2026 DI SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HOST OPERATIONS 2025-26 MANUAL

Preliminary Rounds

Division I Softball

Contents

Section 1 • Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Products 4
Section 2 • Americans with Disabilities Act 6
Section 3 • Awards 7
Section 4 • Bands, Spirit Squads and Mascots 8
Section 5 • Banquet 9
Section 6 • Championship Presentation/Fan Engagement 10
Section 7 • Commercialism/Contributors 13
Section 8 • Competition Site Requirements/Diagrams 19
Section 9 • Drug Testing 26
Section 10 • Equipment 27
Section 11 • Financial Administration 28
Section 12 • Game Management 30
Section 13 • Health & Safety Considerations 36
Section 14 • Hydration Product 38
Section 15 • Insurance 39
Section 16 • Lodging 41
Section 17 • Marketing 43
Section 18 • Media Services 45
Section 19 • Merchandise/Licensing 54
Section 20 • Programs 56
Section 21 • Safety and Security 59
Section 22 • Ticketing 62
Section 23 • Transportation 64
Section 24 • Umpires 65
Section 25 • Volunteers 66
Appendix A • Administrative Meeting 68
Appendix B • Umpire Meeting Agenda 71
Appendix C • Weather Policy 72
Appendix D • Pregame Timing Sheets 74
Appendix E • Volunteer Waiver 76
Appendix F • Marketing Strategies 78
Appendix G • Bat Testing 79
Appendix H • Equipment List 83
Appendix I • Clock Operation Guide 84
Appendix J • Clock Protocol 86
Appendix K • Guide to Live Stats 89

INTRODUCTION

This manual outlines the responsibilities of an institution/conference hosting this round of an NCAA championship. It is essential that each host institution/conference staff become familiar with the information and policies included in this manual.

The NCAA considers this hosting opportunity a partnership between the host institution/conference, competition site, committee and the NCAA. The primary objective of each individual involved in the administration of the championship shall be to provide a memorable championship experience for each participating student-athlete, coach, institutional staff member and championship attendee.

DEFINITIONS

Championship: Postseason competition conducted by the NCAA in a particular sport, in which eligible student-athletes and teams of active member institutions compete to determine the division champion (or National Collegiate champion in sports that do not have a separate division championship) in that sport.

Governing Sports Committee: The NCAA membership committee responsible for developing policies and procedures governing the administration and conduct of the championship under its jurisdiction, subject to the approval of the applicable division's governance structure and the requirements, standards and conditions prescribed by NCAA Bylaw 31.

Host Institution/Conference: An active NCAA member institution and/or conference selected to serve as host for a championship. The host shall administer the finances of an NCAA championship in accordance with the institutional/conference championship budget, as submitted during the selection process and approved by the governing sports committee.

Local Organizing Committee: A local organization formed in the city where a member institution/conference proposes to host an NCAA championship, to provide to the NCAA services and assistance in connection with the various activities related to the championship. The host institution/conference must be a part of the leadership of the local organizing committee.

NCAA Championships Manager: The staff member(s) representing the NCAA championships and alliances staff assigned to serve as administrator(s) for a championship.

ROLE OF NCAA

The NCAA championships and alliances staff, working in conjunction with the NCAA sport committees and other NCAA partners, will lead the planning efforts, management and execution of all NCAA championships and events. The NCAA will oversee all aspects of the championship and its related activities, including facility operations and space allocations, hotel accommodations, media and team operations, hospitality functions and social events, in venue entertainment, fan and sponsor events, broadcast programming, youth events, as well as many other aspects.

The NCAA will work closely with the host institution/conference, competition venue and local organizing committee to ensure that the championship provides a positive and rewarding experience for student-athletes and fans.

ROLE OF GOVERNING SPORT COMMITTEE

The NCAA's core purpose, values and envisioned future provide the framework for all actions in the committee's administration of the championship and its stewardship of the game. Within the framework and spirit of its charge, the governing sport committee will balance the principle of student-athlete well-being with its efforts to maximize exposure for intercollegiate athletics and revenues from the championship through policies and activities that are subject to the final authority of the NCAA Division I Board of Directors.

DIVISION I SOFTBALL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The list of current committee members may be accessed here.

NCAA STAFF

John Bugner Director, Championships and Alliances (O): 317-917-6529 (C): 317-522-7220 (E): **jbugner@ncaa.org**	**Liz Turner Suscha** Managing Director, Championships and Alliances (O): 317-917-6189 (C): 317-270-3318 (E): **lsuscha@ncaa.org**
Kelly S. Whitaker Associate Director, Championships and Alliances (O): 317-917-6511 (C): 317-476-6867 (E): **kwhitaker@ncaa.org**	**Sami Bogenschutz** Assistant Coordinator, Championships and Alliances (O): 317-917-6984 (E): **sbogenschutz@ncaa.org**

PRELIMINARY-ROUND FACILITIES AND GAMESMANSHIP

Institutions that do not or choose not to meet the facility, crowd management and game management requirements set forth in the Division I Softball Prechampionship Manual and the Host Operations Manual will not be eligible to host the following year, even if they are a seeded team.

Section 1 • Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Products

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Beer, wine and prepackaged/premixed beverages (in the latter case, with alcohol by volume content not greater than 15% such as most hard seltzers) may be sold and dispensed at NCAA Divisions I, II, and National Collegiate championship and ancillary events, provided that the host, venue and/or concessionaire:

- Comply with, and certify in writing the compliance with, the NCAA Championship and Ancillary Event Alcohol Sales Policy, as amended by the NCAA from time to time, which addresses such matters as:
    - Permissible types of alcoholic beverages;
    - Eligibility for the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages;
    - Indemnity, warranty and insurance obligations; and
    - Verification.
- Agree to (i) keep and maintain, or cause its designated vendor or concessionaire to keep and maintain, complete and accurate records of all (a) alcohol-related incidents (e.g., expulsions, arrests) and (b) sales transactions related to the sale of concessions at the NCAA Championship and related ancillary events, including gross revenue, cost of goods, allocable overhead, and applicable taxes; (ii) no later than sixty (60) days after the conclusion of the event, provide the NCAA with a report setting forth in reasonable detail such information, together with the corresponding dates of transaction, including (a) alcohol-related revenue generated on each day of the event, (b) the direct cost of selling alcohol at the event (including the cost of goods), and (c) the indirect cost of selling alcohol at the event (including overhead and increased security needs at the event venue site); and (iii) permit the books, records, and accounts of host, venue and vendor/concessionaire pertaining to the sale of concessions at the event to be inspected, audited, and copied by NCAA or its agents at any time during normal business hours upon giving reasonable notice to host, venue and vendor/concessionaire.
- Agree to pay the NCAA an amount of twenty percent (20%) of the gross revenue generated from the sale of alcohol during the event (and any approved ancillary events), less the pro rata applicable sales tax and credit card fees (without deduction of any operating, costs of goods, indirect, or other expenses, such as overhead, marketing, fulfillment, general and administrative, interest, or other expenses), with such agreement to be reflected in a written agreement between the NCAA and the applicable parties (host, venue and/or concessionaire) executed prior to, or simultaneously with, the NCAA's official selection of the host for the applicable championship.
- Following the championship conclusion, provide the NCAA with certain information regarding the concessions activity – including gross sales, direct costs and applicable taxes – for food, nonalcoholic beverages and alcoholic beverages sold during the event.
- Execute, as part of the bid submission, the applicable policy and agreement documents maintained in the NCAA Championships Bid Portal.

General

The NCAA shall determine in its sole discretion whether alcohol will be sold or distributed at the ancillary events.

The venue, LOC/host and/or caterer shall be responsible for any permits unless otherwise directed by the NCAA.

Promotional items (cups, shakers, flags, signs, etc.) with commercial slogans or identification or other unauthorized markings are not permitted inside the practice, competition and/or ancillary event venue(s), inside surrounding areas/facilities that are to be used, or outside on practice, competition and/or ancillary event venue property unless expressly approved in advance by the NCAA. Items such as newspapers, handbills, flyers, memorabilia, T-shirts, caps, etc. (except products sold or authorized by the NCAA or its vendors) may not be distributed on these premises. Demographic or other studies may not be conducted unless approved in advance by the NCAA.

An economic impact study can be executed at an NCAA championship to examine the effect of the championship(s) on the local economy. In some cases, the NCAA will conduct an on-site study and will provide the data to the host once the study is completed. In other cases, the NCAA will support the hosts' efforts to execute a study. This can be done using the hosts' own approach/tools or the NCAA's Economic Impact Study "In-a-Box" tool."

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The use of tobacco products surrounding NCAA championships is against championship policy and many facility policies. Violations of this policy are subject to misconduct penalties and team administrators are asked to ensure this policy is adhered to, particularly at the competition site and in any public settings. Penalties for violating this policy are outlined in the misconduct provisions and may include financial implications.

Section 2 • Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III prohibits private places of public accommodation (e.g., sports arenas) from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. The host institution/conference is required to confirm that each facility in which an NCAA championship or ancillary event occurs is in compliance with the ADA. The host institution/conference is responsible for determining if the competition site will be in compliance as of the dates of the championship. If the host institution/conference becomes aware that a competition site hosting an NCAA championship event will not be in compliance, it shall immediately notify the NCAA national office staff member with responsibility for the event in order to discuss the issue.

If the host institution/conference receives a request for an accommodation, which may require input from the NCAA, the host institution/conference shall immediately notify the NCAA national office staff member with responsibility for the event in order to address the request.

Section 3 • Awards

CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS PRESENTATION

To celebrate and enhance the student-athlete experience at the super regional sites, the NCAA will send items to increase the excitement and the level of championship branding exposure in photos for student-athlete's memories when looking back on their experience. Each super-regional champion will receive a super-regional champion team trophy and 50 generic super regional champions hats to commemorate the experience of winning a super regional. Listed below is a summary of steps that should be followed in preparation for the distribution of product.

- Please remove all hangtags and stickers (if needed) on the merchandise before being distributed.
- The team trophy should be presented immediately as the team celebration is occurring.
- The merchandise should be distributed to the winning team only, immediately after the handshake as soon as the game has officially concluded. Extra product (if any) should be given to the team's equipment manager. This photo should be sent to Nathan Arkins (**narkins@ncaa.org**) immediately following postgame wrap up to use for special signage at the Women's College World Series.
- A "ticket punched" sign will be sent for the team to hold during the celebratory team photo, which should be taken on the field after the immediate celebration. The photo should include the sign and the team wearing their champion hats.
- Any winning team inquiries about obtaining additional locker room product should be directed to Jared Hunt with Event 1 for T-shirts (**jared.hunt@unrivaledteamwear.com**) and Jackie Rivas or Matt Boeke at Zephyr for hats (**jacqueline.rivas@blue84.com** or **matt.boeke@blue84.com**). Please contact David Clendenin, associate director of licensing, at the NCAA national office should you have any questions, **dclendenin@ncaa.org** or 317-917-6496.

CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS

MTM, Inc., the NCAA national office awards supplier, will send official NCAA participant medallions for the nonadvancing team's squad size (22) to the tournament director before competition. When the awards arrive, the tournament director should inventory all awards to be sure they are undamaged, are correctly inscribed and are in the appropriate quantities. The awards boxes should then be retaped, closed and secured in a limited-access area.

ORDERING ADDITIONAL AWARDS

To order additional awards after the championship, please go to **services.mtmrecognition.com/ncaa**.

PARTICIPATION

Due to the financial burden on a host institution, to be consistent with NCAA policy, and to provide each student-athlete participating in NCAA preliminary-round competition the same experience, **mementos will NOT be permitted at preliminary rounds.**

Section 4 • Bands, Spirit Squads and Mascots

ADMISSION

A maximum of 25 band members, including the director, 12 uniformed cheerleaders and/or pep squad members, and one costumed mascot will be admitted free of charge. Each institution's administrator should be asked to submit a typewritten list to the tournament manager and NCAA representative at the coaches meeting prior to the competition.

ARTIFICIAL NOISEMAKERS

The use of artificial noisemakers, air horns, cow bells, ball buckets, etc., and electronic amplifiers by student-athletes, team personnel and fans is prohibited while on site for competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site. Further, electronic effects and bands may not play when the game is in progress.

DESIGNATED AREAS

Cheerleaders and mascots will be permitted only in their team's designated area at all times. Additionally, mascots are not permitted on the field at any time. No live animal mascots are permitted in the stadium at any time.

ELECTRONIC AMPLIFICATION

Bands may use electronic amplification equipment only with the specific approval of the NCAA representative.

FIGHT SONGS/MUSIC

Hosts should plan on playing institution fight songs after each score, unless the host reaches out for specific runs scored/home run songs. Institution fight songs will be provided by the NCAA. **Batter walk-up music will not be played unless arranged for all teams at the site.**

MAXIMUM NUMBER

A maximum of 25 band members plus the director, 12 uniformed spirit squad members plus the sponsor, and one costumed mascot will be admitted free of charge. Live animal mascots are not permitted. The institution may purchase additional tickets for band members; however, no more than 25 will be permitted to play during any session.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The national anthem shall be played after the introduction of the starting lineups. The anthem shall be played before the first contest of each session only.

SEATING

Bands should be seated in the area usually reserved for bands. Place bands in rows so as not to interfere with spectators, photographers or teams, subject to the approval of the NCAA representative.

WARM-UP MUSIC

The host institution will administer the music throughout the regional/super regional. **Batter walk-up music will not be played unless arranged for all teams at this site.**

Section 5 • Banquet

Due to the financial burden on a host institution, to be consistent with NCAA policy, and to provide each student-athlete participating in NCAA regionals and super regionals competition the same experience, banquets and mementos will NOT be permitted at regional and super regional competition.

Section 6 • Championship Presentation/Fan Engagement

FAN FESTS

The NCAA prohibits host institutions/conferences from conducting special ancillary entertainment activities for fans in conjunction with the championship. Should another entity (e.g., convention and visitor's bureau) elect to stage such activities, the following policies shall apply:

- All plans must be approved in advance by the NCAA.
- NCAA marks, logos, name or references to the championship or tickets may not be used.
- No activity connected with the championship may be sponsored by an entity that is not an NCAA Corporate Champion/Corporate Partner (CC/P).
- Such an activity may not take place on property controlled by the competition venue.

No entity may contact NCAA CC/Ps directly. All such contact shall be directed through the NCAA staff.

NCAA MARKS

The NCAA owns and controls all rights and interests in its name, logo, seal, trademarks and service marks. Use of these marks is prohibited without advance written approval by the NCAA. Host institutions/conferences should review information outlined in NCAA Bylaw 31.6.1. Only official NCAA Corporate Champions/Partners (CC/Ps) and licensees are permitted to use NCAA marks and logos in commercial advertising and promotions, unless written approval is provided by NCAA Marketing. All and any proposed commercial advertising and promotions, if not by a CC/Ps, must be reviewed by NCAA Marketing staff prior to approval and production.

Game Presentation

NCAA championship hosts are required to use NCAA-provided public address announcer scripts, run-of-shows and video board content. Host and participating team messaging or video board content is not allowed. This includes promotion of upcoming events at the championship site, recognitions and sponsorships. Any enhancements that you would like to propose for the event must be approved by the championship manager.

IN-VENUE ENTERTAINMENT

Video Board Content and Public Address Scripts

The public address announcer scripts allow game management/game presentation to keep the flow of the championship moving through the communication of important information to those in attendance. Communicate with your NCAA championship manager to secure a timing sheet, PA script and run of show for the championship event you are hosting.

The NCAA will provide video board content to sites that have such capabilities. The video board content is important to the overall championship experience for student-athletes and those in attendance. Please work directly with your NCAA championship liaison to identify if there is a Van Wagner producer assigned to you (final sites) or if content should be downloaded from the Van Wagner box site directly (preliminary rounds).

Questions related to video board content logistics should be directed to:

Brandon Anthony– Senior Producer
Van Wagner
Telephone: 925-354-5721
Email: **banthony@vanwagner.com**

Break in Action Contests or Promotions

NCAA championship hosts are encouraged to explore in-venue entertainment options during the championship to keep fans engaged, excited and to enhance the atmosphere for both the fans and student-athletes. Various potential areas of in-venue entertainment and the guidelines associated with them are discussed below. Please discuss any forms of in-venue entertainment you would recommend with your NCAA staff point person for approval.

Hosts should consider continuing nonsponsored regular season halftime/quarter break/timeout contests and promotions or creating new, unbiased/nonsponsored promotions to use during NCAA championships. Entertainment can also include local performance groups or youth scrimmages. Guidelines and ideas for consideration:

- Must not include any commercial recognition (unless approved/provided by an NCAA corporate champion, partner or official equipment supplier and signed off by a member of the NCAA Corporate Relations staff).
- Must be appropriate and in good taste.
- Must fit safely within given time constraints with no chance of interfering with the competition.
- Must not negatively impact the championship playing surface in anyway.
- No connection or resemblance to gambling.
- Participants must be randomly selected.
- No bias toward or against any participating team.
- Campus and venue rules must be considered when developing the contest or promotion.
- NCAA championship merchandise purchased by the host (e.g., extra volunteer apparel, committee or contributor gifts, items or certificates purchased from Event 1) make good prizes for these contests as prizes with commercial recognition would not be permitted.

National Anthem Singers

Hosts are encouraged to explore their resources to bring in local, regional or even nationally recognized celebrities or groups to sing the national anthem (e.g., recording artists with strong local ties, military, local individuals, choir groups or bands). Guidelines and ideas for consideration:

- No bias toward or against any participating team (e.g., performers should not wear the apparel of a participating team).
- Performances should not come at a cost and will not be reimbursed by the NCAA.
- A brief description and “thank you” for the performing group or individual may be incorporated into the script, but no commercial recognition, sponsorship, sales or recruitment messages should be included.
- Highly recommend a pre-event rehearsal with the performer(s) and others involved.
- Anthem should take two minutes or less to perform, however please build extra time into the script for introduction and placement of the color guard (if applicable), and introduction/applause for the performer.

Enhanced Team Introductions

Examples of this could include using special music, smoke machines or on-field fireworks, youth athletes forming a tunnel or holding hands with student-athletes as they are introduced, local or school bands playing, etc. Guidelines and ideas for consideration:

- Must be appropriate and in good taste.
- Must fit safely within given time constraints with no chance of interfering with the competition.
- No bias toward or against any participating team and should be equally executed for all participating teams.
- Should be discussed with the NCAA point person in advance.

Affiliated Award Recognitions

If appropriate, national award winners for the given sport who are in attendance but not competing at the time of the scheduled recognition may be awarded on field during NCAA championships (e.g., Elite Scholar-Athlete Award winner, coaches' association player of the year winner, coach of the year). Please consult with the NCAA point person to determine appropriateness. Sponsored awards should not be incorporated without approval from an NCAA Corporate Relations and staff member.

Military Involvement

Military involvement in NCAA championships may include national anthem or break performances (military singer, instrumentalist or band), color guard, fly-overs, parachute teams, precision drill teams, etc. Please work with the NCAA CR and In-Venue team to finalize military involvement, as some elements may be influenced by partnership agreements. *Please see Military Involvement below for full description and guidelines.*

MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

The NCAA is supportive of inviting the military to participate at NCAA championships if their involvement enhances the championship experience for student-athletes and fans while at the same time honoring the military in an appropriate and unobtrusive manner. At many NCAA championships, local or national military groups have been arranged by the host to perform pregame, during halftime or other breaks in the action. These performances have included, but are not limited to, national anthem performances (military singer, instrumentalist or band), color guard, presentation of large flags, fly-overs, parachute teams, precision drill teams, eagle releases, reunions of troops returning from overseas with their families, honorary recognitions, etc. Please discuss any forms of military involvement which you would recommend with your NCAA staff point person, who would in turn discuss with the NCAA Corporate Relations and Game Presentation teams as some elements may be influenced by partnership agreements.

Guidelines

- Involvement from military groups often requires substantial government paperwork. Fly-overs and parachute jumps will also require FAA approval to be handled by the host. Please allow adequate lead time to coordinate.
- Host connections with local military bases will be most cost-effective in arranging military involvement.
- No messages about military recruitment should be incorporated into on-field performances.
- General messages paying tribute to all military personnel and thanking the particular military unit which has performed are encouraged (e.g., "Let's give a big round of applause for tonight's performance from the United States Air Force Heartland of America Band... and for all of the American military service personnel who they proudly represent.").
- Request for any type of presence on-site (e.g., booth space, interactive elements, inflatables, giveaway items or space within an NCAA fan festival) is not permitted unless discussed with your NCAA point person who would in turn discuss with the NCAA Corporate Relations team.
- Campus and venue rules must be considered when developing the presentation.
- Please discuss with your NCAA point person if providing complimentary access to watch the championship before or after their presentation is appropriate and possible.
- When several military groups are in attendance and recognized during one game/session of a multiday championship, you may want to consider a theme night "Military Appreciation Day/Night." This should be discussed with your NCAA point person. Marketing should also be involved if you do a theme night.

NIL INFORMATION

NCAA marks and intellectual property may not be used for product/service endorsements or commercial activity unless approved in writing in advance by the NCAA. This limitation is applicable to anyone seeking to use NCAA marks for endorsement or commercial purposes.

Section 7 • Commercialism/Contributors

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Activation of Corporate Champion and Corporate Partner Program. The NCAA may request/require that certain areas of the competition site be made available for use by NCAA Corporate Champions or Corporate Partners (CC/Ps) for the purpose of marketing/promotional events/activities. If such requests are made, the host institution will provide requested space or similar accommodations.

Local Organizing Committee Hospitality. If approved by the NCAA, the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) has the option to host specified events during the championship. Commercial identification of any kind at any LOC function is prohibited unless specifically approved by the NCAA. The NCAA must approve all uses of NCAA logos, names, or other graphics (including school logos). The LOC shall submit detailed proposals (e.g., location, date, time, food and beverage, entertainment, budget), to the NCAA for review and approval at least 60 days in advance of the event. Any such events conducted are conducted at the LOC's expense.

Other Functions. To enhance the experience for participating institutions, fans, and alumni during NCAA championships, the NCAA (in conjunction with a third-party agency) may facilitate an official hospitality program in or outside of the competition site.

PREMIUMS GUIDELINES

Competition Venue shall provide to the NCAA a set of guidelines, similar to those outlined below, that identify items that are not permitted in the venue no fewer than 120 days prior to the first NCAA championship related event. The NCAA will then utilize and share that information with its NCAA Corporate Champions and Corporate Partners.

Laser Pointers. Laser pointers of any kind are not allowed.

Noisemakers. Artificial noisemakers of any kind including but not limited to, air horns, electronic instruments, inflatable noisemakers, etc., are not permissible. Facility personnel are responsible for confiscating prohibited items at the entrance points or removing such items from the facility. Megaphones may be used for voice amplification, but they shall not be used as a distraction.

Promotional Items. Promotional items (cups, shakers, flags, etc.) with commercial slogans or identification other than those from NCAA Corporate Champions and Partners, are not allowed on the premises. Items such as newspapers, handbills, flyers, memorabilia, T-shirts, caps, etc., except products sold/distributed by the NCAA or its agents, may not be distributed on the premises.

Signs, Flags, Banners. Large signs, flags or banners are not permissible. It is the facility personnel's responsibility to confiscate all prohibited articles. Items that can be held by one individual, reflect good sportsmanship and do not block the view of other ticketed patrons may be permitted. In no case may a sign, flag or banner be affixed to the facility.

Video Camera/Still Camera Policies. Ticketed patrons shall not bring video equipment into the facility on game days. Still cameras with a lens no longer than four inches are permissible on any day.

