



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S SOCCER COMMITTEE
JANUARY 30-31, 2023, MEETING**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **KPI.** The committee voted to recommend using the KPI as another consideration tool for ranking and selection.
2. **Additional topics.** The committee is gathering information on more nonlegislative items action items to be submitted, including automatic qualifier approvals, enhanced hosting requirements (including but not limited to locker rooms and hotel requirements) and exploring a format change to include an extra day of rest for the second/third rounds.

ACTION ITEM.

1. **Legislative items.**

- None.

2. **Nonlegislative item.**

- **KPI.**

- a. Recommendation. That the KPI be used as another consideration during ranking and selection.
- b. Effective date. 2023 Championship.
- c. Rationale. The KPI is an established tool used that has been proven effective in basketball selections. After the presentation from Kevin Puga at last year's annual meeting and a review of the KPI data from the 2022 at this meeting, the committee feels that having another metric to consider in comparing teams is helpful. The KPI data was similar to the RPI data; however, instances where it differed prompted the committee to more closely compare those teams, continue discussion, and identify and discern inputs that contributed to the differences.

Like the RPI, the committee would use the KPI as a selection tool. It also will be a valuable addition when the committee discerns teams' resumes during the seeding process.

- d. Estimated budget impact. None.

- e. Student-athlete impact. Having more data at the committee's disposal will ensure teams are accurately evaluated during the selection and seeding process, therefore giving the student-athletes a more equitable path to postseason participation.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Review agenda and meeting schedule.** The committee reviewed the agenda and meeting schedule and made no adjustments.
2. **2022 committee annual meeting report.** The committee approved the 2022 annual meeting report as submitted.
3. **Joint committee agenda.** The committee reviewed the joint agenda and noted items to discuss and report out to the group.
4. **Review of the 2022 championship.**

- a. **Preliminary rounds.**

- (1) **Evaluations.** The committee would appreciate a more organized results report from the evaluation surveys, particularly knowing toward which site comments were directed. Several comments referenced locker rooms and whether the committee should review and adjust the minimum hosting requirements for the locker space. The main concern was the lack of equitable locker room space for the visiting team(s). Hotels also were raised as a concern, particularly the distance from the facility (more than 30 miles); hotels with limited rather than full service; and hotels with no or inadequate meeting space.

Two sites were cited as not meeting minimum requirements for hotels. Scott Leykam, the chair, will work with staff to draft correspondence to those schools to inquire about the shortcomings and how they will be rectified in the future.

- (2) **Broadcast.** Natalie Steger, NCAA associate director of championships and alliances, broadcast services, presented to the committee an ESPN+ recap and discussed this year's first-ever top-10 reveal, which was publicly well received. The committee decided the timing should be three weeks before selections and asked Ms. Steger to work with ESPN to identify a key matchup for the in-game reveal. Committee members decided to expand the reveal to the top 16 teams this fall.

- b. **Women's College Cup – Cary, North Carolina.** The committee was pleased with the host and site overall.

- (1) **Parking.** There is an ongoing concern with the parking situation. The ingress and egress of vehicles is a problem and there are long waits to enter the parking lots on the facility grounds. This year, it was even more challenging due to the University of North Carolina being one of the Women's College Cup teams and prompting the expected sellout crowd. Staff was directed to continue working with the host on traffic control, traffic patterns and researching a shuttle option. Committee members also noted that portable restrooms should be provided in the parking lot area.
- (2) **Ticketing/attendance/marketing.** The committee was surprised to learn that while the event was announced as a sellout, which caused frustration among fans unable to procure a ticket beforehand, the final attendance announced was not a sellout. Staff was directed to find a way to realize the full attendance. The committee also wants to revisit the number of tickets that are offered to the youth soccer showcase tournament in town. While offering tickets to the teams helps ensure a large crowd, committee members noted that fans of the participating teams were displeased about not being able to purchase tickets after their team made the tournament because they were already sold to the youth tournament attendees prior to that time.

