



***PRECHAMPIONSHIP
2025-26 MANUAL***

NCAA General Administrative Guidelines

Contents

Section 1 • Introduction	2
Section 1•1 Definitions	2
Section 2 • Championship Core Statement	2
Section 3 • Conduct	3
Section 3•1 Certification of Eligibility/Availability	3
Section 3•2 Drug Testing	3
Section 3•3 Honesty and Sportsmanship	3
Section 3•4 Misconduct/Failure to Adhere to Policies	4
Section 3•5 Sports Wagering Policy	4
Section 3•6 Student-Athlete Experience Survey	4
Section 4 • Elite Scholar-Athlete™ Award	5
Section 5 • Fan Travel	5
Section 6 • Health and Safety	5
Section 7 • Logo Policy	5
Section 8 • Research	6
Section 9 • Travel Party	6
Section 10 • Religious Conflicts	6
Section 11 • Team Replacement Policy	6

THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 6222

Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222

317-917-6222

ncaa.org

September 2025

NCAA, NCAA logo, National Collegiate Athletic Association and Elite 90 are registered marks of the Association and use in any manner is prohibited unless prior approval is obtained from the Association.

Section 1 • Introduction

During the 2025-26 academic year, the Association will sponsor 92 national championships – 43 for men, 47 for women and two for both men and women. Of the men’s championships, four are National Collegiate Championships, 13 are Division I championships, 12 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. Of the women’s championships, eight are National Collegiate Championships, 12 are Division I championships, 13 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. The combined men’s and women’s championships are National Collegiate Championships.

The Prechampionship Manual will serve as a resource for institutions to prepare for the championship. This manual is divided into three sections: General Administrative Guidelines, Sport-Specific Information and Appendixes.

Sections one through nine apply to policies applicable to all 92 championships, while the remaining sections are sport specific.

Section 1.1 Definitions

Prechampionship Manual. Resource for institutions to prepare for the championship.

Administrative Meeting. Prechampionship meeting for coaches and/or administrators.

Appendixes. Any supplemental documents to be provided and distributed through the various resources.

Championship Manager. The NCAA staff member(s) responsible for the operational oversight of the championship.

Games Committee. The committee assigned to supervise the conduct of each championship session at a specific site. For finals sites, the games committee is typically the NCAA national committee.

NCAA National Committee. The sport committee with direct oversight responsibilities for the championship.

Non-predetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host at the time of the participant/team selections announcement.

Playing Rules. The rules under which the competition will be conducted.

Predetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host before the participant/team selections announcement.

Preliminary Rounds. The rounds of the championship before the final or championship round.

Regional Alignment. The geographic location of institutions or regional advisory committees.

Schedule of Events. Official event schedule – includes all required activities (e.g., practices, banquets).

Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the team selection process.

Site Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the site selection process.

Squad Size. In any championship in which a squad limit has been established by the governing sport committee or by the bylaws, the number of eligible student-athletes in competitive uniform eligible to participate at the start of competition.

Tournament Physician. The physician designated by the host institution/conference to serve as the chief medical advisor for the championship event(s) to be hosted at the host venue.

Section 2 • Championship Core Statement

The championships and alliances staff strives to administer competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner so that the experience of the student-athlete is paramount.

This is attained by:

Ensuring student-athletes’ optimal experience.

Executing championship events reflecting appropriate quality and values to/for stakeholders – student-athletes, coaches, administrators, member institutions, sport committees, fans, broadcast partners and corporate champions/partners.

Coordinating all aspects of the championship in an efficient, effective manner through common operating policies and practices, using internal and external resources.

Integrating championships with broadcast and corporate relationships in a manner that maintains the integrity of the championship.

Assuring effective management of the business aspects of the operation.

Enhancing the assets of the NCAA and their value by collaborating with internal and external expertise to achieve heightened exposure (e.g., community programs, fan events, banquets, anniversaries).

Section 3 • Conduct

Section 3•1 Certification of Eligibility/Availability

[Reference: Certification of Eligibility/Availability in Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20.2.4, 31.2.1.7.1, 31.2.1.7.1.2 and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaws 7.3.1.5 and 18.2.1 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Division II Championships Committee Policy and Bylaws 31.2.1.5, 31.2.1.5.2, and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

Only student-athletes eligible under Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 may compete in NCAA championships. Member institutions are required to certify the eligibility of their student-athletes before the beginning of each academic year and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from all intercollegiate competition.

Member institutions are reminded to notify the NCAA national office before the selection date for each championship of any student-athlete who may have participated in regular-season competition but subsequently is determined to be ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition.

