



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S SOCCER COMMITTEE
JANUARY 29-30, 2025, AND FEBRUARY 19, 2025, MEETINGS**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. First- and second-round date adjustment.

- (1) Recommendation. Adjust the first- and second-round dates of competition from Thursday/Sunday to Friday/Tuesday.
- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.
- (3) Rationale. The adjustment to the Friday (first round)/Tuesday (second round) will provide an additional day of rest from the current format. The push to Friday will also allow additional preparation and lead time from the time of the selection announcement (Monday) for both teams and hosts. A Friday night match hosted on a campus site increases the likelihood for better attendance and championship atmosphere. This would adjust the third-round match from the current Saturday or Sunday option to a Sunday match only. The quarterfinal match days would not change. This adjustment would maintain a consistent three days of rest between each round of competition.

This recommendation also aligns the men's and women's championship weeks. The women's recommendation, also effective with the 2025 championship, includes a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday option for the first round, a Tuesday second round, and a Saturday or Sunday third round. For institutions that may be hosting both genders, based on the dates recommended by the committees, there will flexibility to host both genders on the same weekend on different days.

Men's Proposed Dates	Women's Proposed Dates
First Round: Friday	First Round: Friday, Saturday or Sunday
Second Round: Tuesday	Second Round: Tuesday
Third Round: Sunday	Third Round: Saturday or Sunday
Quarterfinal: Saturday or Sunday	Quarterfinal: Friday or Saturday

- (4) Estimated budget impact. The NCAA planning and finance team is working to determining the financial impact associated with this recommendation.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. This will ensure that student-athletes have ample, sufficient, and consistent rest between all matches of the NCAA tournament.

b. Automatic qualification.

- (1) Recommendation. That the following conferences receive automatic bids for the 2025 NCAA Division I Men's Soccer Championship: America East Conference; American Athletic Conference; Atlantic 10 Conference; Atlantic Coast Conference; Atlantic Sun Conference; Big East Conference; Big South Conference; Big Ten Conference; Big West Conference; Coastal Athletic Association; Horizon League; The Ivy League; Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference; Missouri Valley Conference; Northeast Conference; Ohio Valley Conference; Patriot League; Southern Conference; The Summit League; Sun Belt Conference; West Coast Conference; and Western Athletic Conference.
- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.
- (3) Rationale. All eligible conferences are being recommended. The bracket will remain at 22 automatic qualification allocations and 26 at-large allocations for a total bracket size of 48.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Review agenda and meeting schedule.** The committee approved the agenda and meeting schedule.
2. **2024 committee meeting report.** The committee approved the 2024 meeting report as submitted.
3. **Review of 2024 championship.**
 - a. **Preliminary-round feedback.** The committee reviewed the preliminary-round feedback and was generally pleased with the survey results. The group discussed preliminary-round hosting expectations, focusing particularly on defining more concrete expectations of field adjacent on team areas. The committee also will consider implementing a facility scorecard to be completed by the site representative for all preliminary rounds.

The committee also discussed at length the use of video review in the postseason and expressed some initial interest in requiring video review for postseason competition. The committee will collect additional data before making any formal recommendation.

- b. Video exchange review.** This was the second year of mandatory video exchange in all rounds of the postseason. The committee reviewed postseason compliance and was pleased with the overall success rate. For institutions that did not comply with the policy, the committee will investigate those situations and assess fines where appropriate. The policy remains a priority of the committee and will continue to be monitored moving forward.
- c. Men's College Cup – Cary, North Carolina.** The committee was pleased with the execution of the 2024 championship. The City of Cary, WakeMed Park, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, have continued to be a great partners and supporters of the College Cup. The continued partnership with NCFC Youth provides a significant increase in ticket sales and an enhanced game environment for the Friday semifinal matches.

The committee shifted from a four-team celebratory banquet to individual team dinners at local restaurants. This opportunity provides teams to allow for an additional allotment of institution staff and administrators to join their intimate team celebration. The feedback from this new experience was positive and something the committee will continue moving into the 2025 championship.

The committee brainstormed ways to continue enhancing the overall championship experience. Initial conversations included engaging the local host to develop a marketing plan that includes city-wide engagement, options to create premium seating opportunities, and local partnership engagement in venue and during pre-match fan fests.

The committee also received updates from the men's soccer internal team regarding marketing and ticketing, media coordination, broadcast, game presentation, and corporate relations.

- d. Broadcast/ESPN.** The committee reviewed information from ESPN and the broadcast liaisons and learned that the ratings from the 2024 championship were up significantly from the previous year. This was a result of the championship match receiving a network upgrade from ESPNU to ESPN2 due to an opening in the network schedule. The committee understands that the 2025 championship will return to ESPNU but is encouraged by the influx and engagement the 2024 championship received and hopes to find additional opportunities to leverage the College Cup on ESPN2.