The committee also reviewed the marketing research that was conducted.

- (3) **Student-athlete banquet.** The committee approved moving the student-athlete banquet from Thursday (which is also the practice day and the day before competition) to Wednesday night. This will decompress the schedule and allow for a much better experience for the student-athletes. The committee also noted that other championships already hold their student-athlete banquets two days prior to the competition (including softball, men's lacrosse, men's golf, women's golf, FCS football and men's and women's cross country). The NCAA travel group also noted that historically most teams have arrived on Wednesday, which is a request that has traditionally been approved; therefore, the committee believes moving that banquet will not cause an undue increase in expenses.
- (4) **Committee assignments.** The committee will review the committee assignments while on site at the Women's College Cup and add more areas of responsibilities and more detailed explanation of each duty. The committee also agreed to meet on the first day of arrival to discuss the assignments and talk through roles and responsibilities. Members suggested developing a one-page frequently asked questions document for team liaisons.
- (5) **Onsite administrative meeting.** The committee expressed its desire to return to in-person administrative meeting at the championship, to be conducted on Thursday. While the virtual meeting earlier in the week covers most topics, some items such as pregame timing sheets and expectations, and other site-specific items could be better discussed after being on site. The committee also discussed implementing the virtual

advancing teams meeting on Saturday. The main topics for the Saturday meeting would focus on championship pregame and postgame activities.

- (6) **Broadcast/ESPN.** The committee reviewed information from ESPN and discussed the viewership, minimum requirements for ESPN+, and ratings for the Monday night championship.

c. **Committee ranking calls and selection weekend.**

- (1) **Selection, seeding and bracketing process.** The committee discussed the selection process and asked staff to explore creating electronic versions of the “boards” that are in the room and show them on the monitors so that they are easier to see for those in the room and can be presented via Teams for anyone attending virtually.

The committee reviewed the process and tools used during selections. Some committee members were able to join a portion of the men's meeting where Will Hopkins, championship manager for Division I Field Hockey, provided perspective from the field hockey committee's pilot use of KPI in 2022. The women's soccer committee also had the opportunity to review KPI data ran from 2022 women's soccer results. While the rankings order was very similar to RPI, the areas where it differed prompted the committee to reexamine the inputs. The committee found this valuable to the evaluation process, as it identified areas that warranted further discussion. The committee recommends that the KPI be added as another tool to use during ranking and selection. (Refer to Action Item 2).

- (2) **Bracketing pilot program.** Overall, the committee was very pleased with the pilot initiative the Division I Competition Oversight Committee (COC) approved allowing the women's soccer and women's volleyball committees to seed 32 teams (50% of the bracket as opposed to 25% in previous years). The COC requested feedback from both sport committees regarding the process and whether modifications were warranted.

The women's soccer committee recommends expanding to seed teams 1-48 in pods of four (similar to how the pods of four were grouped when seeding 32 teams); teams 49-64 will be sent to sites based on geographic proximity while avoiding first- and second-round conference matchups. Teams 49-64 will not go back to the same site as the previous year, using the 2023 championship as the starting point.

- (3) **2023 automatic qualifying conferences.** Due to the submission deadline being later than the committee meeting, the committee could not review the automatic qualification forms at this meeting but will report recommendations in the near future.

5. 2023 championship preparation. The committee directed staff to work with the hosts, the Town of Cary and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, on the following items:

- Conduct the student-athlete banquet on Wednesday night and secure one venue for all four teams.
- Address parking and traffic issues and develop a comprehensive plan to better handle the ingress/egress, to be implemented for 2023 championship.
- Explore more options/development of Fan Fest.
- Explore the outdoor deck by the press box to use as VIP/hospitality space for the competing teams.
- Inquire about securing game clocks in the locker rooms to alleviate some pregame timing issues experienced during the 2022 championship.