DISCOVERY OF INELIGIBILITY OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE AFTER SELECTION

If an institution fails to report an ineligible student-athlete and the omission is not discovered until after the institution is selected to participate in the championship, necessitating the institution's withdrawal from the championship, that withdrawal shall be considered as one of the years of ineligibility, provided another institution participates in the championship in place of the disqualified institution. If the discovery of the ineligible student-athlete occurs so near the beginning of the championship that the governing sport committee does not have a reasonable period of time to replace the disqualified institution in the bracket, that fact shall be taken into consideration in determining the number of years the disqualified institution shall be ineligible to participate.

Section 3•2 Drug Testing

As part of preparation and planning to participate in championship events, member institutions are reminded and encouraged to review all applicable policy and legislative requirements pertaining to banned substances, drug testing and related eligibility requirements with their student-athletes. Student-athletes who compete in NCAA championships may be subjected to drug tests in accordance with legislation and may be determined to be ineligible as a result thereof. Only student-athletes who have consented in writing to such testing are initially eligible for these championships; and thereafter, student-athletes who are tested shall remain eligible only if they test negative.

Section 3•3 Honesty and Sportsmanship

Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.

Section 3•4 Misconduct/Failure to Adhere to Policies

MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in an NCAA championship is any act of dishonesty, unsportsmanlike conduct, unprofessional behavior or breach of law, occurring from the time the championship field is announced through the end of the championship, that discredits the event or intercollegiate athletics. Each games committee shall hold an administrative meeting with the representatives of participating institutions to review and explain the policies related to misconduct.

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A governing sport committee may assess a financial penalty against an institution for failure of any of its representatives to adhere to the policies and procedures governing the administration of the competition. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to comply with the procedures and deadlines for submitting scores, score sheets, schedules, rosters and entry/march-in forms for qualification and other materials necessary for the efficient administration of the competition. [Click here](#) to see the full misconduct/failure to adhere to policies and procedures online.

Section 3•5 Sports Wagering Policy

Sports wagering includes placing, accepting or soliciting a wager (on a staff member's or student-athlete's own behalf or on the behalf of others) of any type with any individual or organization on any intercollegiate, amateur or professional team or contest. Examples of sports wagering include, but are not limited to, the use of a bookmaker or parlay card; internet sports wagering; mobile betting; auctions in which bids are placed on teams, individuals or contests; and pools or fantasy leagues in which an entry fee is required and there is an opportunity to win a prize.

The current NCAA legislation against sports wagering prohibits NCAA student-athletes, member institutions' athletics staff and non-athletics staff with athletics responsibilities, and conference office staff from participating in sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activities concerning intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics practice or competition in a sport in which the NCAA conducts championship competition, in bowl subdivision football and in emerging sports for women.

A wager is any agreement in which an individual or entity agrees to give up an item of value (e.g., cash, shirt, dinner) in exchange for the possibility of gaining another item of value.

STUDENT-ATHLETES

A student-athlete found in violation of the prohibition against knowingly participating in any sports wagering activities or providing information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activity that involves intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics competition shall be ineligible for further intercollegiate competition, subject to appeal to the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement for restoration of eligibility.

POSTSEASON

In championships in which a bracket format is used, student-athletes, coaches and administrators may not participate in bracket competitions where there is both a required entry fee and an opportunity to win a prize. Student-athletes and administrators may participate under current NCAA rules in bracket contests where there is no entry fee but a possibility of winning a prize. Some NCAA member schools, however, have chosen to ban student-athletes from participating in these types of bracket contests.

HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES

It is permissible for NCAA championships to be conducted at locations in states that permit sports wagering.

Section 3•6 Student-Athlete Experience Survey

During the NCAA championships, the student-athlete experience is paramount. NCAA staff and hosts dedicate themselves to planning the best experiences for all involved. As part of our commitment to getting better, following the championship, participants will receive a survey to provide feedback on their experience and input on how championships can be improved for future NCAA student-athletes. Institutional administrators and coaches will receive

an email containing a link to the survey and will be asked to forward the survey to student-athletes. Additionally, this survey will be accessible via QR code found on the back of NCAA-issued championship credentials.

We also understand that sometimes certain circumstances or conditions occurring during the events may require real-time consideration. When this is the case, student-athletes may reach out to their site representative or NCAA national office staff on-site.

Section 4 • Elite Scholar-Athlete™ Award

The Elite Scholar-Athlete award was created to recognize the true essence of student-athletes by honoring individuals who have reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in their sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among their peers. The award is presented in every sport, every division, and goes to the student-athlete who has the highest cumulative grade-point average of all student-athletes competing at the finals site. One student-athlete per championship will receive the award, and the announcement of the winner will be made at the finals site.

Institutions that wish to nominate a student-athlete must do so through an online nomination process. For more information or to access the online form and submit a nomination, [click here](#).

