



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S LACROSSE COMMITTEE
JUNE 10-11, 2024, ANNUAL MEETING

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Additional team in championship bracket.** The NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Committee requests the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee to consider adding a team to the championship bracket. (See Action Item 2-a.)
2. **Seeding 50% of the field.** The committee requests that women's lacrosse be considered to seed 50% of the field during the next round of championship consideration for the seeding program. (See Informational Item 3.)
3. **Video replay at finals site.** The committee requests approval to have video replay available at the championship finals site. (See Action Item 2-b.)
4. **Video replay at preliminary rounds.** The committee requests approval to require prospective preliminary-round hosts to have video replay capabilities. (See Action Item 2-c.)
5. **Automatic qualification.** The committee requests approval for all eligible conferences to receive automatic qualification. (See Action Item 2-d.)

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **Legislative items.**

- None.

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

a. **Championship access.**

- (1) Recommendation. Add one team to the women's lacrosse championship bracket.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.
- (3) Rationale. While women's lacrosse is currently in line with the bracketing access ratio in Division I, three new programs are expected in 2024-25, two more in 2025-26 and four additional reclassification schools over the next three years. This growth will drop the access percentage from 24% to 22%, while men's lacrosse would likely stay near 24%. Given this growth in sponsorship, the committee requests adding a team to the bracket, with the eventual goal of competitive equity and bracket integrity consistent with no byes in the first round.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. The committee estimates \$67,000 for the addition of one team, though the range of budget impact could be between about \$58,000 and \$100,000 depending on the mode of transportation for that additional team (i.e., drive or charter). This estimate is based on a FY23 estimate of adding teams, which includes transportation, per diem and game-fees.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Adding a team to align with the growing sport sponsorship will provide more access to the championship for deserving teams and student-athletes.

b. Video replay at the finals site.

- (1) Recommendation. Allow video review technology and service providers to be contracted and used at the championship finals site.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. The committee believes that video review should be used during the championship to ensure the correct calls are made. Video review has been an experimental rule for the past two seasons, and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel recently approved a change to allow video review to be a permissive rule, including during postseason play. The committee believes it would be a disservice for video review not to be used during the postseason, especially at the finals site. The committee believes having review available during the championship will help elevate the sport and enhance the championship. Additionally, the committee is aware that NCAA Division I Men's Lacrosse Committee currently uses video review during its championship, and the women's committee wants to provide an equitable experience when possible. This will be especially apparent at the 2025 finals site as the women's and men's championships will be combined at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, MA. Additionally, the women's lacrosse committee conferred with Melissa Coyne, the national coordinator of officials, who expressed confidence that the pool of eligible officials during the championship will have sufficient experience using the technology as it has been used by top officials the past two years. Ms. Coyne expressed the sentiment that the officials highly recommend having video review available to assist in making the correct calls. The committee collaborated with the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association to survey head coaches on their recommendation for video review during postseason. Of the 62 respondents, fifty-nine respondents supported video review being available at the finals site.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Approximately \$10,000 annually. This includes the fee for the video-review company at the finals site, as well as travel expenses for the video-review personnel. The committee notes that the expense in 2025 will be less than \$10,000 as it will be a shared expense between the two championships.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. Student-athletes will be provided every opportunity to ensure the correct call is made on the field if video-review technology is used. Ultimately, the student-athlete experience is directly tied into the result of the competition and officiating, and the goal of the committee is to ensure the student-athletes are aware that the technology was available if needed.

c. Video replay at preliminary rounds.

- (1) Recommendation. Require prospective preliminary-round hosts to have video review capabilities.
- (2) Effective date. During the 2025 championship.
- (3) Rationale. The committee believes that video review should be used during the entirety of the championship to ensure the correct calls are made as much as possible. This does not mean the institution must use it during the regular season if their conference does not allow it. The committee will work with the NCAA playing rules staff to provide minimum specifications to potential hosts of what is required to have video review available. The committee is aware that the rule states that only one monitor be available for video replay, and that there is already an expectation to provide a minimum of two human-operated cameras for ESPN+ during the first and second rounds for broadcasting. Additionally, the quarterfinal round is on linear television, with ESPN producing the broadcasts, guaranteeing at least two camera angles during the quarterfinal round as well as the first and second rounds. The committee hopes that by requesting this mandate early in the 2024-25 academic year, all potential hosts will have ample time to understand logistics behind providing video replay at their site if they do not use it during the regular season. While it was an experimental rule for the 2023 and 2024 playing seasons, the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel recently made the rule a permissive rule for the regular and postseason. During the 2024 playing season, the committee provided an opportunity for institutions to request the ability to use video review while it was an experimental rule. In 2024, only 20 institutions requested using it during the regular season. With this mandate coming early in the season, the committee hopes that more institutions will request access to use technology, and conferences as a whole will look at their video review policies. The committee believes it would be a disservice to not use video review during the entirety of the postseason. The committee is aware that although the men's lacrosse championship does not have it as a hosting mandate for preliminary rounds, all but one game is on linear television, making access to video review capability for a host less essential than a non-linear television operation. The committee believes because of the television capability difference, the recommendation is equitable. The recommendation garnered overwhelming support from the coaches association (see survey results noted in the rationale for Action Item 2-b above.) Of note in that survey, 57 supported having video review available during the postseason, and 46 respondents supported video review being available at preliminary rounds if the venue was capable of providing it.

