



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S SOCCER COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 9, 2024, AND JANUARY 29, 2025, MEETINGS**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Championship date formula change.** The committee is requesting to move its championship back one week starting with the 2026 championship. (See Action Item 2-e.)
2. **Additional topics.** The committee is requesting video review for the 2025 NCAA Division I Women's Soccer Championship, adding a second day of rest between the second and third rounds of the championship and allowing all student-athletes to participate in NCAA tournament games. (See Action Items 2-b, 2-c and 2-d.)

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **Legislative items.**

- None.

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

a. **Automatic qualification.**

- (1) Recommendation. Approve the following 30 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2025 NCAA Division I Women's Soccer Championship:

America East Conference; American Athletic Conference; ASUN Conference; Atlantic 10 Conference; Atlantic Coast Conference; Big 12 Conference; Big East Conference; Big Sky Conference; Big South Conference; Big Ten Conference; Big West Conference; Coastal Athletic Association; Conference USA; Horizon League; The Ivy League; Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference; Mid-American Conference; Missouri Valley Conference; Mountain West Conference; Northeast Conference; Ohio Valley Conference; Patriot League; Southeastern Conference; Southern Conference; Southland Conference; Southwestern Athletic Conference; The Summit League; Sun Belt Conference; West Coast Conference; and Western Athletic Conference.

- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.

- (3) Rationale. This reflects all eligible conferences.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

b. Championship format change.

- (1) Recommendation. Establish a second day of rest between the second and third rounds of the NCAA tournament.
- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.
- (3) Rationale. Most Division I women's soccer teams do not play with only one day off between games all season. Therefore, the committee recommends that student-athletes not play on one day's rest before one of the biggest games of their season in the third round. To accommodate the request, the committee would only allow first-round games on Friday or Saturday (institutions would need a waiver to host Sunday). Currently, teams are allowed to host Friday, Saturday or Sunday, but this year there was only one first-round game played on Sunday. The second round would be moved to Thursday and the third round would be Sunday (if Brigham Young University were to host, they would play Friday-Monday). Currently, schools are mandated to host Friday-Sunday with BYU being allowed to host Thursday-Saturday. In addition, the committee would mandate that all Sunday games be played no later than 2 p.m. local time to allow all teams to travel home the night of the game. In 2024, seven of the eight third-round games were played Saturday night. Quarterfinals would be Friday or Saturday as has always been the procedure for the following week. Currently, there are at least two days of rest between every round of the Division I men's soccer tournament and this request would provide the women the same benefit.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. The NCAA accounting staff is working to determine the financial impact.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. This will ensure that the student-athletes have at least two days of rest between every game of the NCAA tournament, which would be equitable with the men's tournament.

c. Video review.

- (1) Recommendation. Require all preliminary-round hosts to provide video review.
- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.
- (3) Rationale. With the continuously evolving technology, the chance for human error, and video review being allowed by the rules committee, the committee believes video review should be required during the championship to mitigate the chance for a team being eliminated by mistakes that could otherwise have been corrected. Last year, the

Competition Oversight Committee tabled this request and asked for more information regarding what teams typically do in terms of video review. In the 2024 tournament, 38 of the 44 preliminary-round host sites had replay available, so not many hosts would be impacted by this request. Currently, video review is in place for the national semifinals and final. From a gender equity standpoint, in the 2024 men's tournament, 25 of the 32 preliminary-round tournament sites provided video review. In addition, the men's soccer committee is also expected to forward a similar request.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None. The expectation of hosting will be that the host cover the cost of the production.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. This will ensure any egregious errors by the officials are able to be reviewed and hopefully fixed to make sure the deserving student-athletes are rewarded for their efforts.

d. Players available to participate in NCAA tournament.