NCAA CORPORATE CHAMPION AND CORPORATE PARTNER PROGRAM

The NCAA Corporate Champions and Corporate Partners Program (i.e., corporate sponsors of the NCAA), managed by the NCAA along with TNT Sports and CBS Sports, authorizes the exclusive rights to license NCAA trademarks, tickets and taglines in commercial promotions with respect to the NCAA championships.

The host shall not solicit or permit involvement by any corporations or entities whose products may be in competition with any of the NCAA corporate champions or corporate partners. All proposed commercial involvement must receive prior approval of the NCAA.

NCAA Corporate Champions and Corporate Partners are dedicated to emphasizing the role of athletics in higher education, support all 92 NCAA Championships and are granted a wide variety of benefits, including certain category exclusivity around use of NCAA logos, trademarks, designations and championship tickets.

For more information and a current list of corporate champions and partners, please click on the following link:
NCAA Corporate Champions & Partners

LOCAL CONTRIBUTOR PROGRAM

Currently, local non-CCP corporate entities are not permitted to utilize the NCAA's registered marks, logos, tickets, name or references to the championship in a promotional/commercial manner. If a host institution/conference has an interest in using value-in-kind contributors, the contributor plan must be approved in advance by the NCAA Corporate Relations staff. The LOC is permitted to involve a local contributor in the championship only as a sponsor of LOC activities or as a ticket package purchaser (pending NCAA approval of said local entities and approval of the arrangement).

Local contributors may only be referred to as "local contributors of the LOC." Local contributors may not use the word "official," "official sponsor of" or "corporate champion/partner" in any manner. Local contributors will not receive any in-venue or on-site recognition/branding/exposure, with the exception of small signage in private hospitality locations; in the souvenir (print or digital) game program, and/or additional digital advertisement space. In being recognized, these local contributors must be referenced as supporters of the local organizing committee, and not of the NCAA. Any recognition, branding and/or exposure creative must be submitted to the NCAA Corporate Relations staff for review and approval.

Local contributors may be provided an opportunity to purchase an advertisement in the souvenir game program, provided the corporation is not a competitor of any NCAA Corporate Champion. All advertisements must be submitted to the NCAA Corporate Relations staff for advance approval. As noted above, local contributors who purchase an NCAA-approved ticket package may not receive recognition of any kind without the advanced approval of the NCAA staff.

NCAA TRADEMARKS

NOTE: These general guidelines do not include merchandise designs. All product designs must be submitted through the NCAA's licensing program administered by The Collegiate Licensing Company. Inquiries should be directed to the NCAA licensing staff.

1. ALL uses of NCAA trademarks or logos must be submitted to the NCAA for approval.

2. Downloads of NCAA logos may be obtained through the **NCAA Digital Library**.

3. The NCAA's position on inclusion of ® and ™ marks is first and most prominent use.

   The location of the trademark and how it is used is the primary factor in determining if a trademark symbol should be included in text. If the protected logo location is prominent and the primary focus on the page or product design, an ® or ™ in the text is not necessary. However, if the logo location is placed lower on the page or is secondary to the message being delivered, an ® or ™ in the text or header (first use only) should be inserted.

   In the case of NCAA Women's Final Four, an ® is required after NCAA and after Women's Final Four. The NCAA owns "NCAA" and "Women's Final Four", but "NCAA Women's Final Four" is not a registered mark in itself: NCAA® Women's Final Four®.

   To further expand, if the NCAA primary logo, which displays the registered mark, is used in a prominent position; NCAA Women's Final Four would require an R-ball only after the Four because the NCAA has already been identified as a registered mark. NCAA Women's Final Four®.

4. In radio and television advertising, NCAA should only be pronounced as N-C-A-A or N-C-double-A. It should not be referenced as "N-C-two-A" or in any other fashion.

5. Official names cannot be changed or abbreviated unless specifically trademarked (Final 4).

6. There may be no registration of or use of NCAA marks within internet domain names unless advance approval from the NCAA is secured and ownership of the URL is maintained by the NCAA. Such use of NCAA marks in Internet directories is prohibited; however, members may use an NCAA mark within a member URL, provided such NCAA mark does not appear in the domain name portion of the URL. By way of example, members may use the following URL: **memberx.edu/ncaa**.

Identification of Commercially Named Venues on NCAA Materials

- For the purposes of providing information about and promoting the location of an NCAA championship, the venue/competition site of any round of NCAA championships can be printed, in text-only, on any and all pertinent materials bearing NCAA marks (subject to NCAA approval of the graphics).
- The logo of a commercially named venue cannot be used on any materials bearing NCAA logos or trademarks.
- The venue's name and information (without use of logos) will also be included on the dedicated website that the NCAA will provide to sell tickets.

NCAA Logo Use by Commercially Named Venues

For the purposes of providing information about and promoting the sale of NCAA tickets, the venue/competition site of any round of NCAA championships is permitted to display (subject to NCAA approval of the graphics) the championship site-specific logo as recognition of the event being held in its facility. The NCAA logo must be in the form of a link to a dedicated web page that will be established and/or assigned by the NCAA championship administrator to sell the NCAA tickets.

The following conditions apply to this NCAA logo use:

- The NCAA championship site-specific logo can be used by the venue to communicate the NCAA event as one of the variety of upcoming events at the facility. The NCAA logo must be used only once and only as a part of a group of other logos of events being held at the venue.
- The one-time logo use is limited to the site's "home web page" or "event web page."
- The NCAA logo must be placed in a location on the venue's web page so that there is clear and defined separation between the NCAA logo and any other commercial logos (including that of the commercially named venue). [This is because NCAA Corporate Champions/Corporate Partners and WBD/CBS have graphic exclusivity in the use of NCAA logos and marks.] Logos of the venue's or the website's advertisers/sponsors may be used on the home/event web page even with the NCAA's championship site-specific logo on the same page if those commercial entities are clearly separated from the NCAA logo (e.g., are on a different colored background and are located at the bottom of the website page).
- The venue is not permitted to claim to be "the home," a host or co-host of any session of the NCAA championship.
- The logo provided by the NCAA championship staff cannot be modified in any way.
- ALL uses of NCAA logos must be submitted to the NCAA staff for approval.

NCAA Trademarked Protection Language

NCAA trademarks benefit from consistent "source identification" to the public through basic legal language attributing ownership.

The legal statement should be used on "printed" materials of all types for all NCAA trademarks, except where there is agreement by key staff stakeholders that aesthetic or space limitations prevent legal language. The legal statement is NOT required when the NCAA blue disk or the word NCAA is used alone and part of NCAA-produced materials without any of the conditions below.

- Printed items that display logos of other business entities/organizations (i.e., corporate champions/corporate partners, network partners, official suppliers, official licensees, local organizing committees and NCAA members).
- Printed items that are produced to be "used" by other business entities/organizations including NCAA members and host institutions.
- Printed items produced for advertisement/promotional purposes (i.e., magazine and newspaper ads, NCAA souvenir publication ads, posters, newsletters).

The NCAA requires protection language as outlined below. This does not have to be prominently displayed language and is expected to be included as some form of "mouse print".

The examples below are written only to represent the most typical examples. If you are unsure of exact wording for a specific example, please contact Ali Narracci at **anarracci@ncaa.org** or 317-790-7596.

For blue disc and/or secondary (word) mark, please use:

- NCAA is a trademark of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

For blue disc/secondary marks plus another NCAA trademark, please use (for example):

- NCAA and March Madness are trademarks of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.
- NCAA, NCAA Sweet Sixteen and Road to the Final Four are trademarks of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

For blue disc/secondary marks plus another NCAA trademark used with other authorized business entities, please use (for example):

- The NCAA, March Madness, Men's Final Four and Women's Final Four are trademarks owned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. All other licenses or trademarks are property of their respective holders.

NCAA Licensed Trademarks

College World Series and Women's College World Series: The NCAA is the exclusive licensee of these marks, registered by Major League Baseball, in connection with the NCAA Division I Men's Baseball Championship and the Division I Women's Softball Championship.

All other licenses or trademarks are property of their respective holders.

Helpful Links

NCAA Trademarks
NCAA Digital Library
NCAA Corporate Champions and Corporate Partners

OFFICIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS/LICENSEES AND SUPPLIERS

The NCAA licensing program is designed to ensure the quality and consistency of all of the NCAA's Championship Event merchandise, protect the intellectual property of the NCAA and our member schools, and generate revenue to enhance programs that support NCAA student-athletes.

Any premiums and/or other merchandise that bear NCAA marks, brackets, taglines or other NCAA references must be produced by an official NCAA Licensee or NCAA Official Equipment Supplier. There may be royalties or other related costs associated with such items. If the NCAA is unable to identify a current NCAA Licensee or NCAA Official Equipment Supplier to provide a specific piece of merchandise, the NCAA will work to sublicense (on a short-term basis) a company that can provide the specific item.

For a list of NCAA licensees and official equipment suppliers, **ncaa.org/championships/marketing/ncaa-official-licensee-list**.

ADVERTISING/SIGNS/"LOOK AND DÉCOR"

a. **Advertising/Banners/Signs/Displays.** The host shall not permit advertising, marketing identification, banners, signs or displays of any kind to be hung, posted or displayed anywhere within the general public seating/viewing area of the competition, practice and/or ancillary event venue(s) (i.e., any place that can be seen from the playing surface or seats), including the scoreboard and the playing surface, seats or within broadcast view, prior to or during the conduct of the championships, other than NCAA, media partner or NCAA corporate champion/partner branding/recognition (e.g., signage, banners, scoreboards, LED scorer's table, video board, ribbon board, PA announcements) approved by the NCAA. Any permanently affixed (or previously leased) advertising banners, signs, cup holders, select equipment bearing corporate marks (e.g., TVs, computer monitors, stats monitors or displays), product/exhibit displays (e.g., car displays, branding exhibits/kiosks) shall be covered with décor elements or other NCAA directed elements by the competition, practice and/or ancillary event venue(s) and at the

expense of the venue(s) as specified by the NCAA, including costs of production and installation and strike. The NCAA must be notified within 60 days if any signage has changed after the site visit or before the championship. Similarly, for any surrounding areas/facilities that are to be used by the NCAA for official events, no advertising, marketing, identification, banners, signs, decals, sampling, distribution or displays of any kind shall be hung, posted or displayed anywhere within those areas unless authorized by the NCAA. Professional and collegiate signage/marks/pennants/banners/retired numbers/etc. may continue to be displayed. NCAA staff representatives have the discretion, during their site visit or when on-site in advance of the tournament, to have the building staff remove a sign/banner. All usage of marks must follow NCAA brand guidelines and must be approved by NCAA staff in advance. If the host agency or institution has contractual obligations that limit this policy, those provisions must be submitted in writing to the NCAA Division I Softball championship manager (**kwhitaker@ncaa.org**) with the bid proposal.

If there is corporate signage in the venue that is visible during television and/or streaming, photos must be submitted as part of the bid submission. Any exceptions to the policy to cover corporate signage must be sent to Kelly Whitaker (kwhitaker@ncaa.org).

b. **Alcohol/Tobacco/Gambling.** All alcohol, tobacco and gambling advertisements/corporate identification within broadcast view or viewable by game attendees in the competition venue bowl must be covered at the expense of the host or venue. Any alcohol advertising that is deemed by the NCAA as not viewable from within the bowl does not need to be covered, whether in the concourse or in ancillary venues; tobacco or gambling advertising in the concourse must be covered. All other advertisements/corporate identification in the noted areas must, at a minimum, not be backlit unless otherwise authorized by the NCAA. This would apply to preliminary rounds and the championship rounds for all 92 NCAA championships.

c. **External Signs.** All exterior venue corporate signage, other than professional franchise identification, must be covered as specified by the NCAA and must be covered with décor elements as specified by the NCAA at the expense of the competition, practice and/or ancillary event venue(s).

d. **Commercially Named Venues.** Commercially named competition, practice and/or ancillary event venue(s) may display no more than two preexisting interior signs consisting only of the competition, practice and/or ancillary event venue(s)' name at the top of the venue, with placement designated by the NCAA. The competition, practice and ancillary event venue(s) signage design and placement must be approved by the NCAA. If the commercially named competition, practice and/or ancillary event venue(s) is an existing NCAA corporate champion or corporate partner, the NCAA, in its sole discretion, may allow additional branding of the commercially named venue(s).

e. **Covering Existing Signage/Product Branding.** In regard to any signage that is to be covered in accordance with these bid specifications, the practice, competition and/or ancillary event venue(s) shall not limit or prohibit the ability of the NCAA to use signage or other elements of its own third-party designees in covering such existing signage/product branding.

f. **NCAA Corporate Champion and Partner Branding/Recognition.** The NCAA shall have the right to display branding/recognition (e.g., signage, banners, scorer's table, video board, ribbon board, PA announcements, inflatables, projections, kiosks, decals, window clings, lighting, street teams, logos) for the Association, its corporate champions and partners and media partners inside and outside of the competition, practice and/or ancillary event venue(s). These locations, include but are not limited to the concourse, within the competition bowl and venue exterior without limitation.

g. **Official Stickers and Stencils.** The NCAA shall provide the competition venue with the appropriate stickers/field stencils for the approved playing surface markings for the championship.

h. **Fan Promotional Materials.** If facility approves, patrons are permitted to bring in small signs and in non-noise-making items in accordance with NCAA and venue policies. Items may not include any (non-CCP) commercial identification.

i. **Digital Inventory.** At no charge, the NCAA will have full access to, and control of, all LED and other digital signage inventory, both internal and external to the competition venue. This includes TV monitors, video screens, video walls, LED fascia, and all internal and external signage, digital or otherwise. This includes all digital inventory to be made available at the time of the championship, inclusive of any inventory that may be added by the venue after this bid document is signed.

j. **Banners Inside Facility.** The banners permissible inside the facility are as follows: TV Banners (2), NCAA Radio Banners (1), NCAA Banners.

k. **Institutional Signage.** Institutional signage does not need to be covered. Championship banners may remain permanent (not hung seasonally). If temporary and hung on a seasonal basis, they must be taken down.

l. **Directional Signage.** Directional signs should be posted in all areas used by the participants and the media.

m. **Video Boards and Electronic Messages.** If there is a video board in the facility it must be used for all games. The atmosphere will be the same for all games whether the home team is playing or not.

Any exceptions must be requested by the host to Kelly Whitaker (**kwhitaker@ncaa.org**) for discussion with the corporate relations/branding group.

Section 8 • Competition Site Requirements/Diagrams

ATHLETIC TRAINING

A training room stocked with towels and other necessary equipment should be provided and staffed with the appropriate personnel prior to and during all games and practice sessions.

COMPETITION SITE AVAILABILITY/REQUIREMENTS

Dates

At regionals and super regional sites, the competition and practice facilities must be available from the day prior to the first date of competition until midnight of the last day of competition. Host should also be aware that competition may extend beyond the last scheduled day of competition if inclement weather delays the competition.

- Regional Dates: May 15-17 (May 14-16 for those regionals with a team that has a no-competition-on-Sunday policy)
- Super Regionals: May 21-24

Field Requirements

- Facility Enclosure and Parking. The facility must be enclosed in order to charge admission, with a minimum seating capacity of 500 unobstructed-view seats. On-site parking must be provided for teams, tournament personnel and umpires.
- Field Dimensions. The distance of the outfield fences shall not exceed 235 feet. Outfield fences shall be a minimum of 190 feet in left and right fields (200 feet preferred). If a portable fence is used, it must be placed at a distance of 200 feet in left and right fields, and 220 feet in center field. All portable fencing must be secured to prevent balls from rolling under. The outfield fence is required to be a minimum of four feet but highly recommended to be a minimum of six feet. Please see the **2026 and 2027 NCAA Softball Rules Book** for requirements.
- Backstop. Backstop, sideline and outfield fences must enclose the playing field. There must be a minimum of 25 feet and a maximum of 30 feet from home plate to the backstop and from the baselines to the fence or dugout. When the backstop is wood, cement or brick, it must be padded from dugout to dugout, beginning not higher than one foot off the ground and extending to the top of the wood, cement or brick, or six feet from the ground, whichever is shorter.
- Field Surface and Bases. For all NCAA postseason competition, the infield must be skinned (no turf), and the outfield must be natural grass or a grass-like synthetic surface. It is preferred that institutional field stencils are not within the competition field. While Rule 2.7 makes it permissible to stick a label on the rise of the base, for NCAA postseason competition, only a sticker or label with NCAA branding may be used. **The double first base is required to be used for Division I softball.**
- Dugouts. Dugouts must be covered and enclosed from spectators. When a team plays back-to-back games in the same day, to effectively manage the turn-around time and minimize the logistical impacts for teams, a team will remain in its dugout for the following game regardless of home or away team designation and even if the host is a participant. No more than the total number of student-athletes on the roster plus 14 team personnel are allowed in the dugout.
- Bullpens. Two separate bullpen areas of comparable composition to the competition field (dirt is preferred) and distance from dugouts, must be provided. Bullpens must be separated from the spectator area. (PITCHERS: Pitchers for the upcoming game may use the bullpen area provided it does not interfere with the game in progress and only when the bullpen area is not in use by either of the participating teams. If either participating team desires to use a bullpen, then neither bullpen may be used by teams preparing for upcoming games.)
- Batting Cages. If only one batting cage is available at the site, all teams will have equal time in the cage prior to their game. The home team uses it first. The batting cage may be used while another game is being played if it does not interfere with the game in progress. If two batting cages of equal quality are available, each team will use one cage.
- Warm-Up Area and Equipment. Visiting teams must have equal access to an equitable, restricted warm-up area with adequate space to run, stretch and throw. This area must be in immediate proximity to the playing field. Also, hosts must provide, in the participant manual, a list of equipment available to all teams (i.e., screens, pitching machines) and a list of indoor facilities. An equipment list is provided in Appendix H. Hosts must supply these items at a minimum.

- Lighting. A lighted facility is required to host preliminary rounds. The minimum lighting requirement for television is 125 foot-candles. **A professional lighting survey conducted in the last two years is required to be submitted with the bid materials.**
- Electronic Scoreboard and Press Box. An electronic scoreboard and public address system (including back-up, if possible) must be available. Institutions also are required to have (at a minimum) a three-sided covered press box with internet and telephone access. A covered interview area must be provided, separate from spectator and hospitality areas.
- Visible Action Clock. **NEW FOR 2026:** A visible action clock is required to be displayed in preliminary-round competition. Refer to Appendix I (Action Clock Operation Guidelines) and Appendix J (Pitch/Between Innings Clock Protocol) for usage guides.
- Tarp. All facilities must have field and bullpen tarps, which must be used appropriately for all areas in the event of inclement weather. Grounds crew must be available during all practices and games.
- Locker Rooms. Hosts must provide equal access, for all teams, to conveniently located, similar facilities (locker rooms or team rooms) with appropriate air conditioning/heat. The facilities will be used not only for dressing and meeting, but also as a safe space during inclement weather. Teams will maintain possession of the locker room during games delayed by weather until the contest has been completed. If locker rooms are not available, two equitable areas must be designated for participating teams. Plans need to be made for all teams for inclement weather situations, which may include teams staying on buses.
- Restroom Facilities. Restroom facilities must be conveniently located to dugouts and reserved exclusively for student-athlete use during the game. If permanent restroom facilities that meet these requirements are not present, high-end temporary restrooms (flushable and running water) are acceptable if they are conveniently located, reserved exclusively for student-athlete use and cleaned regularly. It is not acceptable for student-athletes to share restroom facilities with spectators, nor should players be expected to walk great distances to reach the designated facilities.
- Athletic Training Facilities. Athletic training facilities on site must be available to all teams. The facility should be stocked with necessary equipment and staffed with appropriate personnel prior to and during all games and practices. If permanent facilities are not available, tents may be used to meet this requirement.
- Umpire Facilities. A private dressing area for umpires (both male and female) must be provided. Portable locker rooms, recreational vehicles, etc., may be used; however, a tent does not fulfill this requirement. A sign reading, "NCAA Use Only" shall be posted on the officials' locker rooms.
- Scouting/Game Film Tagging Seats. Three scouting seats per team shall be reserved behind home plate (rows one and two). Only official members of the coaching staff are permitted in the scouting seats. It is acceptable to provide alternate scouting seat locations if requested by the coach and the host can accommodate the request. Provide one seat per team at an optimal location for game film tagging in a manner that is equitable for each of the competing teams.
- Data Analytics. The use of analytical or data collection cameras/systems that are allowable per the NCAA softball playing rules is now permitted during all rounds of the NCAA Division I Softball Championship. The host institution is required to share any such data collected with all teams participating at the championship site and must collect data in some manner for all games if being used at the site.
- Videotaping. All team cameras shall be unmanned and located in a designated area in center field. The host will provide three-foot-high platforms in both right- and left-center fields, approximately 20 feet from center field. If a facility cannot provide this, teams should be given equitable access to a similar location for videotaping. Right View Pro cameras or similar data collection devices must be covered for practice. The site representative or a designee will check the cameras periodically to ensure they are operational.

  Rule 5.9.1 – A team may film or videotape only contests in which it is playing, but may record (from video truck, satellite feed or airwaves, not video camera) any game that is or will be televised. Recording from the dugout is PROHIBITED during NCAA postseason play.
- Video Review Area. To accommodate postgame review per Rule 5.9.10, for NCAA postseason competition, hosts shall provide an area for review as outlined by the NCAA's video review partner.

CONCESSIONS

Food and beverage prices shall be no higher than similar events or primary tenants in the facility.

Vending. No food, beverage or merchandise, of any nature, may be vended or dispensed in the seating areas, except before games begin, between innings and between games. During competition, selling is restricted to the concourse and established selling locations. The facility is expected to be in compliance with all applicable city, state or Federal regulations concerning access and seating for disabled persons.

ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS/LIGHTING

In order to host preliminary-round competition, a lighted facility is required. (Minimum lighting requirement for television is 125 foot-candles). Please visit the **NCAA Best Lighting Practices** on **ncaa.com/media** in the Broadcast Services section for more information.

PROFESSIONAL LIGHTING SURVEY OF PLAYING FIELD

For television purposes the NCAA recommends that all preliminary-round hosts have field lighting that measures an evenly distributed 125 horizontal foot-candles in the infield and 100 horizontal foot-candles in the outfield. At a minimum, 100 infield/70 outfield horizontal foot-candles are required to televise an NCAA championship event. In order for the NCAA to plan for the ordering of additional lighting where needed, each institution submitting a bid **is required to provide a professional lighting survey, completed in the last two years**. For more information on NCAA lighting standards, please review the NCAA best lighting practices web page, and scroll down to the softball section for a link to "Best Lighting Practices: Regional and National Broadcast," as well as links to the "Performance Checklist" and "Lighting Performance Checklist: Survey Sample." Once completed, your professional lighting survey should be submitted using the document upload in the championships bid and host portal.

TEAM LOCKER ROOM USAGE

1. Host teams must provide equal accommodations to facilities (i.e., locker room or team room) for all teams.

2. For regionals and super regionals, the home dugout designated by the host facility for the regular season is the home dugout. The host team may occupy its own dugout regardless of home and away team designation (except in the situation described in Item No. 5 below). All guidelines or access to the locker rooms attached to dugouts will apply.

3. The host team may access their locker room if: 1) there are two locker rooms at the competition field; and 2) if the locker rooms are attached to the dugouts. **If there are differences in the amenities provided by either locker room, teams are limited to using those amenities that are the same for both** (e.g., if one locker room has an attached coaches meeting room but the other does not, the coaches room may not be used).