Only 14 respondents supported video review being required at preliminary rounds.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None, as any additional expenses to implement video review would be considered a non-reimbursable hosting expense. The committee acknowledged that the expected minimum costs to implement video review at a site that does not have it at during the regular season should be limited to an operator game fee, a monitor, a headset for the official, and corresponding connection plans for the cameras to the monitor. The committee believes that host expense would be approximately \$500 per round. The committee encouraged the NCAA staff to work with each host to ensure they understand the minimum requirements during the bid and budget process. The committee also noted that during the 2024 championship, four of the eight preliminary-round hosts used video review during the regular season.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Student-athletes will be provided every opportunity to ensure the correct call is made on the field if video-review technology is used. Ultimately, the student-athlete experience is directly tied into the result of the competition and officiating, and the goal of the committee is to ensure the student-athletes are aware that the technology was available if needed.

d. Automatic qualification.

- (1) Recommendation. Approve the following 15 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2025 NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship: America East Conference; American Athletic Conference; Atlantic Sun Conference; Atlantic 10 Conference; Atlantic Coast Conference; Big 12 Conference, Big East Conference; Big South Conference; Big Ten Conference; Coastal Athletic Association; Ivy League; Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference; Mid-American Conference; Northeast Conference; and Patriot League.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (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. **2023 annual meeting report**. The committee approved the 2023 annual meeting report as submitted.

2. **Automatic qualification, pool breakdowns and regional alignment.** The committee reviewed automatic qualification forms, conference grace periods, and conference regional alignments. Staff noted conference membership changes, which will be confirmed once the 2024-25 sponsorship information is available. Staff also noted several institutions that will begin sponsoring or becoming championship eligible during the next several years.
3. **Seeding 50% of the championship field.** The committee believes that women's lacrosse is an excellent candidate for the next championship to be provided with the ability to seed 50% of the championship field. The championship currently seeds eight teams, meaning only eight additional teams would be seeded. The committee noted the regional makeup of the sport would likely assist in potential expenses since the additional seeded teams would have multiple non-seeded institutions within driving distance. The committee also noted the 50% seeding could mean additional flights would be needed, but feels as if it would require less flights than other championship. The committee believes it has a strong case to be considered for seeding 50% of the field and hopes that the Competition Oversight Committee will agree when deciding the next championships to seed 50% of the field.
4. **Discussion with the national coordinator of officials and secretary-rules editor.** The committee met with Melissa Coyne, the national coordinator of officials, and Stefanie Smith, secretary-rules editor, to discuss the postseason assignment process, video replay in preliminary rounds, and to provide a general recap of the championship officials and the 2024 rules changes.
 - a. **Officials selection process.** The committee reviewed the process used for selecting and approving officials for the 2024 championship and thought Ms. Coyne did an outstanding job. Committee members appreciated Ms. Coyne's work to ensure that the appropriate officials were assigned to all rounds of the championship.
 - b. **Officials evaluations.** The committee agreed to continue the officials evaluations from coaches during the championship and hope there will be a higher response rate in 2025.
 - c. **Rule changes.** The committee asked for Ms. Smith's review of the rule changes that were implemented in 2024. Ms. Smith provided an overview of the upcoming rules committee agenda and future surveys for feedback.
5. **Championship date formula.** The committee discussed the championship date formula with a continued review of the change in the quarterfinal round to Thursday. The committee discussed the pros and cons of the date and game times. The committee also discussed game-time philosophy for the first and second rounds. The committee was pleased with additional planning around game times for the first and second rounds, and urged staff to continue that work for the fan viewing experience.

6. 2024 championship review.