- (1) Recommendation. Allow every student-athlete that dresses the ability to enter the game.
- (2) Effective date. 2025 championship.
- (3) Rationale. Currently, only 22 student-athletes are allowed to play in a given NCAA tournament game even though there is no limit during the regular season. There is no competitive advantage in being able to play more than 22 players as typically those players would only enter a contest during a lopsided game. Therefore, in situations where a team is winning by a lopsided margin, a coach would be able to put in the players that normally don't get in to help mitigate the score in addition to giving the student-athletes the experience of playing in an NCAA tournament game.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None for NCAA. Most teams are already bringing their entire roster, but for those that don't there would be a financial impact.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. This will ensure that every student-athlete be treated the same and have the chance to enter the game.

e. Championship date formula change.

- (1) Recommendation. Adjust the championship date formula by moving the tournament back one week. In coordination with the adoption of proposal 2024-62, the committee recommends moving the championship back one week.

(2) Effective date. 2026 season.

(3) Rationale. Recently adopted legislation (Proposal No. 2024-62) increases the playing season by two weeks. Currently, the championship starts three weeks prior to the start of the Women's College Cup, which is defined as the first full weekend of December. The committee is recommending that the Women's College Cup fall on the second full weekend in December, with the championship still starting three weeks prior to the start of the Women's College Cup. The committee believes this will help schools mitigate costs by only having to bring student-athletes back to school one week earlier than currently. This also would place the women's championship on the same weekend as the men's championship. Cary, North Carolina, which has already been selected for both championships in 2026 and 2027, has confirmed that it will have no issues in hosting both on the same weekend. In addition, staff has contacted broadcast partner ESPN to confirm that they will be able to broadcast both events on the same weekend.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. This will allow the student-athletes to have an expanded regular season, which will decompress the number of games that need to be played in the same week, allowing for more rest and less missed class time.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Review agenda and meeting schedule.** The committee reviewed the agenda and meeting schedule.
2. **2024 committee annual meeting report.** The committee approved the 2024 annual meeting report as submitted.
3. **Academic and Membership Affairs/Student-Athlete Engagement Committee Update.** The committee received an update from Abbie Markey, NCAA associate director of academic and membership affairs, on legislative proposal 2024-62 that was adopted at the 2025 NCAA Convention. The committee was directed to discuss the impact of the legislation on the championship and make a proposal to the Sports Oversight Committee. (See Action Item 2-e above.)
4. **Joint committee agenda.** The committee reviewed the joint agenda and noted items to discuss and report out to the group.
5. **Review of the 2024 championship.**
 - a. **Preliminary rounds.**

(1) Evaluations. The committee reviewed the evaluations from the preliminary rounds. The areas of concern about which the committee had extensive discussion were: (1) This was the first year mandating hotels two nights prior to game day and it was very well received; (2) Hosts need to do a better job making sure the meeting room at the hotel is large enough to accommodate a soccer team and is available the entire time the team is staying at the property; (3) There was continued discussion about possible solutions to reimbursing teams for higher per diem when they are forced to pay high hotel rates due to the host school also hosting a football game on campus and can they be approved for the high cost city rate in these situations.

(2) Broadcast. Tommy Barrett, NCAA coordinator of championships and alliances, broadcast services, presented to the committee an ESPN+ recap and discussed the implementation of a \$5,000 stipend to all hosts for each game.

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

(1) Evaluations. The committee reviewed the evaluations and commented on several items. The police escorts being handled by the state police were effective and well-received. Parking and traffic continue to be an issue from a fan standpoint. The committee also decided to keep team ticket allotments to 310 per team, but wanted staff to figure out a way to increase the flexibility for the teams holds when warranted.

(2) Committee timing. The committee reviewed the assignments and felt they were still appropriate. The committee started its annual meeting in person on the day of the championship game and felt it was time well spent. In addition, the change of only having the team liaisons arrive on Wednesday and the rest of the committee not until Thursday was effective and efficient.

c. Committee ranking calls and selection weekend.

(1) Selection, seeding and bracketing process. The committee feels that being able to seed 50 percent of the bracket continues to be a successful component of the bracketing process. The committee also discussed the potential for having conference teams play each other in the second round if they didn't play in the regular season to gain some flexibility in the pairing process, but no recommendation was made.