4. If two locker rooms are available at the regional sites, the two competing teams will have full access to their assigned locker rooms beginning at the start of their on-field warmups until the completion of the game.

5. When a team plays back-to-back games on the same day: to effectively manage the turn-around time and minimize the logistical impacts for teams, a team will remain in its dugout for the following game regardless of home or away team designation and even if the host is a participant.

6. If only one locker room is available at the softball facility, no team will have access to the host institution locker room. The host institution may access its locker room only after it has completed its final game of each day.

7. Locker room facilities will be used not only for dressing and meeting, but also as a safe space during inclement weather. Teams will maintain possession of the locker room during games delayed by weather until the contest has been completed. If locker rooms are not available, two equitable areas must be designated for participating teams. Plans need to be made for all teams for inclement weather situations, which may include staying on team buses.

NCAA SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Entrances. Entrances must be staffed by an adequate number of persons. Signage should be posted to clearly identify all entrances (e.g., media, player-ticket and band/spirit squad).

Player-Guest Entrances. A gate must be identified to admit patrons holding player-guest tickets.

Team Personnel Entrance. An entrance, near the locker rooms, must be identified for all student-athletes and coaches. The entrance and pathway to locker room and other team areas (e.g., warmup area, batting cage, competition field) should be managed to avoid interaction with game umpires other than what is necessary for competition.

Locker Rooms. A locker/team rooms shall be provided for each team, and two rooms for the game officials.

Security. Security personnel should be stationed at the door of each locker room/team room.

Supplies. Each locker/team room must be clean and adequately supplied with towels, toilet paper, water and ice, soft drinks (Coke products), and white boards, markers and erasers for all practices and games. The NCAA representative will inspect the locker/team rooms prior to the first practice.

Signs. Signs should be posted to identify the teams' and officials' locker rooms. "NCAA Use Only" shall be posted on the officials' locker rooms.

Media Areas. The areas used for the media workroom and the postgame interviews should be close to one another and to the locker rooms in order to facilitate the media's work and access for coaches and players. There needs to be adequate distance between the interview area and the competition facility to ensure interviews can be conducted without interruption. The workroom and interview room must be separate rooms (e.g., not one room divided by a curtain). Neither should be adjacent to the hospitality area.

Workroom. The media workroom should be equipped with an adequate DSL lines (or wireless), telephones, electrical outlets and other necessary supplies. NCAA logos should be displayed appropriately.

Postgame Interview Room. The postgame interview room should be "dressed" appropriately to reflect the prestige of the event by (a) placing NCAA championship signage and logos on the podium and walls; (b) using draping on tables and other areas as necessary; (c) setting up a platform for the interviewees and moderator; (d) providing a riser for photographers and persons at the back of the room; and (e) providing a sound system.

Holding Area. An area adjacent to the interview room shall be designated as a holding area for players waiting to be interviewed. It should be situated so players do not have to walk through the actual interview room to reach the holding area. Chairs and water should be provided so players are able to wait comfortably.

Access/Security. Security should be provided for the media workroom and postgame interview room to check credentials; this individual should be instructed that only credentialed individuals may enter the area. Umpires are prohibited from this area.

NCAA Committee/Games Committee Meeting Room. The room should be large enough to accommodate eight people comfortably. This area needs to be close to the competition field and not visible to the public.

Mother's Room. A private Mother's room will be made available, on request, for use at each competition venue. To secure such a room, please notify the NCAA at least 24 hours prior to arrival at **kwhitaker@ncaa.org**. The NCAA will identify the competition venue lead contact who will work with the primary team administrator to secure a designated private space.

PARKING

A parking area for the participating teams and tournament officials (i.e., key game personnel, NCAA representative and umpires) should be designated. Parking passes should be provided. For participating teams, five parking passes for those traveling via vans, three parking passes for those traveling via bus.

TOBACCO

The use of tobacco products surrounding NCAA championships is against championship policy and many facility policies. Violations of this policy are subject to misconduct penalties and team administrators are asked to ensure this policy is adhered to, particularly at the competition site and in any public settings. Penalties for violating this policy are outlined in the misconduct provisions and may include financial implications.

VIDEO REVIEW

The NCAA is partnering with DVSport, Inc. (DVSport) to provide a centralized review center (CRC) for regionals and super regionals. As part of this solution, plays that are reviewable via the NCAA Softball Playing Rules will be reviewed off-site at a national video review command center and the outcome of the review will be relayed to the umpire crew chief and another designated umpire via a headset on the playing field. The requirements for video review are outlined below.

Personnel

- Video Review Headset Assistant. The host institution will be responsible for providing an individual to assist with the video review communication process. This person will have the headset on near the field of play (dugout location that should be at the end of the dugout closest to home plate) to assist in the communication between the video review centralized review center, the umpire crew chief on the field and the other designated umpire during a review. The Video Review Headset Assistant must wear the headset the entire game and be in position at least one hour before game time. This can be the same person as the Video Review Facilitator (see below in this section) if the site prefers. The Video Review Headset Assistant must also have a cell phone as a back-up form of communication, along with the power cord for the cell phone. The Video Review Headset Assistant can receive a per-game fee that is consistent with typical game operations personnel during both the regional and super regional. These expenses should be included in the personnel section of the online proposed budget for the regionals and super regionals.

- Video Review Facilitator. The host institution site representative from IT or Facilities also must be provided that can work with DVSport Inc. on setting up the video encoder and Voice Over IP (VOIP) system at the host site and testing the video and communication transmission between the host site and the CRC. This person needs to be available to assist DVSport Inc. two days prior to the start of the games through the end of the last game in case testing or troubleshooting equipment is required. This would be applicable for both the regionals and super regionals.

Video Review Facility Requirements

- The location of the Video Review Headset Assistant should have:
  - Access to a power outlet.
  - A cell phone that can be used to communicate with the CRC if the headset system were to experience any issues.
  - Enough XLR cabling that the Video Review Headset Assistant can come on to the field 30 feet to give the headsets to the umpires during a review.
- A power outlet must be at the TV truck location designated for the DVSport Inc. Review Case.
- Internet connections – An internet connection is needed for DVSport Inc. located at the TV truck location with a dedicated minimum throughput of 150 is encouraged, but a minimum of 40 mbps is required. The Network Specifics for the Internet Connection:
  - TCP/UDP Connection: Two outbound TCP and UDP connections are required. The connection must be stateful or bidirectional.
  - Router/Firewall: The video encoder and voice-over IP system will be connected to a DVSport provided router and be protected by its firewall.
  - Network Ports: Please ensure the following ports are open on the IP address.
    - IP Address Port Number Inbound/Outbound Port Type Purpose.
    - 66.37.50.50, Ports 13011-13208 Outbound (bidirectional) TCP/UDP Video.
    - 66.37.50.50, Port 12001-12004 Outbound (bidirectional) TCP/UDP Communication.
    - 66.37.50.50, Ports 14001-14002 Outbound (bidirectional) TCP/UDP DVSport.

- Intercom lines – Two XLR lines between the TV truck location and the designated Video Review Headset Assistant location.
    - An example of the type of XLR cabling we are requesting is a Belden 8723. Any cabling of similar spec is acceptable.
    - The XLR cabling the school provides should be long enough for the video review assistant to get the headsets 30' on the field for the umpires during a review.

DVSport Requirements Survey. All prospective host institutions should complete the site survey by April 17, 2026 (**forms.gle/p5mf5Yjq48BPSY7C8**) if you have not already done so. This will allow DVSport to better understand how prepared you are for review and consult with you on any questions you have leading up to the championship.

Video Review Expenses. Each host institution will need to meet minimum requirements for video review. In addition, all expenses related to video review for the regional and/or super regional rounds will be the sole financial responsibility of the host institution. These expenses cannot be submitted with your proposed budget to host a regional and/or super regional round of competition. The institution will receive an invoice from DVSport Inc. for the expenses for video review in conjunction with the regionals and super regionals. It is anticipated that this invoice will be approximately $7,700 per regional and super regional site. If a host site does not have the necessary video cabling from the television truck location to the review system location, this would also need to be provided at an approximate additional institutional expense of $2,000.

Video Review Setup. Each host institution will receive communication equipment from DVSport that will be shipped to each regional and super regional site the week of the respective regional and super regional (if applicable). Immediately upon receipt of the video review communication equipment, the host institution should install and test the equipment with DVSport. Representatives from DVSport will guide the host institution through the process of establishing video feeds and communication lines between the stadium and the centralized review center.

- What will be transmitted from the Host Institution Stadium to the CRC?
    - TV production dirty program feed.
    - Headset communication with TV producer.
    - Headset communication with crew chief and umpires.
- Review Equipment Provided by DVSport.
    - 1x review case with a video encoding system and VOIP system inside.
    - 3x DVSport headsets and beltpacks.
- Review Setup.
    - The video review facilitator will set up the review case that contains the video encoding and VOIP systems near the TV Truck.
    - The following cables will be connected to the review case:
        - 2x TV production dirty program feed via two BNC cables.
        - 1x XLR cable that connects to the 2x DVSport headsets at field level for the crew chief and umpire.
    - You will loop out of one of the DVSport headset beltpacks designated for the umpires into the second DVSport headset beltpack designated for the umpires.
    - The DVSport headsets will be set up near the field of play (dugout location that should be at the end of the dugout closest to home plate) and a Video Review Headset Assistant will be positioned at that location to assist the umpires with the headsets during a review.
    - There needs to be enough XLR cabling that the Video Review Headset Assistant can come on to the field 30' to give the headsets to the umpires during a review.

- The Headset Assistant should also have a cell phone. This will be used as a back-up if there are issues with headset communication during the game.
- No review booth is required because the review official will be located off-site at the CRC.
- During the competition, additional security should be provided for the umpire crew chief, the umpire who made the call being reviewed and the Video Review Headset Assistant on the field as they are using the headset to review any play.

Host institutions with video boards should use the parameters set forth in Appendix F of the 2026 and 2027 NCAA Softball Playing Rules Book.

At the conclusion of all applicable preliminary-round competition at a given host site, the host institution should carefully package the communication equipment and return it to DVSport immediately. The host institution may be responsible for any damage that occurs to the communication equipment as determined by the NCAA in consultation with DVSport.

If you have any questions about review expectations or preparations, please contact DVSport at 412-788-9070 or **replaysupport@dvsport.com**.

Section 9 • Drug Testing

The NCAA is dedicated to fair and equitable competition throughout each round of NCAA championships and strongly supports the drug-testing program established by its membership, to safeguard the health and safety of the participating student-athletes.

Comprehensive drug testing details for hosts can be found at the following link: **NCAA Drug Testing Program - ncaa.org**.

Section 10 • Equipment

All teams at the site must have access to all equipment. If there is a discrepancy in the quality of equipment (e.g., batting cages), all teams must be provided equal time to use the best equipment. An equipment list is provided in **Appendix H**. Hosts must supply these items as a minimum.

GAME BALLS

The Rawlings NC12L (.47 COR; 375 max compression) is the official softball for the championship. Rawlings will supply balls for all championship rounds; no other softball shall be used during competition.

Championship softballs (10 dozen per regional site; two dozen per super regional site) will be sent from the manufacturer directly to the attention of the tournament director. If the softballs do not arrive by 5 p.m. Eastern time, Wednesday prior to competition, please contact Kelly Whitaker immediately at 317-917-6511 (office), 317-476-6867 (cell) or **kwhitaker@ncaa.org**.

Game balls should be available two hours prior to each game for each team. Scuffed balls should be returned to the NCAA representative prior to the teams' leaving the field.

One new game ball should be given to each team prior to the start of each game. The game ball should be returned to the umpire.

BARREL COMPRESSION TESTING (BCT)

BCT will be conducted on competition days (not practice days) during all NCAA postseason rounds. Each site MUST provide a secure location; G4, SSL or WSU bat testing fixture; table; three (3) chairs and the provide the NCAA site representative with the appropriate distinctive stickers and testing administrative log sheets sent following your selection to host. The bat testing areas should be close to the practice area, yet private, and sheltered from the weather (sun, wind, rain). If an indoor facility is close to the practice area, that is preferred. If not, a tent should be provided if an outdoor covered area is not available. Refer to additional information on RQ+ website under the "Softball Miscellaneous" items heading or **Appendix G** of this manual.

Following the completion of each tier, the administrative log sheets should be attached to an email along with a request for a prepaid shipping label for any failed bats to the NCAA Softball Equipment Consultant who provided the administrative log via email. Bats should be shipped following the last tier for each host.

Coaches are reminded that they are responsible for legally equipping their team, and bats will be subject to BCT and umpire inspections for damage prior to every game. The team's Bat List and all bats to be used during the game shall be appropriately stickered and available to the umpires for their pregame review.

Section 11 • Financial Administration

AUDIT

Sites will be randomly selected for financial and box office audits following the championship.

The NCAA will make every effort to notify sites selected for audits within 30 days after the approval of financial reports, but reserves the right to audit a site up to one year after the championship. Receipts, facility settlements, expense reimbursements and honorariums are subject to change until the audits are reviewed and accepted by the NCAA. If selected for audit, the documentation requested could include: box office audit reports or sales summaries; ticket purchase invoices or statements; unsold tickets; invoices, contracts or timesheets supporting all expenses; general ledger; bank statements; check copies and reconciliations; competition venue rental agreement; and any other documentation to support details reported on the host financial report. In addition, overages between budgeted and actual numbers will be reviewed.

APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET

As part of the site-selection process, each prospective host must submit a proposed budget for approval by the NCAA. All receipts and expenses associated with the conduct of the championship competition shall be included in the proposed budget. This includes lodging expenses for officials and site representatives, if applicable. The proposed budget must be submitted before the selection date in accordance with the schedule set by the sport committee and approved by the NCAA prior to the first date of competition of the championship. Additionally, best efforts should be made by the host to reasonably forecast expected ticket sales from the hosted event due to attendance driving a number of host expenses.

The host institution is responsible for adhering to championship expenses as approved by the NCAA, including (but not limited to) competition site rental, maintenance, insurance, printing of tickets, ushers, maintenance personnel, ticket sellers, ticket takers, minor officials, police and security, promotion, publicity, advertising, meetings, banquets, medical staff. Other expenses not included in the original proposed budget must be approved in advance by the NCAA.

It is also incumbent upon the host to understand and remit all necessary taxes related to the sale of championship tickets made by both the NCAA and the host at their given state and locality. All consideration must be given by the host for certain relief of taxes with respect to the NCAA's not for profit status under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Additionally, certain championships may be required to provide a letter of attestation regarding tax status by an outside CPA/accounting firm.

Minimum Financial Guarantee. A minimum financial guarantee will be imposed on all prospective host institutions based on their submitted projections of game ticket revenues and expenses. The minimum financial guarantee is calculated as 75% of the estimated net receipts (gross ticket revenue less approved game operations expenses) as submitted by the host through **championships.ncaa.org**, i.e., the NCAA host bid portal. The minimum financial guarantee will be set upon the hosts initial submission of their budget. No adjustments may be made to the budget once it has been submitted to the NCAA primary staff liaison. Any adjustments must be requested in advance of the actual competition and will not affect the minimum financial guarantee as submitted in the original budget proposal. Once the minimum financial guarantee is met, the revenue share with the host institution is calculated as the greater of 15% of net receipts (10% if the event is held in an off-campus facility) or the established minimum honorarium. Any financial guarantee not met upon submission of actual revenues and expenses will result in the host institution owing the NCAA the financial guarantee balance less the revenue share calculation as described above.

In order to be considered by the host selection committee, all prospective host institutions are required to submit a minimum financial guarantee of $5,000 for regionals and $7,500 for super regionals, which are automatically calculated by the NCAA host bid portal as described above. Once the minimum guarantee is met, the committee will review other site selection criteria to determine host sites.

The host institution is responsible for adhering to championship expenses as approved by the NCAA, including (but not limited to) competition site rental, maintenance, insurance, printing of tickets, ushers, maintenance personnel, ticket sellers, ticket takers, minor officials, police and security, promotion, publicity, advertising, meetings, banquets, medical staff. Other expenses not included in the original proposed budget must be approved in advance by the NCAA.

It is also incumbent upon the host to understand and remit all necessary taxes related to the sale of tickets to the given championship for sales made by both the NCAA and the host at their given state and locality. All consideration must be given by the host for certain relief of taxes with respect to the NCAA's not for profit status under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Additionally, certain championships may be required to provide an outside letter of attestation speaking to their tax status provided by an outside CPA/accounting firm.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Host institutions must complete the online financial report, which includes accurately reporting all revenues and expense, and must include payment of the amount due to the NCAA, within 60 days after the final date of competition at the site (if applicable). If requested, the host may be required to provide all supporting documentation to validate the revenues and expenses of their site. As a best practice, hosts are encouraged to upload all appropriate receipts, ticket audits and other supporting documentation to their host report on the "summary" tab as documentation supporting each line of their revenue and expense figures.

Financial reports showing net receipts are not considered complete until payment is received at the national office. Institutions that fail to meet the 60-day reporting period will be assessed the following penalties: 60-90 days past due (25% reduction in honorarium), 91-120 days (50% reduction in honorarium) and 121 days or more (100% reduction in honorarium). If there is a shortfall in the funds available to reimburse approved expenses and honorariums, the NCAA will make best efforts to reimburse the host within 5 business days of the report being approved by the NCAA finance and accounting department.

DRUG TESTING EXPENSES

The budget for drug testing expenses should only be completed and returned to Drug Free Sport if the host has been notified that drug testing will occur. The drug-testing budget and expenses are separate from the financial report form. The drug-testing budget form is an appendix in the **drug testing manual** (ncaa.org/Student-Athlete Programs/Health and Safety).

PARTICIPANTS

The NCAA will reimburse the competing institutions for transportation and per diem expenses in accordance with the appropriate NCAA policies. The competing teams shall be responsible for their local transportation, unless otherwise allowed under NCAA policy. Once the championship is completed, participating institutions should submit online expense forms via the Travel Expense System (TES) to the travel department at the NCAA national office within 30 days of the competition. Please note that if you host a championship, the submission of per diem and/or transportation reimbursement is a separate process and submission from completing the host budgeting and approval process defined above.

SITE REPRESENTATIVES

The NCAA representative's hotel room and tax shall be paid (via direct bill) by the host institution and submitted on the financial report. All other expenses (i.e., per diem, travel) will be paid directly by the NCAA.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation. The NCAA shall pay for the rental of cars for a predetermined number of game officials and the NCAA committee representative(s). The championships staff will approve the individual to get a rental car and the individual will need to call Short's Travel to book.

Air Transportation for Teams. If a school is eligible for air transportation, all air travel must be booked through Short's Travel.

Hotel Room Block for Predetermined Sites. If at an NCAA predetermined championship site. On Location will assist with the management of those hotel room blocks.

Local Transportation for Teams. For team sports, eligible for reimbursable ground transportation, must arrange ground transportation through Short's Travel. Individual sports, eligible for reimbursable ground transportation receive mileage reimbursement in accordance with the travel policy.

NCAA Championship Travel Policies

Section 12 • Game Management

ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

This meeting must be conducted late on the day prior to competition and will be chaired by the NCAA site representative; this meeting may also be conducted virtually based on a determination by the tournament director and NCAA representative. The purpose of this meeting is to review policies and procedures governing the conduct of the championship. The head coach, sports information director and an administrator (defined as the athletics director, senior woman administrator, or his/her designated full-time staff member of the institution) are required to attend this meeting. This definition would allow a sports information director or trainer, if properly designated, but not a member of the coaching staff, to fulfill this requirement. A fine will be assessed for any institution that does not have an administrator present. It is recommended, at a minimum, the nonworking umpire in chief attends. See the appendixes for a sample agenda.

COMPETITION TIMES

Game Times

Prospective host institutions must submit recommended start times for all games with the prebid materials for approval of the softball committee and are subject to change.

Game times should be set two- and one-half hours apart and must follow the championship format below. Game times are subject to change per the broadcast schedule.

- Regional. Games may be scheduled on Friday and Sunday noon to 9 p.m. local time and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. local time. (Regional competition will be conducted Thursday-Saturday for those regionals with a team that has a no competition on Sunday policy. Thursday games may be scheduled noon to 9 p.m. local time.)
- Super regionals. Games may be scheduled between noon and 9 p.m. local time. Games for super regionals may be Thursday-Saturday; or Friday-Sunday.
- If the regular-game schedule needs to be altered due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, the following guidelines shall be used prior to when the NCAA representative informs the teams:

  NOTE: Contact Kelly Whitaker at 317-476-6867 or **kwhitaker@ncaa.org** *to confirm any changes to the schedule prior to communicating changes with the teams.*
- No more than two games by any one team will be scheduled in one day. A halted game resumed on the following day constitutes a game when considering the policy that a team plays no more than two games in a day.
- If possible, games will not be scheduled to begin prior to 9 a.m. or after 11 p.m.
- Per NCAA Bylaw 31.1.4.4.1, games may only be scheduled to begin prior to noon Sunday if extenuating circumstances arise.
- If regional competition cannot be completed Sunday, the last time to start a regional championship game (i.e., Games 6 and "if" 7) to complete the regional finals is the Monday immediately preceding the super regional at 11 p.m.
- If super regional competition cannot be completed as scheduled, the last time to start a super regional championship game (i.e., Games 3) to complete the super regional finals is the Monday immediately preceding the Women's College World Series at 11 p.m.
- If play is suspended prior to the completion of the regional and super regional and competition ceases, teams will be advanced per the formula (see the rain delay advancement formula; length and schedule of games) in the Prechampionship Manual.
- If the game schedule cannot be adhered to, time must be permitted for field maintenance and warmup periods for both teams prior to the start of the next scheduled game. There should be no less than 35 minutes between games except for between Games 6 and 7 at regionals (30 minutes). The grounds crew should be allowed 15 minutes, with five minutes for line drills and four minutes for team introductions. See appendixes for sample timing sheets.

Game Format

For all four-team regional competitions, Games 1 and 2 will be played on the first day; Games 3, 4 and 5 will be played on the second day; Games 6 and 7 (if necessary), will be played on the third day.

The procedure below will be observed (subject to change by the NCAA Division I Softball Committee). Once established, the game order will remain intact.

Day 1: Game 1 – No. 2 vs. No. 3

Game 2 – No. 1 vs. No. 4

NOTE: The Softball Committee may determine a different order of Games 1 and 2 for a specific host site.

Day 2: Game 3 – Winner Game 1 vs. Winner Game 2

Game 4 – Loser Game 1 vs. Loser Game 2

Game 5 – Winner Game 4 vs. Loser Game 3

Day 3: Game 6 – Winner Game 3 vs. Winner Game 5

Game 7 – Winner Game 6 vs. Loser Game 6 (if necessary)

In all two-team super regional tournaments, Game 1 will be played on the first day; Game 2 will be played on the second day and game 3 (if necessary) on the third day. Competition should be completed no later than the Sunday before the Women's College World Series. (Exceptions [i.e., weather or television] may preclude the completion of competition by Sunday.)

The procedure below will be observed:

Day 1: Game 1

Day 2: Game 2

Day 3: Game 3 (if necessary)

EVALUATIONS

All evaluations will be completed online. The NCAA research department will email all participants, site representatives, officials and tournament directors for feedback on the championship experience.

All regional and super regional sites will also be evaluated by their site reps. To provide a positive championship experience for all participating teams, this process will serve to evaluate the fitness of each site to host in future years. Categories to be evaluated include but are not limited to practice and competition facilities, locker rooms, restrooms, tarps and grounds crew, crowd control and visiting team decorum.