4. Selection process and evaluation of teams.

- a. Selection weekend.** The committee will continue to arrive for selections on Saturday. This provides the group sufficient prep time and monitoring of conference championships. This timeline also gives new committee members time to understand and be comfortable with the selection process in advance of Sunday.

- b. **Automatic-qualification conferences.** The committee confirmed automatic-qualification conferences for 2025 during its February 19 session (see Action Item 2-b).
- c. **Selection criteria.** The committee reviewed the selection criteria and did not make any adjustments for the 2025 championship selections.

5. Site review/format/long-range planning.

- a. **Future championships in Cary, North Carolina.** The 2025, 2026, and 2027 championships will be in Cary. The committee and hosts are looking forward to an extended return of the Men's College Cup. The committee is committed to developing additional opportunities to increase attendance and engagement surrounding the championship. Four consecutive years in Cary provides a unique opportunity to market the championship and develop meaningful ways to enhance the experience.
- b. **Video review at preliminary rounds.** The committee is interested in pursuing mandatory video review for all matches in the postseason. The committee will meet in the coming months to review any applicable data that can help guide the decision and assess the impact on hosting institutions.

- 6. **Officiating.** The committee met with the national coordinator of officials to review the officials selection process. The committee has continued to share their desire to both protect referees and manage expectations of referees' responsibilities. Both topics work in tandem with playing rule adjustments and recommendations. The national coordinator of officials meets with the playing rules committees regularly to track things that are going well, areas that need improvement, and potential adjustments for the next playing rules cycle.
- 7. **Playing rules update.** The committee met with the playing rules staff and the men's soccer playing rules liaisons to review the playing rule adjustments implemented this year. The men's soccer committee shared concerns around bench decorum and is considering proposing a playing rules adjustment for mandatory team seating in the bench area outside of the traditional playing rules cycle.
- 8. **Academic and membership affairs update.** The committee received a report from the AMA staff, which included details regarding the new Division I Sport Oversight Committee (SOC), created as a result of merging the Student-Athlete Experience Committee (SAEC) and the Competition Oversight Committee (COC). The committee also discussed the current playing and practice season model and the desire to adjust the men's soccer championship segment to the spring.
- 9. **Pre-championship, host operations and site representative manuals.** The committee will provide staff with necessary updates. Any recommended updates will be reflected in the 2025 manuals.

10. Committee.

- a. **National and regional advisory committee composition/vacancies.** The committee reviewed upcoming committee vacancies. NCAA staff will work with conferences that have RAC members' terms expiring to nominate replacements in late summer.
- b. **Committee chair.** The committee approved Shawn Chin-Farrell, director of athletics at California State University, Northridge, as the chair beginning September 1, 2025. He will replace current chair, Tim Bernal, executive associate athletics director at the University of Kentucky, when Mr. Bernal's term on the committee expires August 31.
- c. **2025-26 committee calendar.** Selections for the 2025 championship will be November 16-18 in Indianapolis. The 2026 annual meeting is tentatively scheduled around January 26-28 but will be coordinated with the women's annual meeting.
- d. **Joint session.** The men's and women's committees met jointly. The group discussed a variety of topics including future sites and playing season updates. More information can be found in the joint committee report.

11. Other business.

- a. **Review of championship bracket size.** At a future meeting, the committee will review sponsorship data and assess whether it is appropriate to request a bracket increase based on the established access ratio thresholds.
- b. **United States Soccer concept.** The committee discussed the United States Soccer concept which includes an adjustment to the championship structure and playing and practice season.

Committee Chair: Tim Bernal, University of Kentucky, Sun Belt Conference
Staff Liaison(s): Micaela Liddane, Championships and Alliances

Division I Men's Soccer Committee January 29-30, 2025, and February 19, 2025, Meetings	
Attendees:	
Tim Bernal, University of Kentucky.	
Bob Butehorn, University of South Florida.	
Shawn Chin-Farrell, California State University, Northridge.	
Robert Emmerich, Stonybrook University.	
Brian Mackin, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.	
Bo Oshoniyi, Dartmouth College.	

Russell Payne, Northwestern University.
Carlos Somono, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Josh Berlo, Playing Rules Committee Member.
John Collins, National Coordinator of Officials.
Rich Grady, Secretary-Rules Editor for Men's Soccer.
Michael Seabolt, Playing Rules Committee Member.
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:
Micaela Liddane, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Tommy Barrett, Championships and Alliances.
Greg Bowder, Championships and Alliances.
Stanley Broaden, Championships and Alliances.
Michael Gett, Championships and Alliances.
Abigail Markey, Academic and Membership Affairs.
Jarom McLiver, Championships and Alliances.
Sadie Redburn, Championships and Alliances.
Danielle Romero, Championships and Alliances
Liz Wacienga, Championships and Alliances.