Section 5 • Fan Travel

Through support from Marriott International as the Official Hotel Partner of the NCAA, NCAA championships are pleased to provide easy and affordable accommodations for family and fans to follow their favorite student-athlete(s) and team(s) as they participate in NCAA championships competition. Travel arrangements completed through Marriott and NCAA Travel help support NCAA student-athletes. Please direct your fans to ncaa.com/travel to search and book online hotel reservations.

Section 6 • Health and Safety

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 including, among others, those relating to concussion management, catastrophic injury prevention, inclement weather and independent medical care. These requirements and related information can be found in applicable division manuals, sports playing rules and the materials located on the [Health, Safety & Performance website](#). In addition, a summary of some of the key health and safety considerations related to traveling to championship events can be found in the [NCAA's Guidance for Medical Care and Coverage for Student-Athletes at Away Events](#).

Section 7 • Logo Policy

[Reference: Bylaws 12.5.4, 31.1.7 and 31.1.8 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw 17.1.10 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Bylaw 12.5.3 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (e.g., celebrations on the court, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met:

1. Athletics equipment (e.g., shoes, helmets, baseball bats and gloves, batting or golf gloves, hockey and lacrosse sticks, goggles and skis) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public; and

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

2. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including numbered racing bibs and warmups) and all other items of apparel (e.g., socks, head bands, T-shirts, wrist bands, visors or hats, swim caps and towels) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed 2-1/4 square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform and all other items of apparel shall not bear a design element similar to the manufacturer's trademark/logo that is in addition to another trademark/logo that is contrary to the size restriction.

Section 8 • Research

In order to avoid inappropriate and unnecessary participant distraction and disruption of championship events, it is expected any data collection or other research efforts conducted at or during championship events will be coordinated through the national office, with notice and a description of any research proposal to be submitted to the NCAA research staff at least six weeks before the championships event begins.

Section 9 • Travel Party

Please refer to the NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. NCAA Travel policies are updated annually and can be found online [here](#). Please reference Appendix A of the travel policies for reimbursable travel party numbers. The travel policies supersede all other documents.

Section 10 • Religious Conflicts

[Reference: Bylaws 31.1.4.1 and 31.1.4.2 in the NCAA Division I Manual.]

Institutional Policy. If a participating institution has a written policy against competition on a particular day for religious reasons, it shall inform the NCAA national office on or before Sept. 1 of each academic year in order for it or one of its student-athletes to be excused from competing on that day. The championship schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate that institution. *(Adopted: 4/22/98, Revised: 8/11/98, 10/28/99, 5/2/13)*

Individual Championships. In individual championships, an athlete must compete according to the institution's policy regarding Sunday competition (if the institution has no policy against Sunday competition, the student-athlete shall compete on Sunday if required by the schedule).

Section 11 • Team Replacement Policy

Division I developed a team replacement policy considering the possibility of unforeseen circumstances impacting championship fields. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the terms set forth in the policy document available [here](#) when, despite best efforts, a team within the championship field is impeded or hindered from participating in the championship for reasons beyond its control.

Division I Softball

Contents

Section 1 • General Administration	8
Section 1•1 NCAA Tournament Operations Staff Contact Information	8
Section 1•2 Oversight Committee	8
Section 1•3 Regional Advisory Committees.....	8
Section 1•4 Important Dates.....	10
Section 1•5 Equipment	10
Section 1•6 Rules.....	11
Section 1•7 Uniforms.....	12
Section 2 • Determination of Championship Participation	13
Section 2•1 Championship Format	13
Section 2•2 Results.....	15
Section 2•3 Selection Information	15
Section 2•4 Selection Criteria	16
Section 2•5 Site Selection.....	18
Appendix A • Brackets	21
Appendix B • Sport Sponsorship	23
Appendix C • Additional Preliminary Rounds Information	28

Section 1 • General Administration

Section 1•1 NCAA Tournament Operations Staff Contact Information

John Bugner
Director
Championships and Alliances
NCAA
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6222
Office: 317-917-6529
jbugner@ncaa.org

Liz Turner Suscha
Vice President
Championships and Alliances
NCAA
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6222
Office: 317-917-6189
lsuscha@ncaa.org

Kelly S. Whitaker
Associate Director
Championships and Alliances
NCAA
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6222
Office: 317-917-6511
kwhitaker@ncaa.org

Sami Bogenschutz
Assistant Coordinator
Championships and Alliances
NCAA
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6222
Office: 317-917-6984
sbogenschutz@ncaa.org

Section 1•2 Oversight Committee

The list of current committee members may be accessed [here](#).

For additional information about the softball championship, contact:

John Bugner, NCAA
Director, Championships and Alliances
317-917-6529 / jbugner@ncaa.org

Natalie Gonzalez Honnen, chair
Executive Senior Associate AD/Student Services &
Performance
Clemson University
864-656-9254 / nhonnen@clemson.edu

Section 1•3 Regional Advisory Committees

[Reference: Regional Advisory Committees in the Division I General Section and Bylaw 21.8.1.6 in the Division I NCAA Manual.]