GAMES COMMITTEE

The NCAA representative will serve as chair of the committee, which also involves the other members of the games committee (tournament director, sports information director, head trainer [or designee], athletics director [or designee] of the host institution, umpire in chief, and others as needed—grounds crew chief, parking supervisor and security). The NCAA representative at each site will actively supervise the conduct of each championship session. The games committee will be convened regarding issues, and may add additional personnel, if necessary, for the decision-making process.

HOSPITALITY

Player/Team. The area should be stocked with healthy snacks served at the appropriate time of day during the competition. Food served in the hospitality area is not designed to replace a team meal.

Umpires. Refreshments will be provided in the umpire's locker room. For those days with more than two scheduled games, some type of food must be provided (a variety of food is desired).

Media Hospitality. An area should be set up at the site for the media to include soft drinks and a snack. This area must be separate from the players and umpires.

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Each scheduled practice and contest requires (a) the on-site presence of a person qualified and delegated to render emergency care to a stricken participant; (b) planned access to a physician for prompt medical evaluation of the situation, when warranted; (c) planned access to a medical facility, including a plan for communication and transportation between the competition site and the medical facility for prompt medical services, if warranted; (d) access to a working telephone or other telecommunications device; and (e) a thorough understanding by all parties, including the leadership of the visiting teams, of the personnel and procedures associated with the emergency-care plan. The host institution must provide standard procedures and equipment for handling injuries involving blood.

Concussions

The NCAA has adopted legislation that requires all active member institutions to have a concussion management plan for their student-athletes. Participating institutions shall follow their concussion management plan while participating in NCAA championships. If a participating team lacks appropriate medical staff to activate its concussion management plan, the host championship concussion management plan will be activated.

The legislation notes, in part, that a student-athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be removed from athletics activities (e.g., competition, practice, conditioning sessions) and evaluated by a medical staff member (e.g., sports medicine staff, team physician) with experience in the evaluation and management of concussions; a student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion is precluded from returning to athletics activity for at least the remainder of that calendar day; medical clearance for return to athletics activity will be determined by the team physician or the physician's designee from the student-athlete's institution. In the absence of a team physician or their designee, the NCAA tournament physician will examine the student-athlete and will determine medical clearance.

A concussion is a brain injury that may be caused by a blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an "impulsive" force transmitted to the head. Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness or other obvious signs. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the previous one (hours, days or weeks) can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage and even death.

For further details please refer to the "NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook Guideline on Concussions."

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

The tournament director must provide a participant manual for visiting teams. The manual must include a list of equipment available to all teams (i.e., screens, pitching machines) as well as a list of off-campus and/or rainy-day/indoor facilities.

The participant manual shall be posted no later than the Tuesday before regionals and the Tuesday before super regionals.

A participant manual template can be found on the NCAA Web site. Hosts must use this template for consistency and accuracy.

PERSONNEL

The tournament director is responsible for recruiting personnel to assist with performing hosting duties. The personnel may vary depending on the facility and the institution.

Key Institutional Personnel

In addition to the tournament director, the SID and athletics trainer play key roles in the tournament's success. Duties should be reviewed with each person prior to the institution's notification as a tournament site.

Official Scorer. The tournament director is responsible for securing one scorer.

Game Personnel. In addition to the scorer, the following are required for each game:

- Experienced scoreboard operator.
- Public address announcer.
- Qualified statistician(s).
- Adequate number of ground crew persons who can prepare the field for practices and before, during and between games must always be on-site so that the game schedule can be maintained

Facility Management. Depending on the facility, the number of people needed in each category will vary and are as follows:

- Adequate security with at least one uniformed security person.
- Ticket sellers.
- Ticket takers.
- Ushers.
- Concession workers.
- NCAA merchandise sellers.
- Clean-up crew.

Head Trainer. Arrange for a physician to be on call for all games and practices. The head trainer should be able to explain the medical procedures at the administrative meeting, noting training room hours and services. Plan for a trainer to be at every practice.

Arrange for medical supplies, towels, water and ice for all practices and games. Provide transportation to field if training room is not on site. If the training room is not located at the competition facility a temporary training room should be set up at the competition facility.

PLAYING RULES

All rounds of the 2026 NCAA Division I Women's I Softball Championship will follow the **2026 and 2027 NCAA Women's Softball Rules and Interpretations**.

PRACTICE

Equipment. Screens and chalk should be available for teams upon arrival on the practice fields. If possible, a groundskeeper should be present when the team arrives to assist with any immediate needs. Please refer to **Appendix H** for a list of minimum equipment that hosts are required to provide to visiting teams. If the home team has a pitching machine available to them, a pitching machine (comparable in quality/design) should be made available to all teams (set up and ready to use), as well as pitching machine balls. **All teams at the site must have access to all equipment**. If there is a discrepancy in the quality of the equipment (e.g., batting cages, pitching machines), all teams must be provided equal time to use the best equipment.

Practice Times. Practice times should be assigned in accordance with first-day competition schedule. An alternate and equitable practice schedule using an indoor facility should be developed in consultation with the NCAA representative in the event of inclement weather. Changes in practice times due to travel schedule conflicts should be managed by the host institution and approved by the NCAA representative. Note: A team may not arrive at a site a day early due to its practice time (see NCAA reimbursement policies).

Team practices on the competition field will be two hours **(NEW 2026)** for regionals. During its time, a team will have full reign of the batting cages and the competition field. Hosts should schedule blocks of two hours and 15 minutes: two hours for practice and 15 minutes for turnover and field preparation for the next time block. **NEW 2026:** For Super Regionals, team practices will be three hours. Hosts should schedule 15 minutes for turnover between practices.

Open Practices. Practices are open to the general public and media the day prior to the start of the first game. Representatives of other participating institution's official traveling party may not attend.

PREGAME PROTOCOL

Batting Cages. If only one batting cage is available at the site, all teams will have equal time to its use prior to their game. The home team uses it first. The batting cage may be used while another game is being played as long as it does not interfere with the game in progress. If two batting cages of equal quality are available, each team will use one cage for warmups. **Refer to Team Locker Room Usage and conditions for home/away teams to be assigned to opposite dugout.**

Pregame Protocol. If a practice field is available, teams may warm up on the practice field (equal amount of time for each team). Each team is allowed five minutes for its individual line drills/warmup practice on the competition field and will complete line drills on the field: home team along the baseline between third and second and the visiting team along the baseline between first and second. (See pregame timing sheet.)

After both teams have completed use of the batting cages and warmup areas (use of those facilities is established by the tournament director), it is possible to move onto the game field area for warmup under the following conditions:

- The preceding game has ended and both participating teams have cleared the field and dugout area.
- Team equipment is stored in the dugout or along the outfield fence so the grounds crew may water the entire infield area (including foul territory).
- Warmup before the designated pregame protocol (30 minutes before game) is limited to the outfield area nearest the team's dugout until the infield crew has left the field.
- If time remains after the grounds crew has completed its work, and prior to the start of the designated 30-minute pregame protocol, a team may field ground balls on the dirt in foul territory behind first or third base in the outfield. The use of bats is not permitted during this period.

Pitchers. Pitchers for the upcoming game may use the bullpen area while a game is in progress only when the bullpen area is not in use by either of the participating teams (i.e., both bullpens must be open for this opportunity to be used and the opportunity ends if either participating team desires to use a bullpen).

Camera Protocol. All team camera locations will be in center field, and they will be unmanned and checked periodically by the site representative or a designee to be sure they are operational.

- **Right View Pro Cameras or Similar Electronic Devices. The cameras must be covered during practice. If they are to be used in competition, all teams at the site must receive the data and all games at the site must be recorded and shared in the same way.**

RESULTS

All host sites should use the NCAA box score forms available online. At the end of the championship, an electronic copy of each box score form for all regional competition must be sent to Matt Holmes at the NCAA national office. These results should be sent immediately following the competition.

TRAVEL PARTY/SQUAD SIZE

Transportation expenses will be provided for an official traveling party of 30 persons.

Please refer to the NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. The travel policies can be found at **ncaa.org/championships/travel/championships-travel-information**.

The travel party for all rounds of the championship is 30, the squad size is 25 student-athletes in uniform eligible to compete and the dugout size will include up to 14 individuals designated as team personnel and as many student-athletes as are on the team's official roster.

On the field, including the practice field, bullpen and dugout, each team is limited to four official coaches in uniform (head coach, assistant coaches and volunteer coach), 25 eligible student-athletes in uniform, student assistant coaches and any other student-athletes on the team's official roster (these student-athletes may be in uniform). Nonuniformed personnel in the dugout should be performing official team functions that they have performed during the season. A bat handler, who must be 13 years of age or older, does not count against the limitations for the dugout. Nonuniformed personnel in proper attire may participate in pregame warmups. Once a game begins, the athletic trainer or manager is permitted on the field only to perform his/her appropriate duty (e.g., warming up a pitcher is not considered an appropriate duty).

Reimbursable Ground Transportation. For team championships, if the institution is located more than 50 round-trip miles from the site of competition or the departure airport, or if the arrival airport is located more than 50 round-trip miles from the site of competition, the institution is eligible for reimbursement of ground transportation costs. The NCAA will not reimburse actual costs for ground transportation. Instead, a flat rate will be given to all eligible institutions. This amount may vary by championship, so please refer to the NCAA travel policies for more specific details.

NCAA postseason policies for student-athletes above the established squad size of 25 traveling with teams (squad size is the number of players eligible to compete in the game):

- Up to the number of student-athletes on the team's official roster.
- May be in the dugout (they are expected to conduct themselves with the quality and behavior deserving a championship event and shall abide by all policies and procedures and will be removed if noncompliant).
- May be in uniform or uniform jersey.
- May participate in softball-related activities on the competition field, keep stats while in the dugout, and catch bullpen and line drills.

VIDEO BOARD

No video board advertising of any kind or messages promoting non-NCAA events in the facility may be displayed during practice or competition. All video board content will come from the NCAA. The following kinds of messages are permissible: announcements of results from other NCAA competition; reminders that NCAA merchandise and concessions are on sale on the concourse; or any public-service announcements or promotional messages specifically provided by the NCAA. The video board may display the speed of the pitch provided it does so for every game played during the regional and/or super regional.

Section 13 • Health & Safety Considerations

As part of preparation and planning to host and/or participate in championship events, member Institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable health and safety policy and legislative requirements and guidance with event staff and personnel including, among others, those relating to concussion management, catastrophic injury prevention, inclement weather and independent medical care, consulting with institutional legal, medical and risk management personnel as necessary. These requirements and related information can be found in applicable division manuals, sports playing rules and the materials located on the **NCAA Sport Science Institute website**. A nonexhaustive list of some of the key health and safety considerations is provided below. More detailed information on each of these topics can be found in the ***Interassociation Recommendations: Preventing Catastrophic Injury and Death in Collegiate Athletes*** and the ***NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook***.

- Blood-Borne Pathogens and Other Biohazards.
- Catastrophic Incidents and Emergency Action Plans.
- Cleaning and Disinfection.
- Inclement Weather, Air Quality and Other Environmental Considerations.
- Independent Medical Care.
- Medical Facilities.
- Medical Disqualification, Removal and Return to Activities.
- Medical Staff: Resources, Communications, Training and Responsibilities.
- Medical Supplies and Equipment.
- Medical Treatment (including for, among others, the following emergency conditions):
    - Asthma.
    - Burners (Brachial Plexus Injuries).
    - Cardiac Emergencies.
    - Cervical Spine Injuries.
    - Concussion and Traumatic Brain Injury.
    - Diabetic Emergency.
    - Head and Neck Injury.
    - Heat Illness and Heat Stroke.
    - Hypothermia.
    - Mental Health Emergencies.
    - Rhabdomyolysis.
    - Sickle Cell and Other Exertional and Nonexertional Collapse.
    - Skin Infections.
- Prescription Medications, Banned Substances and Drug Testing.
- Protective Gear and Equipment.
- Sexual Violence.
- Visiting Team Care and Coverage.

In addition, and as a supplement to the legislative and policy requirements and related guidance described above, the following health and safety considerations and expectations will also apply to all championship events.

Ambulance Service

Planned access to an ambulance shall be provided by the championship host. If it is determined that an ambulance should be provided on site, the championship host shall obtain the ambulance service and the incurred cost is reimbursable by the NCAA. Any ambulance used must be equipped in accordance with all applicable government regulations and industry medical and safety standards.

Coaches, Officials, Event Staff and Spectators

Host institutions should consult as necessary with applicable institutional legal, medical and risk management personnel to determine and appropriately plan for the management of emergency and other health and safety incidents involving individuals other than student-athletes that may occur at the championship event or venue.

Medical Staff Credentials and Access

Travel party credentials for participating institutions will include credentials for medical personnel; provided it is the responsibility of the participating institution to include medical personnel in their normal credential numbers. Institutions may include medical staff beyond travel party limits provided they pay for the additional numbers with institutional funds. Competition site access can be secured by acquiring session tickets through purchase or an institutional pass list.

Any medical staff traveling with participating teams will have access to their team participants with the assistance of host medical staff, should an injury occur. If medical staff are not to be seated with the team during any championship event for any reason, they should communicate to host medical staff their seat locations and host medical staff should be prepared to provide all participant medical staff with the necessary credentials to access and provide necessary escort to the team locker room or athletic training room in the event of an emergency. Typically, an access point from the stands supervised by security will allow access by medical personnel to student-athletes.

Portable Immersion Tubs

Portable immersion tubs (hot or cold) are permitted at championship events only where use is a component of an established emergency or other health and safety plan and managed under the direction of sports medicine staff, an athletic trainer or physician in accordance with all applicable institutional and government health regulations and requirements.

Section 14 • Hydration Product

BODYARMOR

Equipment Information

The NCAA will provide certain championships relevant equipment (sidelines hydration, competition playing equipment, etc.) on a sport-by-sport basis that must be used in all championship activity. The purpose of the equipment is to hydrate student-athletes for competition. Each championship will receive information from the NCAA pertaining to any equipment that will be provided. Following the championships, each host site will be required to provide the NCAA with a completed inventory sheet (template provided by the NCAA) and pictures for proof of performance.

Cups, Coolers and Water Bottles

Drinking cups, water coolers, ice chests, cooler carts and water bottles should be provided for each scheduled practice or competition of any round of an NCAA championship. Participating teams shall place any premix fluid replacement in the NCAA-issued coolers and water bottles when applicable. Only cups, cans, coolers or water bottles may be used during championships that are provided by the NCAA. If applicable, the host may retain the coolers, cooler carts and ice chests after the competition. Reoccurring host sites are strongly encouraged to use the same equipment the following year unless otherwise notified by the NCAA. Participating teams may retain the water bottles and bottle carriers after the competition.

Hydration Program

Coca-Cola will provide a bottled water product (e.g., Dasani), BODYARMOR powder, and when applicable, BODYARMOR in bottles. Participating teams and student-athletes in NCAA championships continue to be free to use/consume permissible hydration beverage(s) of their own choice in the NCAA-provided equipment. Equipment carrying any branding other than BODYARMOR, however, will not be permitted on the sidelines during NCAA championships.

If a championship also receives BODYARMOR-branded squeeze bottles, they should be provided to student-athletes. Non-BODYARMOR-branded squeeze bottles brought by teams/student-athletes will not be allowed.

If the host must provide and/or purchase product for any NCAA championship use (e.g., student-athlete banquet, committee tent/suite, hospitality areas, media areas), the host must purchase and provide only Coca-Cola products (e.g., Dasani, BODYARMOR, Coca-Cola, Sprite).

Competitors of NCAA Corporate Champion Coca-Cola may not provide product (beverages, water, isotonics) for any NCAA championship, even if the competition offers product for free or at a reduced cost. The championship budget will cover the purchase of Coca-Cola beverage products.

Use of NCAA-Provided Coolers from Previous Years

The host may use previously supplied equipment from the NCAA, specifically POWERADE equipment with approval from the NCAA; however, unless approved by the NCAA, they must be used in areas not within television or photographer view (they may not be used on the sidelines or within the competition area[s]).

If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please contact Kelly Whitaker (317-476-6867; **kwhitaker@ncaa.org**).

Section 15 • Insurance

LIABILITY

If event is held on-campus:

Host institution/conference must maintain:

a. Commercial General Liability coverage on an occurrence form for Bodily Injury and Property Damage and Personal and Advertising Injury, including Products/Completed, Host Liquor Liability, Operations and Contractual Liability coverage. Coverage cannot exclude liability arising from athletic participation, spectators, alcohol or food-borne illness. NCAA must be named as an additional insured and the policy must have minimum limits of:
   - $5,000,000 Per Occurrence
   - $5,000,000 General Aggregate
   - $5,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate

b. Automobile Liability Insurance, covering owned, non-owned, leased or hired autos, with a minimum combined single limit of $1,000,000 Each Accident.

c. Workers' Compensation Insurance in compliance with the laws of the state or province where the host institution/conference is located, covering employees, volunteers, temporary workers and leased workers.

d. Employers' Liability Insurance covering employees, volunteers, temporary workers and leased workers, with minimum limits of:
   - $1,000,000 Each Accident
   - $1,000,000 Disease - Each Employee
   - $1,000,000 Disease - Policy Limit

If event is held off-campus (also applies when on campus venue is operated by a third party)

Host institution/conference or Local Organizing Committee must maintain:

a. Commercial General Liability coverage on an occurrence form for Bodily Injury and Property Damage and Personal and Advertising Injury, including Products/Completed Operations, Host Liquor Liability and Contractual Liability coverage. Coverage cannot exclude liability arising from athletic participation, spectators, alcohol or food-borne illness. NCAA must be named as an additional insured and the policy must have minimum limits of:
   - $5,000,000 Per Occurrence
   - $5,000,000 General Aggregate
   - $5,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate

b. Automobile Liability Insurance, covering owned, non-owned, leased or hired autos, with a minimum combined single limit of $1,000,000 Each Accident.

c. Workers' Compensation Insurance in compliance with the laws of the state or province where the host institution/conference or LOC is located, covering employees, volunteers, temporary workers and leased workers.

d. Employers' Liability Insurance covering employees, volunteers, temporary workers and leased workers. with minimum limits of:
   - $1,000,000 Each Accident
   - $1,000,000 Disease - Each Employee
   - $1,000,000 Disease - Policy Limit

All venues (for competition and ancillary events) must maintain:

a. Commercial General Liability coverage on an occurrence form for Bodily Injury and Property Damage and Personal and Advertising Injury, including Products/Completed Operations and Contractual Liability coverage. Coverage cannot exclude liability arising from athletic participation, spectators, alcohol or food-borne illness. NCAA must be named as an additional insured and the policy must have minimum limits of:
   - $10,000,000 Per Occurrence
   - $10,000,000 General Aggregate
   - $10,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate

b. Automobile Liability Insurance, covering owned, non-owned, leased or hired autos, with a minimum combined single limit of $1,000,000 Each Accident.

c. Workers' Compensation Insurance in compliance with the laws of the state or province where the venue is located provided, covering employees, volunteers, temporary workers and leased workers.

d. Employers' Liability Insurance covering employees, volunteers, temporary workers and leased workers, with minimum limits of:
   - $1,000,000 Each Accident
   - $1,000,000 Disease - Each Employee
   - $1,000,000 Disease - Policy Limit

e. Liquor Liability insurance with minimum limits of $10,000,000 per occurrence and $10,000,000 in the aggregate. The NCAA must be named as an additional insured on the venue's Liquor Liability policy.

NOTES:

1. All agreements, whether with the institution, conference, an LOC or the venue shall include mutual indemnification language.

2. If an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) or Drone will be used by the hosts or venue or its contractor, $1M in liability insurance coverage shall be procured and maintained for third party body injury, property damage or privacy with no exclusion for loss arising from electronic malfunction.

3. Certificate must be submitted to NCAA 30 days prior to competition.

4. Waivers for state institutions can be offered, but will not be offered in cases where the host institution is not responsible for championship operation.

5. Coverage limits may be satisfied through a combination of primary and umbrella/excess policies. Umbrella/excess policies shall follow form of the underlying coverage. Subject to the NCAA's prior written approval, contractors may be permitted to maintain limits which are less than the limits required herein.

6. All insurance policies must be issued by an admitted insurance carrier with an A.M. Best rating of A-VII or better. All liability insurance policies must provide cross liability coverage (separation of insureds or severability of interest provisions). Further, coverage for the NCAA shall apply on a primary basis irrespective of any other insurance maintained by the NCAA, whether collectible or not. No policy shall contain a self-insured retention without prior written approval of the NCAA. No policy shall contain a deductible in excess of $25,000 and any/all deductibles shall be the sole responsibility of the host institution/conference, LOC or venue and shall not apply to the NCAA. All policies shall be endorsed to provide a waiver of subrogation in favor of the NCAA. Prior to execution of the agreement, host institution/conference, LOC or venue shall furnish NCAA with certificates of insurance evidencing compliance with all insurance provisions noted above. The insurance requirements set forth will in no way modify, reduce, or limit the indemnification herein made by host institution/conference, LOC or venue. Any actions, errors or omissions that may invalidate coverage for host institution/conference, LOC or venue shall not invalidate or prohibit coverage available to the NCAA. Receipt by the NCAA of a certificate of insurance, endorsement or policy of insurance which is more restrictive than the contracted for insurance shall not be construed as a waiver or modification of the insurance requirements above or an implied agreement to modify same, nor is any verbal agreement to modify same permissible or binding.

Section 16 • Lodging

The host institution/agency shall negotiate a courtesy hold for the participating institutions/student-athlete(s). The selected hotel properties shall be within 30 miles of the competition site, be priced at a fair and reasonable market room rate (not to exceed $185 per room night) while remaining sensitive to the daily per diem allowances, and be without significant construction that will impact team stays. The selection of a competition site may be dependent on availability and quality of rooms for a participating institutions/student-athletes. A letter of intent is provided by the NCAA for the host to use to confirm the hold with the hotel(s).

- Hosts are required to secure a minimum of 30 total rooms (minimum of 25 doubles) for each team. There is a preference that one king room be a suite for the head coach. Detailed information regarding the team hotel(s) must be distributed by the host institution in the participant manual.
- Officials/Site Representative (two per site for regionals, one per site for super regionals) and teams may not be assigned to the same property. Hotel expenses (excluding incidentals) and hotel parking for the officials and site representative shall be paid by the host (rate not to exceed $185 per room night). When the officials (up to six per site) and site representative (one per site) are determined, the tournament manager will provide the rooming list to the hotel.
- Team Meeting Spaces. One complimentary meeting room, per team, accessible 24 hours a day for the duration of this event. In addition, secure one suite or conference room to accommodate up to five people throughout the duration of the event for coaches' meeting space.
- Officials' Meeting Space. One complimentary meeting room accessible 24 hours a day for the duration of the event.
- Accommodations SHOULD NOT be made at hotels with exterior room doors (for student-athletes or umpires) unless approved by NCAA staff.
- Team accommodations should be equitable and reserved as follows:

Regionals		
	4 teams	**3 teams**
1st Choice	All teams at separate hotels	All teams at separate hotels
2nd Choice	2 teams at one hotel and the other 2 teams at a separate hotel	All 3 teams at the same hotel
3rd Choice	All 4 teams at the same hotel	N/A

Monday following selections and regional competition, the tournament director should be prepared to notify each team of their lodging arrangements. Each visiting institution is responsible for contacting the hotel they have been assigned to arrange for payment and to supply a rooming list.