- a. **Site representative recruitment and training.** The committee discussed the recruitment of site representatives for the 2024 championship and agreed that despite having a great pool of candidates it is challenging to ensure there are well-qualified candidates. Ultimately, the committee was pleased with the site representatives selected and encourages NCAA staff to consider adding training material, resources and communication methods for site reps on site.
- b. **Rankings and regional advisory committee.** The committee reviewed the selection criteria and heard a presentation on different selection criteria options. The committee fully supports sticking with its current selection criteria and selection process. The committee hopes to offer continued education to the membership on the criteria, ranking, and selection process to provide more clarity and transparency when the championship field is announced. The committee also reviewed the regional advisory committee roster and noted future openings with expiration dates and conference realignment.
- c. **Selection call.** The committee discussed the selection timeline for 2024. The committee was pleased with moving up the selection call to talk through the multiple bracket scenarios. The committee was pleased with the technology and number of potential hosts, as well as staff preparation on potential brackets using the bracketing principles.
- d. **Selection show.** The committee asked NCAA staff to continue engaging with ESPN on selection show ideas and formats. The committee was pleased with the show being presented on ESPN2.
- e. **Preliminary rounds.** The committee reviewed preliminary-round feedback and discussed hosting expectations. The committee asked staff to work thorough language surrounding locker room and field specifications. The committee wants to continue to ensure hosts understand what is expected to host a preliminary round. The committee also asked staff to add steps to hear directly from teams once on site to ensure any issues can be addressed prior to gameday as the student-athlete experience is paramount at each site.
- f. **Dual-site hosts (men's and women's).** The committee noted the uniqueness of sites hosting both men's and women's postseason games on the same weekend. The committee believes hosts have proven both can be held at the same site and weekend and encouraged staff to continue working to understand any hosting restrictions prior to selections.
- g. **Practice times.** The committee will continue offering teams 90 minutes of practice the day before competition and 60 minutes the day of competition at all rounds of the championship. The committee asked staff to ensure that if the game field was not available that a practice field of the same surface could be provided for teams.
- 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 noted the importance of working with preliminary-round hosts to ensure appropriate rates and accommodations are reserved for all teams at preliminary rounds.
- j. **Team video.** The committee discussed the importance of ensuring the finals site in 2025 enables teams to use video technology on the bench.
- k. **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 lacrosse and looks forward to growing the game together in the future.
- l. **Survey review.** The committee reviewed the survey results and discussed them throughout the various sections of the agenda.
- m. **Internal team review.** The committee heard presentations from each internal team member and made suggestions and recommendations for the 2025 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.

7. 2025 championship.

- a. **2025 committee timeline.** The committee affirmed the timeline for 2024 worked well and will hope to use a similar timeline in 2025.
 - b. **Combined finals site.** The committee discussed the upcoming site visit to Gillette Stadium. The committee discussed the potential schedule and the importance of equitable amenities for each championship. The committee is excited about the opportunity for a combined championship and will be involved in championship planning to ensure an optimal experience for the student-athletes and fans.
 - c. **Video review.** The committee discussed video review during the championship in 2025 as detailed in Action Items 2-b and c.
8. **Committee roster.** The committee noted the Northeast region not being represented on the committee. The committee asked staff to work through the appropriate process to understand the best way to cover the region with the already slotted roster for 2024-25. The committee welcomed Derek Cowherd, associate athletics director at the University of Louisville, to the committee effective June 1, 2024.
9. **Division I update.** Staff provided legislative updates from the NCAA Convention and recent Competition Oversight Committee meetings.

10. 2026, 2027 and 2028 site selection. The committee finalized its recommendations for the 2027 and 2028 sites to be announced October 2. The committee also discussed strategies and potential hosts for the 2026 host and will remain engaged in the conversation until that site is finalized.

11. Committee chair. The committee unanimously approved Samantha Eustace, Head Women's Lacrosse Coach, as the committee chair.

12. Joint meeting with men's lacrosse committee. The committee met jointly with the men's lacrosse committee to review various items including strategic plans, future site selection, selection criteria, and the branding of the lacrosse championships. (See the joint committee report.)

13. Women's lacrosse manuals review. The committee reviewed the various manuals and instructed staff to make the appropriate updates for 2024-25.

14. 2025 annual meeting. The committee agreed to meet June 9-10, 2025.

Committee Chair: Samantha Eustace, Mercer University, Big South Conference.

Staff Liaison(s): Caleb Kolby, Championships and Alliance

Linda Godby, Championships and Alliances.

NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Committee June 9-10, 2024, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Derek Cowherd, University of Louisville.	
Samantha Eustace, Mercer University.	
Suzette McQueen, Kent State University.	
Cathy Reese, University of Maryland-College Park.	
Bonnie Rosen, Temple University.	
Lindsey Thomas, University of Florida.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Melissa Coyne, National Coordinator of Officials.	
John Kettering, ESPN.	
Dan Margulis, ESPN.	
Liz Robertshaw, IWLCA.	
Stefanie Smith, NCAA Women's Lacrosse Secretary-Rules Editor.	
Lars Tiffany, University of Virginia, SAFE.	

Report of the NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Committee.

Annual Meeting

June 10-11, 2024

Page 9

NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:
Caleb Kolby, Linda Godby.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Connor Lancashire, Alyssa Palmer, Mya Scheidt, Amy Skiles, Liz Suscha and Allison Zwarka.