(2) Selection criteria. The committee made numerous changes to the selection criteria in 2024 and felt it was effective in the selection process and produced the desired results and therefore felt no more changes needed to be made at this time.

- (3) KPI, and other ranking systems. The committee felt that the KPI should be used more in selections as a valued tool in the process. The committee reviewed the Massey Ratings and decided not to request it as an additional selection criterion at this point.
- (4) RPI. The committee reviewed the changes it made to the RPI for the 2024 selections and felt the changes had their intended affect.
- (5) 2025 automatic qualifying conferences. The committee is recommending all eligible conferences to receive automatic qualification. (See Action Item 2-a above.)
6. **2025 Championship preparation**. The 2025 semifinals and final will be held in Kansas City, Missouri at CPKC Stadium. NCAA staff and the committee chair will take a site visit to the venue during the summer of 2025. Ryan Higginbotham was at the stadium for the 2024 Big 12 Championships and felt the stadium will provide a great venue for the NCAA championship. With the lack of a practice area at the venue, there will need to be additional time between semifinal games for the second game participants to adequately warm up.
7. **Championship format**. Currently, there is only one day off between the second and third rounds of the tournament, which is the only time all season most teams have one day off between games. Therefore, the committee is making a recommendation to have two days off between the second and third rounds. (See Action Item 2-b above.)
8. **Video review**. The committee reviewed data provided by the rules committee related to video during the 2024 championship, noting that 57 of the 63 games in the tournament had video available. Therefore, the committee recommending that all hosts be required to provide video review starting with the 2025 championship. (See Action Item 2-c above.)
9. **Players in a game**. The committee is making a recommendation to allow all student-athletes that dress for the NCAA tournament the ability to enter the game. (See Action Item 2-d above.)
10. **Officials**. John Collins, the NCAA national coordinator for soccer officiating, presented to the committee on a number of items. He discussed the process of selecting the officials for the tournament in addition to the educational enhancements that are being made to help officials.
11. **Rules feedback**. The committee met with the NCAA Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee to discuss a variety of topics, mainly video review. The committee was reminded that it is not a rules change year.
12. **Committee**.
 - a. **Timeline**. The committee reviewed the timeline and wanted to have a March 2025 call to go over expectations with all of the new members who will be selected at the Division I

Nominating Committee's February meeting. In addition, the committee would like to have its annual kickoff call at the beginning of August.

b. National and regional advisory committees. The committee reviewed upcoming committee vacancies and noted the need for additional coaches on the committee.

- 13. Election of chair.** The committee voted unanimously to elect Jackie Wallgren, senior associate athletics director at the University of Akron, as chair of the committee, starting September 1, 2025.
- 14. Future meeting dates.** The committee felt the hybrid approach of meeting onsite at the championship and then via video conference was effective and should be repeated in 2025-26.

Committee Chair: Keri Mendoza, California Polytechnic State University, Big West Conference.
Staff Liaison(s): Mark Bedics, Championships and Alliances.

Division I Women's Soccer Committee December 9, 2024, and January 29, 2025, Meetings	
Attendees:	
Duane Bailey, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.	
James Downer, Saint Francis University (Pennsylvania).	
Nathan Fry, Harvard University.	
Ryan Higginbotham, Texas Christian University.	
Keri Mendoza, California Polytechnic State University.	
Kris Pierce, University of South Florida.	
Eddie Radwanski, Clemson University.	
Stephanie Ransom, University of Georgia.	
Brandi Stuart, Pennsylvania State University.	
Jackie Wallgren, University of Akron.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
John Collins, NCAA national coordinator for soccer officiating.	
Aaron Katzman and Mallory Kenny, ESPN.	
NCAA Staff Liaison (or Staff Support if subcommittee) in Attendance:	
Mark Bedics and Jackie Kawamoto.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Abbie Markey, Nick Moeller, Alyssa Rice and Tommy Barrett.	