TEAM HOTEL

Teams are obligated to stay at the host-designated hotel. If an institution does not wish to stay at the designated hotel, or does not wish to use all of the rooms reserved for the team, the team must contact the hotel by 2 p.m. (local time of host) the Monday prior to the start of competition and obtain a written release of the reserved rooms (any unused rooms) from the hotel management or utilize the rooms for persons accompanying the official traveling party. Failure to do so will result in the cost of the rooms being taken out of the institution's per diem.

NUMBER OF ROOMS

Rooms must be reserved for each visiting team beginning the day before practice and checking out the day following competition. Thirty rooms (minimum of 25 doubles) for the official traveling party (30) of the competing teams, and six rooms (regional) or four rooms (super regional) for officials will be reserved by the host institution.

NOTE: Some teams may arrive two days prior to competition; although you are not obligated to secure lodging for the additional night, please assist teams in extending their stay, if necessary.

NCAA SITE REPRESENTATIVE/UMPIRE HOTEL

NCAA Committee Representative. The committee will appoint an NCAA representative (two for regionals, one for super regionals). If they do not live in the immediate area, you must make a reservation for them at a nearby hotel and arrange to have charges direct billed to your institution (room and tax only), to be reimbursed via your financial report.

Umpires. Rooms should be tentatively reserved for each umpire that is not from the immediate area beginning the day before the first scheduled game through the evening of the last scheduled game.

The tournament director will be notified the Monday before the regional and super regional, of the umpires assigned to their site. The tournament director will notify each umpire of their lodging arrangements and where and when the umpires' meeting is scheduled.

- Regional: Five umpires and nonworking UIC (may or may not need a room)
- Super Regional: Four umpires

MERCHANDISING

The hotel understands that the NCAA exclusively will have first right of refusal to sell products licensed by the NCAA for merchandising at the selected hotels. If the NCAA executes this right, the hotel agrees to provide space in its lobby, tables, electricity, dedicated phone line and a secure storage location for such sales at no charge to the NCAA merchandising agent. The NCAA guarantees that the merchandise will be displayed in a neat, professional manner.

In return, the NCAA merchandising agent will pay to the hotel a percentage of the net sales from the hotel location. Net sales are defined as gross sales minus sales tax and credit card fees. The percentage rate will be a predetermined, nonnegotiable rate included in the contract between the two parties, except as specified in the following sections.

Section 17 • Marketing

CONTACTS

The host institution should designate a marketing contact or marketing team for the championship. This person should be familiar with marketing strategies that have worked in the community where the championship will be held to sell tickets and drive attendance. It is the primary responsibility of the marketing contact to work closely with the NCAA championships marketing contact to create and implement the championship marketing plan. While many host institutions may have a marketing contact in the athletics department, this individual may also be from the local organizing committee, convention and visitor's bureau, sports commission or a combination thereof. Contact information for the designated marketing contact(s) should be submitted through the key contact portion of the Championships Bid Portal.

EXPECTATIONS

- Know the marketing budget. The NCAA championship manager on your campus or the NCAA Tournament Operations point person can communicate your marketing budget.
- Develop marketing goals. The primary focus should be driving ticket sales and attendance at the championship by developing inclusive promotion and awareness opportunities and utilizing diverse targeting strategies.
- Map out the time frame to market the championship.
- Determine how to best use the marketing materials provided by the NCAA.
- Establish grassroots initiatives to implement in your local and regional communities by creating and promoting messaging that resonates with people of all race, sex, class, national origin, creed, education background, religion, gender identity, disability, gender expression, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation and which appeals to diverse communities.
- Explore opportunities with traditional media (print, radio and television) in your area.
- Track marketing efforts and analyze results postchampionship to share with your NCAA marketing contact.

MARKETING PLAN

Host institutions/conferences shall establish a marketing plan in coordination with the NCAA championships marketing contact. The marketing should reflect the host's commitment to creating an environment where all guests feel welcome and see themselves represented throughout the championship experience. All marketing plans, marketing budgets and collateral must be approved by the NCAA championships marketing contact prior to implementation. Marketing strategies can be found in **Appendix F**.

MARKETING COLLATERAL

NCAA Marketing Portal. The NCAA Marketing Portal is a comprehensive tool designed to help hosts create marketing products which will generate awareness, drive ticket sales and promote attendance at championship events. The **NCAA Marketing Portal** can be accessed at **ansira.com/cn/ncaachampspromotions**.

Championship hosts should customize and download all necessary artwork to promote the championship from the website. Hosts should utilize imagery from the artwork provided, produce the items locally and obtain reimbursement for production costs, up to the reimbursable allocation provided for the championship round you are hosting.

Each NCAA Championships host marketing contact and tournament manager will receive an email with the marketing website address, username and password. Please contact **ncaachampspromotions@ncaa.org** if you are unable to locate this information.

Customizable artwork templates and marketing resources available on the NCAA Marketing Portal include, but are not limited to:

- PRINT
  - Poster
  - Flyer
  - Print ad
  - Table tent
- DIGITAL
  - Email blast
  - Banner
  - Social media graphics
  - Video board
- OUTDOOR
  - Billboard
  - Banner
- RESOURCES
  - Marketing best practices
  - Social media guidelines
  - Special artwork requests

If you have artwork needs and/or sizing which may not be available on the NCAA Marketing Portal, you may submit a special request through the website. Any additional questions can be directed to **ncaachampspromotions@ncaa.org**.

All requests must be approved by the national office staff before you proceed. Artwork requests and approvals will be managed through the website. If you do not have a local print vendor, we have listed NCAA preferred vendors on the website.

Collateral should not be created outside of the NCAA Marketing Portal. The website ensures proper usage of NCAA logos and trademarks, as well as ensures consistent branding across each championship round and all 90 NCAA Championships.

NOTE: A limited number of Division I predetermined hosts will create all marketing collateral by coordinating directly with the NCAA Championship Marketing contact; they will not have access to the NCAA Marketing Portal.

Television/Video and Radio Ticket Spots. The marketing website allows hosts of select predetermined championship sites to download TV, video, and radio spots for immediate use. Questions regarding the availability of these spots for your championship event should be directed to your NCAA championship marketing contact.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Host institutions/conferences may use already established social media accounts (Facebook, X, etc.) as a place to promote the hosting of an NCAA championship. However, host institutions/conferences should use marketing messages and assets supplied from or approved by the NCAA (links, web banners, flyers, updates, etc.). If the championship does not have an official NCAA social media page, a host is NOT permitted to create a social media page. The NCAA will make efforts to promote this championship on the established pages, as necessary. Please refer to ncaa.org for a listing of official **NCAA social media accounts**.

Section 18 • Media Services

The NCAA considers this hosting opportunity a partnership between the host school/conference, facility and the NCAA. The primary objective of everyone involved in the administration of the championship, shall be to provide a memorable championship experience for each participating student-athlete, coach, administrator and tournament attendee.

Note that health and safety protocols related to preparedness, response and protocols might have an effect on the media services detailed below, with any changes provided to all hosts in advance of each championship.

BROADCASTING/INTERNET

Please log on to **ncaa.com/media** for information regarding broadcast/internet rights.

CHAMPIONSHIP RECORDS

NCAA championship records are available in PDF format at the **Women's College World Series Records Book**.

CREDENTIALS

All media credentials are authorized and issued by the host or NCAA media coordinator. The NCAA provides credentials for all final championship sites and selected preliminary rounds sites. The "Conditions Placed on Use of Credentials" is placed on the back of all credentials. That text, located at **ncaa.com/credentialterms**, should also be visible at credential pickup.

The NCAA will provide credentials for the regional and super regional competition. Conditions placed on the use of a credential shall be printed on the back of each credential. The use of any other credential or entry badge is prohibited, except for NCAA sports sciences personnel, concession workers, ushers, security officers or ticket takers. Credentials are not transferrable. **Each site (regionals and super regionals) will receive the following credentials:**

Regionals

ESPN – 75

Event Management –150

Media –125

Team – 186

Site Representative – 3

Temporary Access – 25 (given out only upon request)

Super Regionals

ESPN – 75

Event Management – 150

Media – 125

Team – 92

Site Representative – 1

Temporary Access – 25 (given out only upon request)

Bench Size/Credentials. The following credentials will be distributed at the administrative meeting; 34 participant credentials (additional may be requested if a team has more than 25 student-athletes on its roster), one media credential for the sports information director, two all-access credentials for institutional administrators and five to be used at the institution's discretion (total of 42 credentials). Only the personnel with the appropriate credentials will be permitted in credential-required areas (e.g., team warm-up areas, locker/team rooms). The squad size and official travel party will be 25 and 30 respectively. The number of people allowed in the dugout is the institution's official roster size plus 14 individuals.

Gambling. NCAA policy prohibits the issuance of media credentials to representative of any organizations that regularly publishes or otherwise promotes the advertising of "tout sheets" or "tip sheets", or other advertising designed to encourage gambling on college sports events.

Issuance of Credentials. Working credentials shall not be mailed. The media coordinator shall issue credentials individually. Credentials may be issued to the following:

- Conference Offices. Two admission tickets may be made available to full-time members of the host institution's conference office and to each conference office that has a team participating at the site. Staff members from other conferences shall not receive credentials unless they are serving in a working capacity for the host.
- Credentials List. During the administrative meeting, the media coordinator must submit a listing of all individuals receiving credentials to the committee representative.
- Drug-Testing Team. In the event of drug testing, plastic credential badges will be issued for the drug-testing team by The Center staff. A minimum of 10 nonmedia seats shall be reserved for members of the drug-testing team. Individuals serving in this capacity will be identified for the tournament manager at each site by the national office staff.
- Official Travel Party. The official traveling party for the championship is 30. Refer to the Bench/Size Credentials section and Appendix A in this manual. Any additional individuals (excluding additional student-athletes on the team's roster along with spirit squad, mascots and band members) must purchase a ticket form the institution's allocation.
- Participant Media. Media credentials shall be issued according to the criteria printed under Bench Size/Credentials in this manual.
- Personnel. Each host SID is responsible for organizing workers to assist in the press operations of the championship. The number of workers will depend on the media demand for the games at the site. Communication with the media coordinator and the SID's knowledge of the area media will help with advancing planning. Such duties as press runners, quote takers, stat crews, copy machine personnel, etc., should all be coordinated with the tournament manager and media coordinator.
- Printing. The NCAA will provide credential boards and a supply of varying types of credentials.
- Photography. Refer to **ncaa.com/media-center/digital-social-media** for photography polices.
- Press. Refer to **ncaa.com/media-center/coordination-statistics** for media criteria.
- Radio Not Providing Play-by-Play. Each station or network will be limited to one credential.
- Radio Providing Play-by-Play. Credentials may be provided to the number of individuals required by a station or network to originate games during the regular season. However, in no case may more than four credentials be provided for any single station/network. Broadcasts of any championship game must conform to the general broadcasting policies established by the Association.

  For the radio agreement form and radio and Internet policy, refer to **ncaa.com/media-center/digital-social-media**.
- Television Providing Play-by-Play (if applicable). Credentials shall be provided to the entity televising the games and claimed in person by the producer. Please refer to the NCAA Broadcasting Manual.
- Volunteers. It is not permissible to issue credentials to volunteer workers except for those directly involved in event management.

CREDENTIAL QUALIFICATION AND ACCEPTANCE

Preliminary-Round Site. Preliminary-round/site media coordinators should send a credential request form to members of the local media to determine who will be covering the event.

NOTE: Working credentials, will not be mailed. The media coordinator should issue credentials individually at an appropriate site at the venue or at the designated headquarters hotel. A government-issued photo ID is required to pick up credentials. Credentials are nontransferable and will only be issued to the person whose name appears on the credential. Credential pickup for others is not allowed.

CREDENTIAL BOARDS

The NCAA will provide five credential boards to each regional and super regional site. These are for public display and to advise security personnel at the competition venue which credentials are allowed into specific areas of the venue. For credentials that are not allowed into a specific area, use a black marker to cross out the credentials not permitted.

FINAL RESULTS BOOKS AND STATISTICS

The final results book for team championships should include, at a minimum, final statistics, play-by-play summary and results as well as a cover sheet, event recap and postgame notes/quotes.

The host institution shall provide complete statistics of all NCAA championships competition.

FLIP CARDS

Flip cards should be provided to all media members for easy reference to participating team information, where applicable. The flip cards should include all players on the roster and a minimum of their uniform numbers along with the head coach and any assistants. The flip card should include team results as well as standard information regarding the game, such as date, location and opponent.

INTERNET POLICY

The NCAA website, **ncaa.com**, serves as the official online resource for NCAA championships.

Please visit **ncaa.com/media** for updated NCAA championship internet policies.

The NCAA and its partners own the Internet rights to all of its 90 championship events. Rights include live statistics, video and audio streaming, electronic commerce, and postevent footage use. The NCAA and its partners own all game action, practice footage, press conferences, one-on-one interviews or any other content on the NCAA website.

Internet Live Statistics

The current live statistics policies can be found **HERE**.

MEDIA GUIDES AND POSTSEASON GUIDES

The NCAA or host media coordinator should notify each school that qualifies for the championship how many media guides and/or postseason guides should be sent to the championship site and/or if media guides and postseason information should be uploaded to the NCAA box library. If wanting to provide a printed version, the media coordinator should provide an overnight address where the schools can send the information (their office or the facility) and a deadline as to when it should arrive. Consider security when selecting the location where these materials will be shipped.

MEDIA ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel. If necessary, the media coordinator should arrange for a block of rooms to be set aside for media, preferably at the headquarters hotel. Media members should be given a contact/link at the hotel whom they can call or link to make reservations; this can be listed on the credential application form along with the room rate and deadline for making reservations.

Hospitality. Media hospitality is strongly encouraged and media coordinators are responsible for coordinating media hospitality functions. Disbursements should be guided by the budget which was originally submitted by the tournament manager and approved by the NCAA national office.

Parking. Complimentary media parking should be provided at all championship host sites. The media coordinator should determine if it would be more effective to use parking passes or a parking list. If passes are used, the host institution must generate them. Media shuttle systems may also be used provided any costs are approved in advance by the specific sport committee and NCAA championships staff liaison.

Media Workroom. If possible, a media workroom should be designated at each site, where media members can file stories following competition. The workroom should provide an adequate amount of media seating, electrical outlets, complimentary wireless internet access and a pool of high-speed internet lines, if possible. Each school's media guides and/or postseason guides, along with any materials the host institution distributes (statistics, game notes, quotes, etc.), should be located in this area.

NEWS FILM AND MINI-CAMS

Please visit **ncaa.com/media** for updated information related to television, video and ENG policies.

OFFICIATING QUESTIONS/POOL REPORTER

Pool reporters may request an officiating and/or rules interpretation via the NCAA committee and staff members on site, when a game includes a potential fighting situation that results in a technical foul and/or ejection of a participant; if a rules interpretation is needed; or there is a clock/timing issue. Additionally, if a member of the respective sport committee deems it in the best interest of the championship for broadcast partners and members of the media to receive an interpretation pertaining to another specific situation, the officiating crew shall return to its locker room and conduct a conference call with the NCAA's national coordinator of officiating for interpretation. No one other than the game officials, members of the committee and the NCAA staff representatives assigned to the site are permitted in the locker room during this meeting.

Upon completion of the meeting and if competition is continuing at the host site, staff will communicate with the pool reporter and the sideline reporter from the broadcast entity (without camera or microphone) to share the officiating crew's interpretation to help enhance the public's understanding of what transpired.

The NCAA will issue a statement and will distribute it to its broadcast partners, on social media and to media covering tournament games at that site.

PERSONNEL

Each media coordinator is responsible for organizing workers to assist in the media operations of the championship. It is important to remind volunteers that they may see very little of the championship competition because of their responsibilities and the NCAA will not pay any expenses. All volunteers should be a minimum of 16 years or older. It is preferred that all media coordination volunteers have experience with media relations or championships.

The number of workers will depend upon the media demand for the games at the site. Communication with the participating SIDs and the media coordinator's knowledge of the area media will help with advance planning.

The following is a basic list of duties for volunteers (if applicable):

- Copy Machine Personnel – Photocopies materials (stats, notes, quotes, etc.).
- Credential Distribution – Pass out credentials to the media; check government-issued photo ID.
- External PA – Announcer for fans.
- Internal PA – Announcer for the media.
- Locker Room Attendant – Person to identify when the locker room is open and closed to the media.
- Mixed Zone Coordinator – Coordinates interviews in the mixed zone in events such as track and field and swimming and diving. Depending on the number of participants, this individual may need several assistants.
- Note Takers – Compiles worthy notes during and after the game or day.
- Photo Marshall – Makes sure photographers work in approved event coverage locations. Hands out photo armbands, if necessary.
- Press Conference Moderator – Introduces players and coach; directs questions from media.
- Quote Takers – Records postgame quotes from the press conferences/locker rooms. A minimum of one person should be designated to take quotes for each team. They should get quotes from the head coach and student-athletes.
- Results Disseminator – Transmits stats, notes, quotes, through appropriate delivery means (website, email, social media, etc.).
- Runner(s) – Distributes photocopied materials (stats, notes, quotes, etc.).

- Spotter – Helps the official scorer identify assists and any other assistance for official scorer.
- Stat Crew – Records the official stats. Note that when applicable, NCAA LiveStats software must be used at all NCAA championships. (Refer to Appendix K for more information on host sites stats.)
- Team Escorts – Serve as escorts for the coaches and student-athletes to and from the postgame press conference.

NEWS CONFERENCES

The media coordinator, or a member of the coordinator's staff, will be asked to coordinate all press conferences, including any conducted before the start of championship play. Because of travel and class schedules, pretournament in-person news conferences are not required for regionals and super regional competition. Instead the host media coordinator can conduct a telephonic or virtual prechampionship news conference two days prior to the first game, if the number of media or interest in the championship warrants it. If a formal press conference will be held, the media coordinator should produce name (table) tents to place on the dais/riser to identify coaches and student-athletes.

ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES AND COACHES MUST BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS. With permission from the NCAA, exceptions may be made to the policy.

The open locker room policy applies to all formal press conferences and to any interview requests for coaches and/or student-athletes not involved in the press conferences. Failure to do so may result in a misconduct finding, as determined by the respective sport committee.

NOTE: In the event that a student-athlete has been selected for drug testing, all media obligations must be fulfilled before going to the drug-testing center.

Team Championships with a Formal News Conference. The winning team shall have a 10-minute cooling-off period before reporting to the interview room. The cooling-off period starts once the head coach and all of the student-athletes have reached the locker room area. The losing team will report to the interview room immediately following the completion of the winning team's press conference. ***EXCEPTION: On Game 3 of regionals, the losing team should go first so they have ample time to prepare for their next game that day.***

It is mandatory for the head coach and a minimum of two student-athletes to participate in the news conference following the cooling-off period. No more than three student-athletes should participate in a news conference. A coach can shorten the cooling-off period but cannot extend it.

As soon as one media member enters a locker room, it will be open to all media members. Locker rooms are open to the media for a minimum of 30 minutes, provided media are present the entire time.

POSTGAME INTERVIEWS

Postgame interviews are mandatory for the head coach and requested student-athletes.

For all games except the Championship Series game that concludes the Women's College World Series, there will be a 10-minute cooling-off period. Following the conclusion of the cooling-off period, the winning team will participate in the press conference first, followed by the nonwinning team.

Only credentialed members of the media and participating institutions' administrations shall attend the postgame press conference.

Uniformed security shall escort coaches and student-athletes to and from postgame press conferences and other media obligations.

Order of Appearance. After each game, the winning coach and selected student-athletes will be scheduled in the interview room first. ***EXCEPTIONS: For Game 3 of regionals, the losing team should go first so they have ample time to prepare for their next game that day. The losing team that must play in Game 5 on the same day should go first, followed by the winning team.***

For the deciding game of the regional or super regional, it is permissible to have the losing team conduct its press conference first, while the regional/super regional winning team is still on the field conducting any regional/super regional photo shoots or other postgame ceremonies.

In the event of a team(s) playing an immediate doubleheader (less than 60 minutes between games), then postgame interviews can be held and take place after the second game.

Assistant Coach's Interview. An assistant coach is permitted to participate in a radio interview on the head coach's behalf prior to the expiration of the cooling-off period.

Locker/Team Rooms. The locker/team rooms shall be open to the media after a 10-minute cooling-off period. The timetable for the cooling-off period begins when the respective head coaches enter the locker room immediately after the game. Unless the coach chooses to forego the cooling-off period, they must proceed directly to the locker room after the match, except if they are requested to remain for a short interview (not to exceed four minutes) by the television network that has purchased rights. All locker rooms for players and assistant coaches shall be open to the media for 15 minutes after the conclusion of the respective cooling-off periods. However, if the media is not interested in entering the locker room, it may be closed before the 15-minute time period expires.

Electrical Outlets. Electrical outlets will be required in the working pressroom to assist representatives using transmission equipment requiring electricity. There shall be electrical outlets in the working pressroom.

Facility Coordinator. Host media coordinators must designate an interview room at the facility and an individual to coordinate the activities in it.

Equipment. The host institution shall provide all the necessary equipment (microphones, mult box, adequate light, etc.) for the interview room.

Obligation of Coach. Regardless of any personal regular-season radio or television contract(s), the coach is first obligated to the entire media staffing the tournament and must report to the interview room immediately after the 10-minute cooling-off period expires. The coach cannot delay a postgame interview with the covering media to conduct a program for a single newspaper, radio or television reporter unless requested to grant a short interview (not to exceed four minutes) by the television network that has purchased rights. (The media coordinator or designee shall have the responsibility to terminate the four-minute interview period, not the network that has purchased rights.) After fulfilling this commitment to the media staffing the tournament, the coach and student-athletes may participate in a special interview.

Quotes. Typed quotes shall be distributed to the media immediately after each news conference. It is recommended that one person be assigned to each team so that the news conferences are covered in their entirety.

"Selected Media" Policy. Should a coach permit a single media agency to enter the dressing room before the cooling-off period has expired the locker room shall be opened to all other media representatives desiring access to the area.

Moderator. The media coordinator shall identify a moderator for each news conference who shall keep the conference moving on schedule.

Press Conference Moderator Duties

1. The press conference moderator should give pertinent game statistics (i.e., leading rushers, passers, tacklers, game records) to media while they wait for the first team to arrive. Statistics should be distributed to the media, coaches and student-athletes as soon as they arrive.

2. Media coordination representatives should obtain the names of the student-athletes who will be attending the press conference and give them to the host or NCAA media coordinator, who then will provide them to the moderator so that they can be announced in advance.

3. The moderator should open the press conference by asking the head coach for their opening statement.

4. After the coach's comments, the moderator should invite questions from media.

5. If necessary, the moderator should direct a question to student-athletes to get them involved, if the media do not do so.

6. Limit the losing team to 10 minutes and the winning team to 20 minutes.

7. The moderator should keep the flow of the press conference moving. If there is a gap of time between questions, limit questions to one more and then thank the head coach and student-athlete(s).

News Conference Setup. Each host media coordinator should designate an interview room or area at the facility, and an individual to coordinate the activities in it. The interview area should have a public address system and an elevated head table.

Media coordinators should use an audio mixer (mix down unit) in the interview area to permit individuals using microphones to attach their equipment to it, eliminating the presence of audio equipment and/or operators in front of, or adjacent to, the speakers at the dais.

The following is a checklist of suggested minimum requirements for the interview room:

- Seating for a minimum number of media or VIPs (check with the previous host for an approximate number).
- Risers or an area with an unobstructed view for television cameras.
- Table for a minimum of 4-6 interviewees.
- Sufficient electrical outlets.
- Sufficient lighting for dais and workspaces.
- Mult box.
- Wireless microphones.