6. Championship format. The committee reviewed the current model the United Soccer Coaches association is discussing. Given the hold on the men's 21st Century Model proposal and the pending implementation of the Division I Transformation Committee recommendations regarding sport governance models, the committee did not act or provide comment on the women's model at this time.

However, the committee did ask staff to research the cost of adding a day of rest between the second and third rounds. Currently, the second and third rounds are the only ones conducted at the same site, except for the Women's College Cup site, which added a day of rest between the semifinals and final matches this past year. The same rationale for adding a day between semifinals and final applies to the second and third rounds.

The committee suggests conducting the second-round matches on Thursday and the third-round matches on Sunday. If a site has a school with a no-Sunday play policy, that site would conduct the second-round matches on Friday and the third-round match on Monday. If this move were to occur, the quarterfinal segment of the bracket should move to Saturday to ensure equitable rest for the advancing teams and afford more time to travel from the second/third-round site to the quarterfinals (which is conducted Thanksgiving weekend). Another consideration is if the men's format changes, confirming the proposed date changes do not coincide in the event a school is selected to host both men's and women's soccer.

7. Officials. The committee reviewed the presentation from Ryan Cigich, the NCAA national coordinator for soccer officiating.

8. Rules feedback. The committee reviewed the data presented regarding the recent rules changes of the elimination of overtime during the regular season and requiring both overtime periods to be played to completion during postseason (i.e., elimination of the golden goal/sudden victory). The committee stated it wants to see another year's worth of data before evaluating and commenting on these major rules changes as they have only been in place for one season.

9. Committee.

- a. Timeline.** The committee reviewed the timeline and staff noted any recommended changes.
 - b. National and regional advisory committees.** The committee reviewed upcoming committee vacancies and NCAA staff will contact conferences whose RAC members' terms have expired to nominate replacements in late summer. Committee members noted that conference membership changes should be reviewed prior to finalizing the RAC roster.
- 10. Future sites.** The committee discussed upcoming future sites, the next open sites and the upcoming bid process for 2026-30.
 - 11. Future meeting dates.** The committee is exploring the feasibility of meeting at the same time as the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee. If that does not work, the committee recommended meeting January 29-30, 2024.
 - 12. Joint session.** The men's and women's committees met jointly and heard from NCAA staff regarding the Division I Transformation Committee's recommendation regarding a sport management governance model that would create oversight committees by sport in addition to the championship committees. The men's and women's committees cited a preference for having separate oversight committees for each gender and will provided feedback when requested.

The committees continue to meet jointly to improve consistency and collaboration to provide the best possible championship experience for the student-athletes.

Committee Chair: Scott Leykam, University of Portland, West Coast Conference.
Staff Liaison(s): Kelly S. Whitaker, Championships and Alliances.

NCAA Division I Women's Soccer Committee January 30-31, 2023, Meeting	
Attendees:	
Duane Bailey, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.	
Maggie Bailey, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.	
Jennifer Klein, University of Michigan.	
Scott Leykam, University of Portland.	
Matt Mott, University of Mississippi.	
Keri Mendoza, California Polytechnic State University.	
Tim Santoro, North Carolina State University.	
Susan Vollmerhausen, Southern Methodist University.	

Jackie Wallgren, University of Akron.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Ryan Cigich, NCAA National Coordinator for Soccer Officiating.
Patricia Hughes, United Soccer Coaches Association.
Dan Margulis, Michael Feinberg, Khari Chimes and Andrew Green, ESPN
Chris Roseman and Lindsay Sharp, St Louis Sports Commission.
William Davis and Scott Dupree, Town of Cary.
NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support if subcommittee) in Attendance:
Mark Bedics, Championships and Alliances.
Kelly S. Whitaker, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Aimee Hartman, Championships and Alliances, Marketing and Ticketing.
Miriam Jaber, NCAA Intern for Leadership Development.
Nick Moeller, Media Coordination and Statistics.
Chris Rakow, Championships and Alliances.
Natale Steger, Championships and Alliances, Broadcast Services.
Jerry Vaughn, Academic and Membership Affairs.