report of the NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee.

Annual Meeting

June 16-17, 2025

Page 7

Bob DeGregorio, NEWHA.
Ian Dunning, ESPN.
Jeff Fulton, NCAA Ice Hockey Secretary-Rules Editor.
Brett Jackson, ESPN.
Mallory Kenny, ESPN.
Krissy Langley, National Coordinator of Officials.
Michelle McAteer, Western Collegiate Hockey Association.
Steve Metcalf, Hockey East.
Michelle Morgan, Atlantic Hockey America.
Nick Sczerbinski, ECAC.
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:
Caleb Kolby,.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Tommy Barrett, Ty Halpin, Markell Staton.