For selected NCAA championships, press conference backdrops, interview room table tents and microphone flags will be sent to the institution by the NCAA. Quotes from formal press conferences shall be made available to the media immediately following each game.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Commercial use of any still photographs is prohibited unless permission is obtained from the NCAA. Specific areas will be designated for photographers, and these areas will be limited by priority and space.

PHOTOGRAPHY AREA POLICIES

The media coordinator shall be prepared to designate "photographer positions," should media requests warrant it. "Prime" positions should be given to NCAA Photos and/or Getty Photos, or otherwise rotated among members of the media. All special requests (i.e., placing a remote camera on the backboard) must be approved by NCAA staff or site representatives.

PROGRAMS

Championships will feature either a printed or digital game program, which the NCAA and LEARFIELD Publishing has the exclusive right to post/distribute at the competition venue during the championship. No competing publications, whether sold or free of charge, are permitted at NCAA events where printed programs are available. Any publications delivered to the venue are the property of LEARFIELD before, during and after the event.

LEARFIELD will be responsible for all program production, including editorial content, layout and design, advertising and printing. Championship media contact should provide LEARFIELD with text and photos for editorial pages about host institution/venue/city, if requested by LEARFIELD. Any pages promoting the host institution/venue/city will not be display advertisements; those interested in purchasing advertising space for sponsors, etc., should contact Clerrinda Queen (**clerrinda.queen@learfield.com**).

LEARFIELD encourages the host institution/venue to distribute supplemental handouts (i.e., updated statistics and notes), provided any such materials:

- Are only distributed with the purchase of a program.
- So not include information available in the program.
- So not include advertisements.

The host should not include expenses for such supplements in the championship budget and/or financial report. All supplemental content is subject to NCAA and LEARFIELD approval.

RADIO/INTERNET AUDIO COVERAGE

Radio broadcast rights and made for internet audio at any NCAA championship may take place only through advance written request and permission of the NCAA media services group. (Refer to **ncaa.com/media**.)

All stations broadcasting any round of an NCAA championship shall be required to fill out the NCAA Championship Radio/Internet Streaming form online. To access the form, log onto **ncaa.com/content/audio-policies-0**.

TEAM VIDEOGRAPHER

Institutions are permitted to videotape championships competition by their teams or their individual student-athletes for archival, coaching or instructional purposes. Each institution is permitted to use one camera and may videotape only that portion of the competition in which it participates. The videotapes may not be used for any commercial purposes. An institutional representative shall contact the event coordinator at the host site to arrange for camera space at that site. For the latest information and policies in regard to team content, go to "Team Content Policy" link at **ncaa.com/media-center/broadcast-services**.

SCOUT VIDEO COORDINATOR

A scout video coordinator is permitted to place a camera to film the game from center field position. A credential also may be issued to a team videographer. The scout video coordinator will receive a media credential and may only film the game of the team represented by the video coordinator. Representatives of participating institutions may record the network telecast of any game at the site, using a video distribution outlet in the video distribution area. The institution must provide its own recording equipment.

SEAT ASSIGNMENTS

Media coordinators should provide preferred seat locations for media agencies that regularly staff games played by the participating and host institutions. Media seating charts should be posted to the media work areas in advance.

SECURITY

Security personnel should be instructed to protect the working media areas and interview area, especially before and after each game, and to limit access in all restricted areas to individuals wearing credentials.

STATISTICS REPORTING TO THE NCAA

Remind host site media coordinator to continue to submit final statistics files to the NCAA statistics staff as they have all season for all games the host plays. The designated home team in games not involving the host institution is responsible for submitting final statistics to the NCAA in those games between nonhost teams. WarnerMedia representatives will reach out to each host site media coordinator with instructions on how to submit live stats and scores to **ncaa.com**. (Refer to Appendix K for instructions on how to transmit live stats to ncaa.com.)

Institutions should send all information as follows:

- Email the information to **NCAA-Editorial@warnermedia.com**. Specify the division, sport, round and region in the subject area.
- Paste the text (official results, including date of competition, round, etc.) directly into the message box.
- Attach HTML box score, if available.

INTERNET

Complimentary wireless internet access must be available at all championship rounds for media use. The host institution may NOT assess an additional "hookup fee" to any media agency. Any wireless charges should be charged to the host or reflected in the proposed budget.

TELEVISION

If an NCAA championship is to be televised, the media coordinator will be notified by the NCAA championships liaison, media coordinator or member of the broadcast staff. This person will relay any needs specific to television, such as power, press row space, etc., to the host media coordinator. Information about NCAA broadcasts can be found online at **ncaa.com/media**.

LIVE STREAMING

For final sites of all nontelevised championships, ncaa.com will provide live streaming of the contest. For all other nontelevised rounds, the NCAA encourages all hosting institutions to provide a live stream of the event.

Apply for NCAA internet streaming rights online at **ncaa.com/rights-request**. Questions about Internet streaming can be directed to Nate Flannery (317-917-6523; **nflannery@ncaa.org**).

Any other entity, with the exception of the NCAA membership, seeking a championship event photo must license it through Getty Images. To license an NCAA championship event photo, please visit **on.ncaa.com/NCAAonGetty**.

For additional questions regarding championship photography, please contact Nate Flannery (**nflannery@ncaa.org**; 317-917-6222).

NCAA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR CHAMPIONSHIP HOSTS

The official NCAA social media pages and official hashtags can be found here: on.ncaa.com/sociallinks

Host Promotion of Championships

A lot of hosts already have an established presence in social media. Examples are school, LOC, Sports Corporation, venue or city pages/accounts. These pages/accounts are all acceptable places to promote hosting of an NCAA championship through the use of marketing messages and products supplied from the NCAA (links, web banners, fliers, etc.). The NCAA also promotes the championships (and the host involvement) on the appropriate NCAA social media pages/accounts. If the championship does not have an official NCAA account on a social media site, a host is still not permitted to create a page for it. The NCAA will make efforts to promote this championship on the other established methods, as necessary. Collaboration is encouraged through the use of cross-posting on Facebook (@ linking within text to drive fans to each other's pages) and mentions on Twitter (X) and Instagram (@ links to show coordination in posts). In addition to collaboration, idea-sharing is also encouraged and can be coordinated with the NCAA social team through the championship's contact.

A host should not create a social media account or page *(Facebook page, Twitter (X) feed, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc.)* **solely devoted to promoting an NCAA championship.** These pages become outdated, distract fans from established pages and fracture the NCAA message.

Please send direct questions, ideas or news to Jeffrey Donely at **jdonely@ncaa.org**.

Section 19 • Merchandise/Licensing

ADMINISTRATION

The NCAA licensing department has oversight for the event merchandising program at all rounds and sites of NCAA championships. All licensing and merchandising questions should be directed to David Clendenin (317-917-6496; **dclendenin@ncaa.org**).

AVAILABILITY

An online ordering system will be available to participating institutions interested in ordering Event 1, Inc., merchandise in advance of the championship. Orders will be shipped by Event 1 directly to the participating institution's campus.

GENERAL POLICIES

The NCAA retains the exclusive right to sell souvenir products at all rounds and sites of the 92 championships; host institutions/conferences and sponsoring agencies for all NCAA championships are required to sell items provided by the official NCAA event souvenir merchandiser. The official NCAA event souvenir merchandiser is Event 1.

Event 1, Inc. will enter into an agreement with the official vendor of the host institution/conference or sponsoring agency and will supply merchandise and inventory reconciliation forms to the official vendor. The official vendor of the host institution/conference or sponsoring agency at the site of the championship(s) is responsible for complete retail vending accountability, including full responsibility for inventory. When the requirements listed below are met, the host institution/conference will receive a 20% commission fee for providing these services. The 20% commission fee will be from net sales, which is defined as gross sales minus taxes and credit card fees. The following is a list of the requirements that must be met to qualify for the 20% commission fee:

a. Receive and count in all merchandise upon arrival from Event 1, Inc., as well as receiving all reorders required to meet customers demand. Reorders could arrive any day of the week and could be as early as 8 a.m. on Saturday or Sunday.

b. Locked and supervised storage adequate to accommodate all championship merchandise.

c. Immediate notification (within 24 hours of receipt) to Event 1, Inc. of any discrepancies in initial inventory counts. Nonnotification will represent host or vendor acceptance of initial inventory provided by Event 1, Inc.

d. Total management, control and accountability of the merchandise. If goods are lost, stolen or damaged, those goods are the responsibility of the host institution/conference or vendor.

e. Everything sent must be returned to Event 1 within two days of the conclusion of the event.

f. An appropriate number of selling locations and sellers throughout the facility in order to meet the demands of the projected crowds.

g. Selling locations that are well displayed and fully stocked prior to the public's access to them.

h. Strict adherence to the merchandising and display standards as outlined below:

- Merchandise made available for sale at all times during the event.
- Each item neatly displayed with correct prices clearly marked.
- Merchandise should be neatly folded at all times.
- Neatly dressed personnel that are customer-oriented.
- Skirted tables for display and checkout.
- Display boards and grids to properly display product at all selling locations.
- Selling locations located in high traffic and easily located locations.
- Vendor shall be responsible for hanging any display or signage material provided by concessionaire.
- Keeping selling areas clean and neat at all times.

- Restocking of back-up inventory in a fast and efficient manner.
- Transferring merchandise between the slower and higher volume stands to meet the demands of the consumers.
- Providing electricity and either hard internet lines or dedicated secured Wi-Fi network connection to support the merchandise sales effort at no extra cost.
- Calling Event 1, Inc. to request reorders should sales warrant.

i. A complete inventory accounting of all merchandise sold with a final inventory count and merchandising report supplied to Event 1, Inc., no later than 24 hours after the conclusion of the event.

j. Total gross sales revenues and a final copy of the inventory report must be sent to Event 1, Inc., within two business days of the conclusion of the event.

k. The remaining inventory forwarded to Event 1, Inc., or the next event site as determined by Event 1, Inc., within two days of the conclusion.

l. Having met each of the above requirements, Event 1, Inc. will pay to the host institution/conference, sponsoring agency or its assigned vendor, a commission equal to 20% of sales net of taxes and credit card service fees. The host institutions will keep commissions earned and the remaining money owed to Event 1 must be sent within seven days of the conclusion of the event.

The host institution/conference may not sell or allow for sale any merchandise that infringes upon the exclusive rights of Event 1, Inc.

Institutional Merchandise. A buy-out option can be made with Event 1/NCAA when the host institution/conference wants to sell merchandise that features the host mark or logo at the NCAA competition. This can only be done when the host institution/conference agrees to purchase the entire product that Event 1 provides. The host institution/conference will receive a 20% commission fee of net sales, gross sales minus credit card fees and taxes, on product supplied by Event 1. The host institution or official vendor will provide the NCAA 15% of sales (net of taxes and credit card service fees) of all non-NCAA championship merchandise. The quantity of NCAA merchandise available for sale shall not be less than a comparable shipment to a comparable site of the previous year's championship.

Reordering Process. The host institution/conference may contact Event 1 to place an order for additional merchandise during the event. The concessionaire must contact Event 1 no later than the conclusion of each day to evaluate inventory levels. The more time Event 1 has to react to the request, the better the chance a reorder can be processed and shipped in a timely manner. Event 1 cannot guarantee that additional merchandise will be available.

Event 1 will provide an event manual, which will include the contact information for the event coordinator assigned to the event as well as additional merchandising guidelines.

DIVERSE SUPPLIERS

The NCAA encourages and requests that local organizing committees/hosts diversify the pool of qualified businesses and select the best vendor(s) that can provide necessary goods and services for awarded championships.

Section 20 • Programs

PROGRAMS

The regionals and super regionals will feature a digital game program, which the NCAA and LEARFIELD Publishing has the exclusive right to distribute at the competition venue during the championship. No competing publications, whether sold or free of charge, are permitted at NCAA events where printed programs are available. Any publications delivered to the venue are the property of LEARFIELD before, during and after the event.

CONTENT/EDITORIAL

LEARFIELD Responsibilities

Responsible for all program production, including editorial content, layout and design, advertising and printing.

Host Responsibilities

Media contact should provide LEARFIELD with text and photos for editorial pages about host institution/venue/city, if requested by LEARFIELD.

Any pages promoting the host institution/venue/city will not be display advertisements; those interested in purchasing ad space for sponsors, etc., should contact Clerrinda Queen (**clerrinda.queen@learfieldimgcollege.com**).

SUPPLEMENTAL HANDOUTS

Preliminary Rounds

LEARFIELD encourages the host institution/venue to distribute supplemental handouts (i.e., updated statistics and notes), provided any such materials:

- Are only distributed with the purchase of a program.
- Do not include information available in the program.
- Do not include advertisements.

The host should not include expenses for such supplements in the championship budget and/or financial report. All supplemental content is subject to NCAA and LEARFIELD approval.

Championship

At the championship site, LEARFIELD provides daily bulletins, which are to be made available throughout the event. Coupons for the daily bulletins are enclosed in each program and can be presented to any program vendor for redemption. Further instructions for distribution of these materials will be communicated by LEARFIELD prior to the championship.

PROGRAM VENDING AND COMPLIMENTARY PROGRAMS

LEARFIELD will enter into an agreement with the official program vendor of the host institution or sponsoring agency on the key contacts form, and will supply programs and settlement sheets to the official vendor. The official vendor of the host institution or sponsoring agency at the site of the championship(s) is responsible for complete vending accountability, including full responsibility for inventory. When the requirements listed below (Program Vending Standards) are met, the host institution will receive a 20% commission of net sales for providing these services. Below are the program vending responsibilities of both LEARFIELD and the host, or official program vendor.

LEARFIELD Responsibilities

- Reserves the right to manage vending/fulfillment in-venue.
- Will email a vending agreement and settlement sheet to the vending contact and tournament manager prior to championship.
- Will ship and manage shipment of programs to arrive no later than the day prior to the start of the event, unless otherwise communicated by LEARFIELD.

- Within one week postchampionship, will provide the host with instructions for returning or destroying the remaining programs (if applicable).
- Will pay sales tax to the proper taxing authority.

Host Responsibilities

- Prior to the event, the program vending contact listed on the host's online key contacts form will need to confirm they are the contact and that the shipping information is correct, when requested by LEARFIELD.
- The host venue will provide all vendors unless otherwise prearranged with LEARFIELD.
- Return a signed vending agreement to LEARFIELD prior to the event.
- If requested and approved by the NCAA, the tournament manager shall issue credentials and provide the necessary parking passes to administrative personnel representing LEARFIELD. All programs vendors shall receive standard facility credentials.
- Distribute the allotted number of complimentary programs.
- Meet the "Program Vending Standards" (listed below) to receive 20% commission of the net program sales.
- After meeting the "Program Vending Standards," LEARFIELD will pay the vendor 20% commission of net sales. The vendor is to keep the commissions earned and cut a check to LEARFIELD for the amount due listed on the LEARFIELD provided settlement sheet within two weeks after the event.
- Email and mail the completed settlement sheet provided by LEARFIELD after the event within the time frame specified in the vending agreement

Program Vending Standards

- Receive and take inventory of the programs upon arrival. Notify LEARFIELD of any discrepancies in the quantity received or damages to the programs within 24 hours.
- Provide total management, control and accountability of the programs. If programs are lost, stolen or damaged, the programs are the responsibility of the vendor.
- Keep programs in locked and supervised storage.
- Provide an appropriate number of sellers throughout the facility in order to meet the demands of the projected crowds. The appropriate number of sellers should ensure that every fan entering the event will pass one person actively and exclusively selling programs, as well as placing multiple sellers in high-traffic areas to provide a quick transaction for all fans.
- Sellers should be either at designated program stands and/or stationed in high-traffic areas of the facility that are easily located (such as ticketed entrances).
- Ensure program stands and/or sellers are prepared to sell prior to the gates being opened. If using program stands or tables, the programs should be neatly displayed at all times. If using tables, please make best effort to make table presentable.
- Ensure that sellers are neatly dressed and are customer-oriented.
- Keep selling areas clean and neat at all times.
- Programs can be available at merchandise stands (i.e., along with apparel) but should not be sold exclusively in this manner.
- Sell programs throughout the event for a mutually agreed upon time with LEARFIELD.
- Display signage in a professional manner, if provided by LEARFIELD.

- Make sure vendors have necessary materials for selling throughout the event, i.e., appropriate number of programs and change. Replenishing sellers with programs and providing change should be done in a fast and efficient manner. This may include transferring merchandise between the slower and higher volume selling areas to meet customer demands.
- Below are a few best practices for vending programs:
    - Designate individuals to sell programs and pay them a commission for each program they sell; or
    - Recruit volunteers to sell programs as a fundraiser for their nonprofit organization and pay them commission for each program they sell.

Questions

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your NCAA administrator or Chad Laytham (**chad.laytham@learfield.com**) at LEARFIELD.

Section 21 • Safety and Security

The NCAA is committed to supporting a safe and secure environment for championship events and is appreciative of the many federal, state and local partners who aid in maintaining safe events for all student-athletes, coaches, officials, fans and staff.

The NCAA has established a Safety and Security Advisory Group (SSAG) to develop Best Practices for all NCAA championships. The SSAG developed these Best Practices based on a review of current and future championships competition venues, discussions with safety and security experts, and their own experience and knowledge. All hosts and competition venues are strongly encouraged to refer to the **Safety and Security Best Practices** when developing a safety and security Event Action Plan.

The suggestions outlined in the for Safety and Security Best Practices are based on practices that are employed by competition venues across the nation. The need and ability to implement them at each facility and event will vary. Properly trained and equipped personnel constitute the primary element of implementing a successful safety and security plan.

Best Practices for championships competition venue safety are intended for guidance purposes only; they are not a requirement under NCAA or other regulations or legislation. In addition, because of the wide variety of designs and sizes of competition venues; and composition and profile of particular events, not all Best Practices will be reasonable or applicable.

The Best Practices should not be viewed as a complete or primary source of information for developing or implementing the safety plan for the competition venue hosting an NCAA championship. Rather, facility managers and local public safety personnel should consider an all-hazards approach in doing a threat assessment and developing an Event Action Plan to utilize appropriate resources and support the NCAA championship event.

Please submit your final safety and security plan with your bid materials. In addition, you will be prompted to provide information for the Critical Incident Response Team form when completing our bid via the NCAA Championships Bid Portal. Please be as specific as possible when providing emergency contacts and numbers.

Unless otherwise expressly authorized by applicable law, no firearms or weapons are permitted on these premises for NCAA championships and events, excluding authorized sworn law enforcement officers. Failure to abide may subject you to ejection as well as other applicable discipline or action. The foregoing shall not limit the applicable equipment used in and for fencing and rifle competitions in accordance with NCAA rules, at the venues for such competitions.

GENERAL SECURITY GUIDELINES

Preparation. Competition site management is reminded of its responsibility to provide an environment that is safe and secure for all student athletes, coaches, officials and fans. This includes sufficient security and/or law-enforcement personnel to ensure that access to the competition and surrounding areas is restricted to players and credentialed individuals. The championship manager and host institution staff shall review with the local law-enforcement agencies their procedures for circumstances requiring emergency evacuation of the competition site or interruption of the game. In the event of a critical incident, contact the NCAA championship manager immediately before making any decisions.

Each host will be asked to provide the following:

1. Local authorities and critical incident response team contact information.
2. Review emergency protocol before the start of an event.
3. Identify chain of authority.
4. Identify incident command center.
5. Identify incident communication plan.
6. Review evacuation plan - review plan with competition site manager.
7. Review emergency response plan for typical emergencies, severe weather and potential criminal actions.

8. Connect with the closest Protective Security Advisors for your area and notify them of the event to receive security notifications and instructions. For more information about this program go here. PSAs can be reached via email at **central@cisa.gov** (submitter should provide their contact information and where they are located so they can be matched up to the nearest PSA).

Interruption of Competition. The officials have the authority to interrupt the championships. If competition is interrupted because of events beyond the control of the committee, it shall be continued from the point of interruption at a time determined by the committee. If necessary, the remaining competition schedule also shall be adjusted by the games committee. The committee should review the following procedures for interruption of competition:

- Head Table. Assure that the timing devices are operational and manual times are accurately recorded.
- Officials. Assure that the officials know the exact situation when competition was halted.
- Student-Athletes and Coaches. On instruction from the NCAA staff or committee members, participants should retire to the locker rooms or outside the building to await further instructions.

Power Source/Public Address. Facility management should protect the power source and the public-address system. If an alternate public-address location is available (i.e., away from the competition area) it should be used so communication is not interrupted.

Disruption. Building security and/or law-enforcement personnel shall be responsible for the restoration of order in the event unauthorized individuals occupy the competition area or if competition is otherwise disrupted. Under no circumstances are student-athletes, coaches, officials or NCAA representatives to become involved in the removal of such persons.

Communication. A senior member of the facility management and the senior law-enforcement officer at the site must proceed immediately to the previously identified location with means of communication to and from other facility staff and security officers. The public-address announcer should keep spectators informed of the conditions, if possible. Participants, coaches and officials must be kept informed throughout the delay.

Meeting. The committee chair, NCAA staff and meet management staff (facility manager, meet director and senior law-enforcement officer) should assemble immediately at a predetermined location to assess the situation.

Normal Conditions. The committee shall determine when conditions have returned to normal.

Resumption of Competition. As soon as possible, competition shall be resumed from the point of suspension. The event staff shall determine the revised schedule after consultation with the committee. If possible, the competition should be resumed in the primary facility. If necessary, the games committee has the authority to limit attendance to credentialed individuals, those on each institution's pass list, other individuals designated by each institution's director of athletics, and required facility operations personnel. Also, the committee has the authority to reschedule the competition in a nearby facility (e.g., on campus or elsewhere in the city) provided the alternate facility meets the provisions of NCAA rules.

Spokesperson. The committee chair or his or her designee, working with the facility management, the NCAA and, when appropriate, city, county, state and federal law-enforcement agencies, will serve as spokesperson in the event of an emergency.

WEATHER

To support and facilitate host institution management of weather and other environmental considerations and requirements, the NCAA has made arrangements to provide a complimentary lightning detection and weather monitoring system to each host institution on a complimentary basis for all rounds of competition for outdoor championships. It is important that the location address provided by the site representative and tournament director in the monitoring system is the actual physical location of where the event is taking place.

It is expected that the host institution will identify one or more tournament staff members who will have designated responsibility for weather monitoring. The site representative, host tournament staff and any other stakeholders should share relevant email and/or cell phone contact information to enable timely receipt of all weather updates. A severe weather response plan should be created and available for reference. The host or tournament director is encouraged to contact a local meteorologist or the nearest National Weather Service office to further facilitate weather and environmental monitoring as part of each event.

If the tournament director and/or site representative determine that weather conditions could alter the approved championship event schedule, they should promptly contact the NCAA championship manager with a summary and details of the anticipated weather/environmental issue and proposed alternate schedule before making or announcing any formal changes.

Lightning and Weather Detection Service

The NCAA has made arrangements to provide a lightning detection and weather monitoring system to all rounds of competition for outdoor championships. This system will assist the event management staff and the NCAA site representatives in case of inclement weather during the championship. A tournament staff member should be dedicated to weather monitoring. This service is provided complimentary so that all sites will have the resources available to ensure the safety of our student-athletes, spectators and event management staff. Both the site representative and host tournament director should request to include their emails and/or phone numbers via text to the weather monitoring system so updates will be received. The site representative and tournament director should also ensure that the address identified in the monitoring system is the actual physical location of where the event is taking place. It is also recommended that the tournament director make contact with a local meteorologist to further facilitate weather and environmental monitoring.

Section 22 • Ticketing

TICKET POLICIES/OPERATIONS

1. **Printing Tickets.** The NCAA prefers the use of mobile tickets for all championship events. If mobile ticketing is not feasible the host institution is responsible for printing and distributing tickets. The NCAA's standard ticket back language should be placed on the back of the ticket stub, but if it cannot be done (e.g., no new ticket stock is produced), this language must at a minimum be posted at all ticket windows for patrons to see, be included as an insert with the ticket mailing, etc. Patrons must be put on notice regarding the restrictions.

2. **Ticket Pricing.** With input and a recommendation from the LOC/host, the NCAA shall establish all ticket prices, including tickets for suites and standing room only. One hundred percent (100%) of the revenues from ticket sales shall be included in the championships receipts to help offset the NCAA guarantee (if applicable), championship expenses, and further revenue sharing opportunities. Revenue from the sale of championship tickets and championship-related event tickets will be exempt from sales, amusement, entertainment taxes and other surcharge obligations to the extent possible. The NCAA is a 501c(3) tax exempt organization. If a tax exemption is not applicable, then all applicable taxes and rates shall be disclosed (disclose in the sport-specific facility questionnaire) and any increases in the tax rates from the time the bid was submitted shall be absorbed by the bid respondent or rebated back to the NCAA.

   Please note any minimum and maximum ticket prices as set forth by the committee or needed to meet financial guarantees.

   Ticket pricing may be scaled according to seat location, but the minimum prices below for the regionals and super regionals will prevail. Any deviation from the minimum ticket price, if less than what is listed, must be approved in advance by the NCAA. **New ticket minimums** have been determined and are reflected below.

   Regional Tournaments

	Reserved	General Admission	Student/Special Groups	Children 1 and under
Single Session	$25	$20	$10	Free
All Tournament	$65	$55	$20	Free

   Super Regional Tournaments

	Reserved	General Admission	Student/Special Groups	Children 1 and under
Single Session	$30	$25	$10	Free
All Tournament	$80	$70	$20	Free

3. **Complimentary Ticket Policy.** The NCAA does not allow complimentary tickets to its championships. However, the NCAA will permit the purchase of tickets to use for championship promotional efforts. All ticket promotions must be approved in advance by the NCAA.

   Admittance to the competition venue on game days will be by ticket or NCAA-issued credential only. Every individual, regardless of age, must have a game ticket for admission, unless specified by the NCAA or venue policy. Unless specifically granted an exception, the NCAA requires that the competition venue utilize a ticket scanning system at all general public access points into the competition venue. The host venue system will be used for access control, box office walk-up sales and day of event issue resolution in the box office.

4. **Team Tickets.** At regionals, hosts are required to provide each team with a guaranteed minimum of 75 premium seats (behind the team dugout) and an additional 25 tickets elsewhere in the stadium. At super regionals, a minimum of 100 premium seats (behind the team dugout) must be held for each team. Hosts must hold tickets for teams until the team confirms the number of tickets to be used, not later than 5 p.m. local time on the Tuesday before the first scheduled competition. Hosts must contact each participating institution with instruction for purchasing and obtaining the tickets. After 5 p.m. local time on Tuesday, the participating institution may not return any portion of their allocation and are responsible for full payment of the number requested. Host institutions may choose to purchase tickets for students; however, the institution is financially responsible for those tickets. Tickets may not be charged to the championship budget.

5. **Player Guest Tickets.** Participating institutions may purchase tickets for their student-athletes in accordance with the regulations specified in Bylaw 16.2. A pass gate should be established at the stadium to administer the players' tickets. A designated individual from each participating institution will be responsible for submitting the names of the individuals who will use those tickets to the tournament manager (or their designee). Individuals using those tickets will proceed through the pass gate to a nearby area with a table or booth, where they will be identified by the appropriate institution's designee, given a ticket sub and directed to their seats.

6. **Final Ticket Database.** Each host conference, institution and/or venue must provide ticket purchaser information to the NCAA upon request, as well as, at the conclusion of the competition. Collecting purchaser information is essential for marketing efforts and postevent purchaser surveys which allow the NCAA to improve the championships experience. All relevant purchaser information must be submitted in an Excel or CSV file. The information should include, but not be limited to: Last Name, First Name, Address, City, State, Zip Code, Email, Phone Number and purchase information such as Total Seats Purchased and Total Purchase Price.

2025-26 STANDARD TICKET BACK DISCLAIMER LANGUAGE

The NCAA's standard ticket back language is posted online at **ncaa.com/ticket-terms**.

The ticket back language should be placed on the back of all ticket stubs, but if it cannot be done (e.g., no new ticket stock is produced), this language must at a minimum be posted at all ticket windows for patrons to see, be included as an insert with the ticket mailing, etc. Patrons must be put on notice regarding the restrictions.

Section 23 • Transportation

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Teams eligible for air travel must arrange make arrangements through Short's Travel. Short's can be reached at 866-655-9215 or by email at **ncaaalo@shortstravel.com**.

Institutions that fly, and are eligible for NCAA paid transportation on-site, will be required to use Short's Travel (STM Driven) to book on-site ground transportation. Short's Travel (STM Driven) can be reached at 844-814-3939 or at **ncaachamps@stmdriven.com**.

The home side ground transportation will be arranged by the institution in accordance with NCAA safety standards. Institutions that are eligible to drive to the championship will book ground transportation independently in accordance with the NCAA safety standards and seek reimbursement through the NCAA Travel Expense System (TES).

Expense reimbursement for participation in championships will be filed through our online system. The TES can be found at **travel.ncaa.org**.

All NCAA Championship travel information can be found **here**.

PARKING

The host institution is responsible for securing complimentary parking at team hotels for team buses and any courtesy vehicles provided, if possible. The competition venue shall provide a designated complimentary parking area for team buses and courtesy cars at the competition venue.

Section 24 • Umpires

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The tournament director should notify all umpires of the following: (a) time and place of umpires meeting; (b) game schedule; and (c) location of and directions to the facility. The tournament director should check with umpires to see if they need hotel accommodations. If an umpire does require a hotel room, room and tax only should be direct billed to your institution. See the lodging section below for additional information.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Participating teams will be advised of the umpires assigned to their competitions at the administrative meeting. The site representative and the nonworking umpire-in-charge will meet with the umpires (separately from the administrative meeting) to review their responsibilities and distribute the NCAA patches.

CREDENTIALS

The host institution shall distribute the "Event Management" credential or similar to the umpires.

TRAVEL/LODGING/PAYMENT

Travel. Umpires will make arrangements through Short's Travel Management (866-655-9215) to rent a car for transporting officials during the regional championship.

Lodging. Umpires rooms should be tentatively reserved for each umpire that is not from the immediate area beginning the day before the first scheduled game through the evening of the last scheduled game. The tournament director will be notified Tuesday before the regional and super regional, of the umpires assigned to their site. The tournament director will notify each umpire of his or her lodging arrangements and where and when the umpires' meeting is scheduled.

- Regional: Five umpires and UIC.
- Super Regional: Four umpires.

Payment. The NCAA will pay umpires and NCAA representative directly; however, staff may request specific arrival and departure information along with other specific information necessary to confirm payments.

Hotel expenses (room and taxes only) for the umpires and NCAA site representatives should be paid by the host; the NCAA will reimburse host institutions for these expenses. NCAA staff members will be responsible for their own hotel expenses.

MEETINGS

Prior to the first game, an umpires meeting shall be conducted to review NCAA policies and procedures, to coordinate assignments and responsibilities, and to review rules modifications. The umpire in chief and committee representative will co-chair this meeting. See the appendixes for a sample agenda.

PATCHES/HATS

NCAA patches and hats will be sent to each regional site from the NCAA and should be distributed to the umpires.

TICKETS

Umpires may purchase tickets for family and friends. Tournament managers are asked to facilitate this with the umpires.

Section 25 • Volunteers

GOAL AND RECRUITMENT

A volunteer program for the championship should be implemented to accomplish the following goals:

- Provide an enthusiastic and warm welcome to participants and guests.
- Answer questions and provide information to visitors.
- Contribute to the general excitement surrounding the championship.
- Assist the LOC with championship operations.

Championship volunteer programs should represent the student-athletes and communities we serve, embrace diversity and be inclusive of individuals from all backgrounds and identities. The NCAA and the LOC shall encourage recruitment and participation of volunteers from a talent pool of individuals that reflect diversity across all aspects, including race, age, sex, class, national origin, creed, educational background, religion, gender identify, disability, gender expression, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation and work experiences. The LOC/host institution should keep the NCAA's commitment to diversity top of mind as they assign volunteers to the various roles and responsibilities throughout the championship.

Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older and must sign a volunteer release waiver. Individuals with driving responsibilities MUST be 25 years of age or older.

Student-athletes or prospect-aged individuals MAY NOT be recruited in any way different than general public volunteers. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) cannot make a specific volunteer presentation to student-athletes of the host institution/conference. Student-athletes and prospect-aged individuals may apply to volunteer in the same manner as individuals from the general public. Student-athletes and prospect-aged individuals must be selected by the same criteria as the general public applicants.

The NCAA may request additional volunteers from the LOC as necessary.

WAIVERS

Each volunteer must sign a waiver of liability before the start of the championship (Appendix E). If there is a written agreement governing volunteer service, a release component must be added if one does not already exist. After the championship, all waivers shall be collected and kept on file, in case requested.

APPAREL

The NCAA will coordinate ordering and production of the apparel for final sites through the NCAA volunteer apparel program. BDA Sports and Event 1 have been selected as the official NCAA volunteer apparel providers for all 2025-26 championships. The NCAA will offer its Corporate Champions/Partners the opportunity to help offset the cost. The champion/partner would be permitted to place one logo on each apparel item, if a separate apparel item is provided for these volunteers.

The championship logo and the licensee's mark will be embroidered on the apparel. The licensee's logo may appear on the right chest or sleeve. The licensee's logo may be no larger than 2¼ inches square.

The LOC will distribute apparel during the required volunteer training sessions to ensure each volunteer's commitment. When ordering apparel, the LOC will ensure that apparel includes women's styles and sizes.

The games management staff, media coordination staff and host media operations staff should be included in overall volunteer numbers and should receive volunteer apparel.

NOTE: Hosts shall work in collaboration with the championship administrator on the selection, ordering and distribution of volunteer apparel.

Appendixes

Contents

Appendix A • Administrative Meeting 68
Appendix B • Umpire Meeting Agenda 71
Appendix C • Weather Policy 72
Appendix D • Pregame Timing Sheets 74
Appendix E • Volunteer Waiver 76
Appendix F • Marketing Strategies 78
Appendix G • Bat Testing 79
Appendix H • Equipment List 83
Appendix I • Clock Operation Guide 84
Appendix J • Clock Protocol 86
Appendix K • Guide to Live Stats 89

Appendix A • Administrative Meeting

AGENDA

National Collegiate Athletic Association
Division I Softball Administrative Meeting

1. Welcome and introductions.

2. Team administration.

    a. Official squad size

        (1) 25 players can participate in the game.

        (2) 30 person travel party.

    b. Credentials.

    c. Uniform and logo policies.

    d. Misconduct statement.

    e. Bat testing protocol.

    f. Banners and artificial noisemaker policy.

    g. Bands and mascots.

    h. Drug testing.

    i. Evaluations.

3. Facilities.

    a. Diagram of facility.

    b. Participating team entrance.

    c. Locker/team room procedures.

    d. Scouting/Game Film Tagging seats.

    e. Parking procedures.

    f. Team fan seating areas.

Division I Softball
Page No. 2

_____

4. Game administration.

    a. Game schedule.

    b. Pre-game format/timing sheets.

    c. Team line-ups.

    d. Determination of home team procedures.

    e. Team introductions.

    f. Game film procedures.

    g. Rain delay procedures.

    h. Action clock(s).

    i. Awards.

        (1) Regionals – participant medallions for squad size (22).

        (2) Super regionals – team trophy, hats, mini-trophies (sent after), ticket punched sign.

    j. Video review.

5. Media and sports information.

    a. Review postgame format/press conference procedures.

    b. Statistics

    c. Timing sheets in dugouts.

6. Sports medicine.

    a. Review medical procedures.

        (1) Hours of operation.

        (2) Access of equipment and modality.

    b. Review availability of trainers, training facilities and physicians.

Division I Softball
Page No. 3

_____

c. Transportation to/from playing field to training room, if needed.

d. After hours protocol.

(1) Contact information.

(2) Hospitals/medical centers.

(3) Physicians.

7. Umpires.

a. Announce the umpiring assignments.

b. Review ground rules, if applicable.

c. Protest procedures.

8. Adjournment.

Appendix B • Umpire Meeting Agenda

AGENDA

National Collegiate Athletic Association
Division I Softball Umpire Meeting

1. Welcome and announcements. (Umpire-in-Chief)
2. Schedule of events.
    - Umpires must be at competition site 30 minutes before starting time.
3. Umpires' uniforms.
4. Procedures for assigning umpires.
5. Determination of home teams.
    - See section 5.3 page 15 of the Site Representative Manual.
6. Protest Procedures.
7. Team lineups become official when given to the umpire.
8. No fraternizing with coaches or student-athletes.
9. Cover photography and on-field policies.
10. Suspending play.
11. Review umpires' payment procedures. (Tournament Director)
    - Fees, travel, per diem (RQ+), and hotel (host).
12. Credentials.
13. Parking.
    - Go over parking diagram and explain access to facility.
14. Umpire lounge and refreshment area.
15. Adjournment.

Appendix C • Weather Policy

BEST PRACTICES – WEATHER: LIGHTNING RESUMPTION

- The Emergency/Event Action Plan should identify potential weather risks, establish precautions and identify procedures for response. This includes evacuation, sheltering in place, reentry, and cancelation or postponement.
    - Develop trigger points and pre-planned responses for sport and venue, allowing for appropriate and timely action.
    - Identify decision authority based on event.

- ***UPDATE: Resuming play related specific to Lightning Only***
- Source/Endorsement: NOAA/NWS Outdoor Venue Lightning Safety Lightning Tool Kit

If the venue is consulting with a professional meteorologist that is using real-time lightning cloud-to-cloud and cloud-to-ground data, the event may resume only if all the following conditions are met: ○ Lightning has moved beyond eight (8) miles of the venue. ○ The storm motion is taking the lightning activity away from the venue. ○ The threat of new lightning strikes within eight (8) miles of the venue has ended.
If the venue is not consulting with a professional meteorologist that is using real-time lightning data, the venue will wait 30 minutes after no observed thunder or lightning strikes.

- This provides an OPTION to resume competition in a shorter time span than currently practiced via the 30 minutes after last lightning strike guideline.
    - SAFETY remains paramount; there are no requirements to resume play before 30 minutes after the last strike. If there is any concern, choose time and distance to allow for a safe environment for athletes, coaches, officials, fans and staff.
    - This update shall NOT supersede any existing venue related policies for weather return to play.
    - Play resumption is a two-prong test:
        - > Venue/host MUST consult with a professional meteorologist. The communication may be in person or via phone, but it MUST be with a pre-identified direct contact **AND**
        - > Lightning has moved beyond eight (8) miles of the venue, the storm is taking the lightning activity away, and the threat of new lightning has ended.
    - The timing of return to competition is associated with field access, and discussions should include timelines associated with any groundskeeping, warmup, or other actions needed before actual competition resumes.

Acknowledgements: National Weather Service (NWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Date Updated 03/25/25 2

WEATHER: LIGHTNING RESUMPTION FAQ

- Is this update a required return to competition approach?
  - No, if the host venue policies prevent this from being implemented, then defer to the host position. This is not a requirement, only an option. Safe return to play is the most important part of the decision-making process.
- What constitutes a professional meteorologist?
  - Examples of people meeting this title would be employees of the National Weather Service, a local media market weather specialist, or a member of the faculty/staff of an Atmospheric or Metrological Studies program at a member institution. It is expected this contact has received appropriate and relevant training and certification. (Note: The chat/question function on DTN would NOT qualify in meeting this standard.)
- Is this applicable to regular-season contests?
  - No, this language is not meant to supersede any specific conference or venue language about lightning return to play and is meant to guide champ managers and the national office in our championship events. However, it is possible this language may be adopted at a later time by other entities to become consistent.
- Is this applicable to preliminary rounds?
  - Yes, as long as the professional meteorologist point of contact is in place and all people facilitating that event have been in communication and are on the same page to use this approach.
- Is this position impacted by broadcast restrictions/rules/policies?
  - Yes, game operations and broadcast operations need to align. Champ managers must speak with appropriate broadcast partners to ensure this approach does not conflict with any broadcast restrictions.
- Will this language be replicated in other NCAA communication documents?
  - Yes, we will work to update all appropriate references including those from the Sports Science Institute, pre-championship manuals, host operations manuals, and Safety and Security Best Practices. In the meantime, you may use the first page of this document as a reference for documentation.

- *SUMMARY: It is essential the NCAA, the venue, and broadcast all communicate and align with lightning resumption procedures and only when using a meteorologist resource can play resume prior to 30'.*

Acknowledgements: National Weather Service (NWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Date Updated 03/25/25

Appendix D • Pregame Timing Sheets

NCAA DIVISION I SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

PRELIM

:05 Start Time

PRE-GAME PROTOCOL AND TIMING SHEET

SECOND GAME OF SESSION

_____ vs. _____
(visitor) (home)

GAME TIME – ____:05 __.m. LOCAL

INSERT HOUR IN "TIME OF DAY COLUMN" – MINUTES ARE ALREADY POPULATED

	Scoreboard Clock	Time of Day
Grounds Crew field prep.	35:00	____:30 or _____
Line drills away team.	23:00	____:42 or _____
Line drills home team.	18:00	____:47 or _____
Grounds Crew field prep.	13:00	____:52 or _____
Team introductions.	9:00	____:56 or _____

1. Visiting team (lines up on baseline in front of dugout, facing dugout; first player lines up nearest home plate, with last person named lining up nearest first base).

2. Home team (lines up on baseline in front of dugout, facing dugout; first player lines up nearest home plate, with last person named lining up nearest third base).

3. Introduction of umpires (stand behind home plate).

Umpires and coaches at home plate.	5:00	____:00 or _____
Teams take field on ESPN cue.	2:00	____:03 or _____
Game begins on ESPN cue.	00:00	____:05 or _____

IMPORTANT NOTE:
If Game 1 runs long, Game 2 will start (first pitch) 35 minutes following Game 1. The NCAA Site Representative will determine the "official" end of the previous game as teams go through the hand shake line. Then, with his/her stop watch (which must be synchronized with ESPN Truck), the NCAA Site Representative will coordinate the timing sequence (via the Time Out Coordinator's head set) for start of this game with ESPN. The stadium staff, teams and coaches will be notified of the start time as soon as possible.

NCAA DIVISION I SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

PRELIMS

:05 Start Time

PRE-GAME PROTOCOL AND TIMING SHEET
FIRST GAME OF SESSION
(with National Anthem)

_____ **vs.** _____
(visitor) **(home)**

GAME TIME – ____:05 __.m. LOCAL

INSERT HOUR IN "TIME OF DAY COLUMN" – MINUTES ARE ALREADY POPULATED

	Scoreboard Clock	Time of Day
Gates open.	65:00	____:00
Grounds Crew field prep.	35:00	____:30
Line drills away team.	27:00	____:38
Line drills home team.	22:00	____:43
Grounds Crew field prep.	17:00	____:48
Team introductions. (non-starters followed by starters)	13:00	____:52

1. Visiting team (lines up on baseline in front of dugout, facing dugout; first player lines up nearest home plate, with last person named lining up nearest first base).

2. Home team (lines up on baseline in front of dugout, facing dugout; first player lines up nearest home plate, with last person named lining up nearest third base).

3. Introduction of umpires (stand behind home plate).

National Anthem.	9:00	____:56
Umpires and coaches at home plate.	5:00	____:00
Teams take field on ESPN cue.	2:00	____:03
Game begins on ESPN cue.	0:00	____:05

DRAFT

Appendix E • Volunteer Waiver

ASSUMPTION OF RISK, RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

Event: _____ (the "Event")

Participant's Name (Please print): _____ (the "Participant")

Participant's Age: _____

In consideration for permitting Participant to participate as a volunteer in the Event as directed by the relevant staff, the undersigned, for themselves, and for their respective heirs, personal representatives and assigns, agree as follows:

Assumption of Risk: The undersigned hereby acknowledge and agree that they understand the nature of the Event; that Participant is qualified, in good health, and in proper physical condition to participate therein; that there are certain inherent risks and dangers associated with the Event; and that, except as expressly set forth herein, they, knowingly and voluntarily, accept, and assume responsibility for, each of these risks and dangers, and all other risks and dangers that could arise out of, or occur during, Participant's participation in the Event.

Release and Waiver: The undersigned hereby RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE the National Collegiate Athletic Association and its member institutions, _____ _____ _____ *or* any subdivision thereof, and each of them, their officers and employees, (collectively, the "Releasees"), from and for any liability resulting from any personal injury, accident or illness (including death), and/or property loss, however caused, arising from, or in any way related to, Participant's participation in the Event, except for those caused by the willful misconduct, gross negligence or intentional torts of the above parties, as applicable.

Indemnification and Hold Harmless: The undersigned also hereby agree to INDEMNIFY, DEFEND AND HOLD the Releasees HARMLESS from any and all claims, actions, suits, procedures, costs, expenses, damages and liabilities including, but not limited to, attorney's fees, arising from, or in any way related to, Participant's participation in the Event, except for those arising out of the willful misconduct, gross negligence or intentional torts of the above parties, as applicable.

Permission to Use Likeness/Name: The undersigned further agree to allow, without compensation, Participant's likeness and/or name to appear, and to otherwise be used, in material, regardless of media form, promoting the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and/or its championships, events and activities, including those of its representatives and licensees.

Severability: The undersigned expressly agree that the foregoing assumption of risk, release and waiver of liability and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is

permitted by the law of the State of _____ and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

Acknowledgment of Understanding: The undersigned have read this assumption of risk, release and waiver of liability and indemnity agreement, and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the same. The undersigned fully understand this assumption of risk, release and waiver of liability and indemnity agreement, that the undersigned are giving up substantial rights in connection therewith, and that its terms are contractual, and not a mere recital. The undersigned acknowledge that they are signing this agreement freely and voluntarily.

_____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Signature of Parent/Guardian of Minor Date
(if Participant is under the age of 18)

_____

Signature of Parent/Guardian of Minor Date
(if Participant is under the age of 18)

Appendix F • Marketing Strategies

Thank you for hosting an NCAA Championship!

In preparation for hosting, we understand there are many different critical factors and responsibilities needing to be addressed before competition begins, one of which is marketing. Understanding the many efforts which will be put forth in the days leading up to competition, we have provided a list of some marketing ideas/strategies to aid your marketing efforts in promoting the championship and increasing attendance.

We understand that not all strategies will apply to each host, so do not feel as if you must accomplish every task on the below list. Feel free to select a few of or portions of the suggested marketing strategies to help guide your efforts.

Thank you again for efforts and best of luck hosting!

Marketing Strategies

- NCAA Online Marketing Website
  - Design creative collateral via NCAA online promotions website (www.ncaachampspromotion.com). After selections, the NCAA has provided you with a username and password for the website. The NCAA has also provided reimbursement per round for production of marketing materials of the marketing materials created.

- Season Ticket Holders
  - Provide ticket ordering information via e-blast, phone calls, etc. to your season ticketholders encouraging them to order tickets. Determine whether the tickets can be mailed, picked up at will call, or able to be printed at home as they will most likely ask the method for delivery.

- Grassroots Marketing
  - Provide posters, flyers, and/or table tents to campus dining facilities, residence halls, libraries, athletic venues, student health centers, local businesses, fitness centers, sports retail centers, athletic department sponsor businesses, etc.

- Database Communication
  - Communicate championship/ticket information via e-blasts through the various databases your marketing department possesses or has access. Examples of databases may include youth leagues, youth club teams, coaches, camp lists, boys and girls clubs, girl scouts, CYO, alumni, donors, faculty and staff, local schools (grade, middle, high school), campus students (through on-campus student rewards program if applicable), past ticket purchasers, etc.

- Traditional Media
  - Promote through traditional media methods such as print (campus and local newspapers), television, radio (potential trade through department partnerships), website, and online web banners, etc. Print advertisements as well as online web banners are available to create on the NCAA Online Marketing Website (www.ncaachampspromotion.com) along with radio and television advertisements for select hosts.

- Social Media
  - Utilize your various social media platforms to promote championship information/tickets (Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, etc.). Potential ideas can include posting information each day to promoting the championship on your athletic Facebook page or creating contests/giveaways on Facebook/Twitter/Foursquare to promote the championship. Utilize text message alerts as well.

- Students
  - Determine a plan to encourage student attendance. Utilize any form of student rewards program you may have on campus to promote championship attendance. Promote the championship in high student traffic areas such

Appendix G • Bat Testing

NCAA SOFTBALL POSTSEASON ON-SITE PORTABLE BARREL COMPRESSION TESTING (BCT) OVERVIEW

The tournament host is responsible for providing the NCAA site representative with a secure location to bat test, their bat testing fixture, and the envelope shipped to them from the NCAA containing the appropriate stickers and an administrative bat log for each team. In addition, they shall secure bats that fail barrel compression testing from the team's possession and ship them for further analysis at the conclusion of the postseason tier.

Coaches, or a team representative, must bring their team's bats and their current, annotated NCAA Approved Softball Bat List (referred to hereafter as the "Bat List") for BCT to the designated location at the designated time on each game day. Additionally, the coach/rep must line their bats in the order in which they appear on the Bat List.

The bat testing manager shall match the model number of each bat with the models highlighted on the team's Bat List and verify the correct number of each is listed in the appropriate column. They shall barrel compression test each bat, per the protocol, until there are two passes or two failures (whichever comes first), using 1550psi as the standard minimum OR the specific, lower exception number listed for backstop style bats (as listed on the Bat List). Bats that pass will be stickered and, when necessary, the team's Bat List will be amended to account for failures. Bats that fail must be marked with the team's name and given to the tournament host for shipping purposes. The bat testing manager must also complete the information in the summary box on page one of the team's Bat List following each testing session for use on the field of play by the umpires and coaches.

On the first testing day, the administrative bat log (provided in the sticker envelope from the host tournament director) must be completed by the bat testing manager or team representative to reflect all bat models presented and their respective pass/fail status. Note-each model should be listed on one line and then the total number of bats of that model are noted in each day's column. After the initial testing day, the bat testing manager may use either the administrative bat log or the team's Bat List to perform the subsequent day testing but must copy the results from the testing document to the other document at the end of the daily testing. At the conclusion of testing for each tier, the completed administrative bat logs, unused stickers and the bat testing fixture must be returned to the host tournament director.

NCAA POSTSEASON BARREL COMPRESSION TESTING (BCT)
DETAILS FOR COACHES

Pre-Competition Barrel Compression Testing (BCT)

General Information

1. Pre-competition BCT will be conducted daily (competition days only) at all rounds and at all sites during the NCAA Softball Championship using the G4 SSL fixture. Note- visiting teams are encouraged (but not required) to travel their BCT fixture to ensure a working fixture is available throughout the competition.
2. Each team must have every bat that will be in a team area or on the field tested during the pre-competition testing. There is no limit to the number of bats a team may have tested and bats may be added on any testing day.
3. Coaches, or team representatives, must bring a current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List (hereafter referred to as "Bat List") with their bat models highlighted and quantities noted to the testing site and have that copy in their dugout during each game for use by umpires.
4. Bat models etched on the bat must be legible and exactly match those on the Bat List.
5. The bat testing manager will sticker each bat that passes BCT with an appropriate sticker for each day.
6. Bats that have not undergone BCT, and thus do not have the appropriate sticker, will not be permitted on the competition field or in team areas.

Testing Protocol

1. At each postseason site, at least one individual designated by the NCAA Championship Committee will conduct BCT as the bat testing manager (most likely the NCAA site representative) according to the protocol listed in the current NCAA Softball Rules Book.
2. The bat testing appointments and location will be determined by the site representative and tournament director.
3. Each team must send a coach or team representative with its bats and its annotated Bat List to the testing. This representative shall assemble the bats in order as they appear on the current Bat List and take possession of the team's annotated Bat List and stickered bats after testing by the bat testing manager.
4. The bat testing manager shall match each bat's model number etched on the bat to the annotated Bat List and may request assistance from the team representative for reminders of BCT minimums for backstop style models and/or for applying the daily sticker for bats that pass.
5. BCT details: The bat testing manager shall assemble and calibrate the BCT fixture each time testing occurs. Each bat is compressed, unclamped from the machine, rotated 90 degrees and then compressed again until there are two passes or two failures (whichever comes first). Passing bats are stickered. Failing bats are tagged with the team's name and given to, and secured by, the tournament director to be shipped to an NCAA designee for additional testing following conclusion of the tier.
6. Following testing, the bat testing manager shall complete the summary box (lavender) on the first page of the team's annotated Bat List for use by the game umpires.
7. On the first testing day, an administrative bat log (provided with the game stickers) must be completed to reflect all bat models tested and their respective pass/fail status. The log or the team's Bat List may be used by the bat testing manager for daily testing but the two lists must match at the end of each testing period.
8. All bats surrendered to the bat testing manager will not be returned to the teams while on-site. Please note an exception exists for damaged (e.g., cracked, dented) bats which will be marked with the team's name and may be returned to the team upon their request following the team's final game of the tier.

Post-competition Bat Compliance Testing

General Information

1. Bats that pass lab testing will be returned; however, bats that fail in the lab will remain surrendered.
2. Affected institutions, the appropriate bat manufacturers, the applicable NCAA Softball Rules Committee
3. and relevant NCAA Championship Committee will receive notification of a bat model that fails in the lab. Two (2) bats will be selected and secured from teams in each of the three division's NCAA final game and from the six (6) WCWS teams failing to qualify for the final game for further evaluation and bat compliance testing.
4. Bats selected for further evaluation or compliance testing will be identified by the bat testing manager, tagged with the team's name and given to the tournament director for shipping to the NCAA designee.
5. Selected bats will not be collected until the season has ended for the participating team.
6. FYI-results on bats sent to the lab, whether taken post-competition as noted above or for failing BCT, will take approximately three (3) months to obtain.

NCAA POSTSEASON BARREL COMPRESSION TESTING (BCT) DETAILS FOR SITE REPRESENTATIVES AND TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

Materials provided by

- Host site director – secure location with a table and three (3) chairs, BCT case (with BCT fixture, calibration ring, stop stick, athletic tape and Sharpie pen), NCAA provided stickers for the bat testing manager and printed administrative log sheets for each team, as well as a plan for a back-up fixture.
- Each team – dispatch a coach or team representative for testing at the designated time with a current, annotated NCAA Approved Softball Bat List and all bats which will be in the dugout or on the field.
- NCAA softball equipment consultant – mail envelopes with stickers separated by day and provide electronic log sheets to the host tournament director.

BCT PROCESS FOR BAT TESTING MANAGERS

1. Verify the fixture's proper calibration each time it is set up by placing the calibration ring in the fixture and testing it for the stiffness (psi) stamped on the ring.
2. Match the model number on each bat with the model number on the latest NCAA Approved Softball Bat List. **THE NUMBERS/LETTERS MUST BE LEGIBLE AND EXACTLY MATCH…NO EXCEPTIONS.** If it does not match, disqualify the bat by applying provided athletic tape with team name to barrel. Disqualified bats remain with the tournament director until their return is requested as the team departs. Record the disqualified bat(s) on the front page of the team's log sheet as illegal.
3. If listed, test the bat by placing it in the BCT fixture until the endcap touches the stop stick; place the calibration ring under the handle so the bat is level and square to the fixture for testing. With the lever hanging down, preload the gauge to 500psi by twisting the gauge then lift the lever. Mentally note the pass/fail result.
4. Bats are considered to pass when the BCT pressure gauge reads 1550psi or higher unless the bat being tested is noted on the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List as an exception having a lower minimum.
5. Release the pressure and rotate bat 90 degrees and retest. Mentally note the pass/fail result.
6. If both results are the same (pass/pass or fail/fail), that result is final.
7. If the results differ, the bat is inspected for damage. If found, the bat is disqualified as noted in #2 above. If no damage is found, the bat is tested a third time to determine the final result.
8. For bats that pass, the appropriate sticker is placed on the taper of the bat nearest the grip, preferably on top of previous stickers. **NOTES: 1) STICKERS ARE SPECIFIC TO EACH DAY, FRAGILE AND CANNOT BE REAPPLIED 2) IF THERE'S AN INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF STICKERS FOR ANY ONE DAY, HALF STICKERS SHOULD BE APPLIED.**
9. For bats that fail, apply the provided athletic tape with the team's name to barrel. Failed bats remain with the site representative or tournament director and will NOT be returned to the team but instead, sent for further analysis.
10. In all cases, direct the team representative to record the model on a single line of the bat log and the number of each model in the daily columns for each tested bat on the NCAA-provided administrative log sheet.
11. Following testing, the bat testing manager is responsible for completing the lavender portion of the first page of each team's annotated NCAA Approved Softball Bat List for later use by the game umpires.
12. At the end of testing for the team, verify the numbers of stickered and disqualified (damaged, illegal and failed) bats match the team's Bat List and administrative log sheet. The site representative takes possession of disqualified bats as well as the administrative log sheet.
13. After the first testing day, the bat testing manager may use either the administrative bat log or the team's Bat List for subsequent testing however the lists must match at the end of daily testing.

The host tournament director is responsible for attaching the completed NCAA-provided administrative log sheets to an email and shipping any bats that failed BCT to the NCAA Softball Equipment Consultant <u>no later than the next day</u> (excluding Sundays). If the site will host the next round, shipping failed bats may be delayed until the next round testing is completed but log sheets must be sent after each tier.
DO NOT DEVIATE FROM THIS PLAN WITHOUT FIRST TALKING TO DEE ABRAHAMSON, NCAA SOFTBALL EQUIPMENT CONSULTANT.

Contact info for Dee Abrahamson: Cell: 815-751-2648; Email: abrahamson@niu.edu;
Shipping Address:498 Quinlan Ave., DeKalb, Illinois 60115.
Backup contact regarding BCT fixture or testing: Donna Martin: Cell: 815-761-8626; Email: dmartin1@niu.edu.

BARREL COMPRESSION TESTING RESPONSIBILITIES FLOW CHART

Host Representative:
In advance of testing-
- Designate a secure location with table and chairs for barrel compression testing.
- Provide site rep with your portable BCT fixture and the provided envelope with the stickers and bat log sheets for each team (which were shipped to your attention).
- In conjunction with site rep, communicate testing plans, time and location to participating coaches.

Coach/Team Rep:
- Highlight and enter the number of each model on the team's bat list.
- Attend BCT at the predetermined time.
- Arrange bats in the appropriate bat list order.
- Following testing, retrieve team's bat list and bats that passed BCT.

Site Representative:
- The site rep should be the bat testing manager, or at a minimum, closely supervise a neutral part replacement.
- Assemble and calibrate portable BCT fixture whenever it is assembled.
- Match the model number on each bat to each team's bat list.
- Return bats not on the bat list, those with illegible model numbers, or those with obvious damage to the team rep at this time.
- Compress each bat until it passes or fails twice paying attention to back-stop style exception minimums as noted on the bat list.
- Sticker or oversee stickering of bats that pass twice.
- Disqualify bats that fail twice, identify them with the team's name prior to securing them with the tournament host, and appropriately amend the bat list.
- Complete the appropriate section of the first page of bat list.
- On the first day, complete (or have team rep complete) the provided bat log which then must be updated daily.

Umpires:
- Verify the number of presented bats equals the number of bats in the game column of the relevant pages of the provided bat list AND equals or is less than the total listed by the site rep in the appropriate box of page one.
- Amend the list to the number of stickered bats presented if needed.
- Inspect the bats for appropriateness, remove those with damage and amend the bat list appropriately.
- Secure damaged bats with the tournament host.

Secure failed bats from the site rep for shipment to Dee following your tier.

Present only stickered bats (preferably in order) and current bat list to umpires at the dugout for inspection prior to each game.

Obtain disqualified bats from the umpires on the field, securing them until the team's final departure from the site.

Retrieve damaged bats from the tournament host when departing the facility for the final time.

If any bats failed BCT, Contact Dee following the final testing session to obtain a shipping label and ship them ASAP.

No later than the end of each day, complete the RefQuest electronic Noncompliant/Inappropriate Bat form for bats failing BCT.

Following the game, complete the RefQuest electronic Noncompliant/ Inappropriate Bat form for disqualified bats due to damage.

Immediately following each tier, forward the teams' bat logs through an email or screenshots to Dee (Abrahamson@niu.edu). Note-stickers need not be returned.

Following the final BCT for the tier, return the BCT fixture, unused stickers and completed log sheets to the tournament host.

Appendix H • Equipment List

EQUIPMENT LIST

ON-FIELD EQUIPMENT	
Quantity	Item
4-6 dozen	Defensive balls (in buckets or ball hoppers)
1	Front screen for on-field activity
2-3	Empty buckets

HITTING AREA EQUIPMENT	
Quantity	Item
1 (ea cage)	Screen
1	Three-wheel pitching machine (similar to, but not limited to, a Hack Attach or Jugs)
3 dozen	Pitching machine balls (in buckets or ball hoppers)
1	Extension cord
2	Tees
6-8 dozen	BP balls (in buckets or ball hoppers)

- These are considered minimum requirements.
- All teams at the site must have access to all equipment.
- If there is a discrepancy in the quality of the equipment provided (e.g., batting cages, pitching machines) all teams must be provided equal time to use the best equipment.
- If the host is using more than one pitching machine, visiting teams should have that option as well (which should increase the number of machine balls and extension cords accordingly).
- Any facility or equipment on campus used by the host school should be made available to the visiting schools.

Appendix I • Clock Operation Guide

20-Second Action Clock Limit

When the ball is “dead”, the pitcher (in possession of the ball) must be in the general area of the pitcher’s circle and all other offensive and defensive players in a softball ready position before the ball can be put back into play.

First pitch of each half-inning **OR** After “Time” is called **OR** Ball becomes “dead” (for example, a foul ball or pickoff throw goes out of play)	Pitcher (in possession of the ball) and all offensive and defensive players are in a softball ready position	Start time limit when plate umpire signals by using the point or beckon

When the ball remains “alive” between batters the time limit begins when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the general area of the pitcher’s circle and all other offensive and defensive players in a softball ready position

First pitch of any subsequent at-bat (Give the batter the opportunity to get to the plate for the first pitch.)	Pitcher (in possession of the ball) and all offensive and defensive players are in a softball ready position	Start time limit when plate umpire signals by using the point or beckon

After each pitch during an at bat (following the first pitch) when ball remains alive, batter remains at bat, and the ball is returned directly to the pitcher from the catcher	Pitcher gains possession of the ball in the general area of the pitcher's circle **Pitcher does not need to be fully inside the circle.**	No signal is required. Start the time limit when the pitcher receives the ball and is in the general area of the pitcher’s

If the catcher or defensive player intentionally delays getting the ball to the pitcher so that the time limit doesn’t start, the plate umpire may point or beckon to have the 20-second time limit started.

The timer shall stop and be reset by the plate umpire (within the guidelines above) under the following circumstances:

1. They umpire appeals to a base umpire on a check swing.
2. The catcher makes a pickoff attempt (throw) to any base.

3. The catcher tries on a runner stealing and throws to 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base.
4. The pitcher covers home plate with a runner coming into score (Ex: passed ball / wild pitch)
5. The umpire calls “time” for any legitimate reason.

Violation to the 20 Second Action Clock Limit

When the pitcher, catcher, or batter are in violation of the limits, the umpire will call time and use the visible mechanic below to signal a violation. Following any violation, the plate umpire will give the new count before putting the ball back into play and starting the action clock with the point or beckon.

120-Second Between Innings Limits

For all games (media and non-media), teams are allowed a maximum of 90 seconds between half innings and at the start of games for warmups.

- The time limit may be shortened by mutual agreement between the two teams or by conference / tournament policy

- If a television agreement requires a longer time between innings and/or half innings, that will become the maximum allowed time.

- **Clock operators should confirm with the on-site administrator and the crew chief of the umpire crew prior to the first pitch of any game, tournament, or series that is being televised and have alternative timing limits**

  - Starts when the last defensive player crosses the foul line.
  - Stops when the umpire calls/signals “Play” for the first pitch of the next half-inning.
  - If no visible clock is being utilized, the base umpires will break from their position behind 2nd base and move to their standard starting position on each line behind 1st and 3rd base. This is the visible key that there are 30 seconds remaining to begin play. The umpire will also verbalize the 30 second warnings when moving to their position.
  - The 3rd base umpire will be responsible for calling time and announcing any violations on the batter or pitcher when they are not ready to play at the end of the time limit.

  For further information, refer to Appendix J.

Appendix J • Clock Protocol

SOFTBALL

Appendix J (2026)
Pitch/Between Innings Clock Protocol

Timing Devices

Consistent enforcement of the time limit between pitches and between innings is important to a game's pace of play. The use of a visible action clock(s) is recommended but not required. Umpires may choose to use an on-field timing device specifically designed to administer these time limits. In any case, the time limits must be administered consistently at all levels of NCAA play.

20-Second Action Clock Limit

1. A pitcher shall be allowed twenty (20) seconds to begin the activity to deliver each pitch. The pitcher does not necessarily have to release the ball within 20 seconds; however, the pitcher must begin the pitch by a clear separation of their hands regardless of the style of the pitching motion.
2. For the first pitch of each half-inning, following an umpire's call of "time", or if the ball becomes dead (e.g., after a foul ball or a pickoff that goes out of play), the timer shall stop, reset, and start again when the plate umpire signals "play" by using the point/beckon after the pitcher (in possession of the ball) and all offensive and defensive players are in a softball ready position.
3. For the first pitch of any subsequent at-bat, the timer shall start when the plate umpire signals "play" by using the point/beckon after the pitcher (in possession of the ball) and all offensive and defensive players are in a softball ready position.
4. After each pitch during an at-bat (following the first pitch) in which the ball remains alive and in play and the batter remains at bat, the timer shall start when the pitcher receives possession of the ball in the general area of the pitcher's circle.
5. The timer shall stop, and the umpire return the ball to "play" under the following circumstances:
   a. The plate umpire appeals to a base umpire on a check swing attempt.
   b. The catcher makes a pickoff attempt (throw) to 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base.
   c. The catcher makes a throw at a runner who is attempting to steal a base.
6. When a pitcher steps off the pitcher's plate, the time limit (or clock) does not stop unless the umpire grants the pitcher "time" for a legitimate reason.
7. When a batter steps out of the batter's box, the time limit (or clock) does not stop unless the umpire grants the batter "time" for a legitimate reason.
8. If a visible clock is being used and the operator does not start the timer at the appropriate time, the umpire shall call "time" and signal to the operator to reset the timer and start again immediately.
9. Batters are expected to enter the batter's box promptly prior to the first pitch of an at-bat. Batters should not delay entry to gain an undue advantage. If the batter does not enter the box and becomes alert to the pitcher with 8 or more seconds remaining, the batter will be adjudged to have violated the rule, and the umpire shall award a strike. The ball is dead, and no runners may advance. Catchers are also required to be in the catchers box within 12 seconds (or with 8 or more seconds remaining).

SOFTBALL

10. If the pitcher does not separate her hands to deliver the pitch prior to the timer reaching "0", the pitcher will be adjudged to have violated the rule.
11. When the pitcher or catcher are in violation, the calling umpire shall signal a delayed dead ball and verbalize "illegal". If the result of the play is not a ball on the batter, the umpire will announce the violation and communicate with the offensive coach to present options.
12. If the catcher or another defensive player intentionally delays getting the ball to the pitcher on the mound so that the time limit doesn't start, or if the pitcher delays taking their position on the mound, the plate umpire may beckon and have the 20-second time limit started.

90-Second Time Limit (or Clock) Between Innings

1. Between innings, teams have 90 seconds to be ready for the first pitch. The 90-second clock shall start when the last defensive player has crossed the foul line. If there are unusual circumstances that prevent either team from getting on or off the field, the time clock is delayed until players have had an opportunity to begin to move to their positions. If the offensive team is not ready within the 90-second time limit, the umpire shall assess a strike. If the defense is not ready, a ball shall be awarded to the batter.
2. For all ***non-media*** games, teams are allowed a maximum of 90 seconds between half innings and at the start of games for warmups. This may be shortened by mutual agreement between two teams or by conference or tournament policy.
3. For all ***media*** games, maximum time between innings limits will be determined by conference, television administration and/or athletic administration prior to the start of the game.
4. The base umpires will break from their position behind 2nd base and verbalize "30 seconds" when there are 30 seconds remaining to begin play. The umpire responsible for keeping the 90-second clock shall wait in fair territory until the 90 seconds has expired (adjust timing for media games) or both the offense and defense are ready to play. Be aware that television production may hold play even though both teams are ready to play.
5. 5.The 90-second pitch clock is enforced even if a coach or player continues to argue an inning-ending play and the clock expires.

Location of the Clock

Each conference will determine if a visible clock(s) will be used for all games or for conference games only and/or if the timer will be administered by the umpire crew on the field. If a visible clock(s) is used, it shall ideally be located on the outfield scoreboard or atop the outfield fence in either left- or right-centerfield as well as behind home plate. The clock(s) should be readily visible to the pitcher, catcher, and home plate umpire. If only one visible clock is available, the priority should be for the clock to be behind home plate.

Personnel to Operate the Clock

Each conference is responsible for developing guidelines for training qualified individuals to operate the clock during games or have it managed by the umpires on the field.

SOFTBALL

No Visible Clock Available or Malfunction of the Clock

If no visible clock is available or if the time clock malfunctions, time will be controlled on the field by the base umpire.

Appendix K • Guide to Live Stats

2025-26 Host Site Stats Document

NCAA LiveStats

NCAA.com is now fully integrated with NCAA LiveStats. Hosts that utilize NCAA LiveStats, a representative from WarnerMedia will contact you to confirm your scoring software. You should not have to do anything differently for these sports.

Hosts not Utilizing NCAA LiveStats

WarnerMedia and StatBroadcast will be collaborating this academic year to transmit live stats to NCAA.com for championship events. As an NCAA championship host, your assistance is greatly appreciated in making this a success. Transmitting stats to NCAA.com is **REQUIRED** for your hosted event.

Downloading NCAA Broadcastr

StatBroadcast's latest version of the Broadcastr software is required for setup. If you have a lower version previously installed, you will need to update in order to continue.

Please visit http://www.statbroadcast.com/ncaa/setup/ for all information on downloading, setting up, and testing StatBroadcast on your scoring computer.

Note: You may need Administrator access to your computer to install this software. If you are receiving errors overwriting files, you may need your Campus IT staff to temporarily unlock your computer.

If you are using Presto Stats, please contact Jason Venson (Jason.venson@wbd.com), for alternate instructions.

Please note: StatBroadcast is not affiliated with any other software.