Each conference shall appoint a member of the advisory committee in its respective region to assist in the evaluation of teams throughout the season. Below are the members of the 2026 Division I Softball regional advisory committees.

NAME	INSTITUTION	CONFERENCE
EAST REGION		
Natalie Gonzalez Honnen	Clemson	ACC
Gina Stoll	Western Ky.	CUSA
Aileen Morales	Georgia Tech	ACC
Jessica Bump	Binghamton	America East
Justin Ross-Walker	George Mason	Atlantic 10
Ashley Wade	UNCW	CAA
Jenny Rohn	Harvard	Ivy League
Anna Nagro	Mount St. Mary's	MAAC
Glenn Moore	Wagner	NEC
Jen Consaul	Army West Point	Patriot

DIVISION I SOFTBALL

NAME	INSTITUTION	CONFERENCE
MIDWEST REGION		
Holly Van Vlymen	South Dakota St.	Summit League
Jane Wagner	Northwestern	Big Ten
Laura Valentino	UConn	Big East
Bonnie Tholl	Michigan	Big Ten
Elisabeth Beirne	IU Indy	Horizon
Craig Nicholson	Akron	MAC
Ryan Jacobs	UNI	MVC
Jordan Stevens	North Dakota	Summit League
SOUTH REGION		
Jessica C. Leger	Louisiana	Sun Belt
Jesse Martin	Oklahoma St.	Big 12
Glenn Moore	Baylor	Big 12
Dot Richardson	Liberty	CUSA
Megan Griffith	Morehead St.	OVC
Rick Fremin	Southeastern La.	Southland
Camise Patterson	Alabama St.	SWAC
Loren LaPorte	James Madison	Sun Belt
SOUTHEAST REGION		
Kevin Saal	Wichita St.	American
Tara Brooks	Tennessee	SEC
Crissy Strimple	Tulsa	American
Jane Worthington	Eastern Ky.	ASUN
Christi Musser	Charleston So.	Big South
Tatjana Matthews	South Carolina St.	MEAC
Tony Baldwin	Georgia	SEC
Frank Reed	Chattanooga	Southern
WEST REGION		
Tiffany Edlin	Long Beach St.	Big West
Lori Perez	Sacramento St.	Big Sky
Nikki Palmer	UC San Diego	Big West
Stacy May-Johnson	Fresno St.	MWC
Kara Dill	UT Arlington	WAC
Sonja Garnett	Saint Mary's (CA)	WCC
Andrew Rich	Idaho St.	Big Sky

Section 1•4 Important Dates

Thursday, Jan. 15	Team schedules must be input on the stats site.
Monday, March 23	Bid information to host regional and super-regional competition available online at ncaa.org .
Friday, April 17	Deadline for submitting bid materials (proposed budgets) for hosting regionals and super regionals.
Sunday, May 10	7 p.m. Selection Show aired live on ESPN2. Selection and notification of teams participating in the championship.
Friday-Sunday, May 15-17	Regionals (regional competition will be conducted Thursday-Saturday for those regionals with a team that has a no-competition-on-Sunday policy).
Thursday-Saturday, May 21-23 or Friday-Sunday, May 22-24	Super Regionals. <i>NOTE: Super Regionals will be a three-day format.</i>
Thursday, May 28-Friday, June 5	Finals, Devon Park, Oklahoma City; hosted by the University of Oklahoma and USA Softball.

CHAMPIONSHIP DATES

Regionals	Friday-Sunday, May 15-17 (regional competition will be conducted Thursday-Saturday for those regionals with a team that has a no-competition-on-Sunday policy).
Super Regionals	Thursday/Friday/Saturday or Friday/Saturday/Sunday, May 21-24
Women's College World Series	Thursday, May 28-Friday, June 5; Devon Park, Oklahoma City; hosted by the University of Oklahoma and USA Softball.

DATE FORMULA

Regionals (16)	Two weeks before finals (Friday through Sunday)
Super Regionals (eight)	Thursday before Memorial Day (Thursday/Friday/Saturday or Friday/Saturday/Sunday)
Women's College World Series	Thursday after Memorial Day (Thursday-Friday + 1 week)

FUTURE DATES

	Regionals	Super Regionals	WCWS
2027	May 21-23	May 27-30	June 3-11
2028	May 19-21	May 25-28	June 1-9
2029	May 18-20	May 24-27	May 31-June 8

Section 1•5 Equipment

PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

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), all teams must be provided equal time to use the best equipment.

BALL

The Rawlings NC12L is the official softball for the championship. Rawlings will supply balls for all championship rounds; no other softball shall be used during competition. The NCAA will provide practice balls at the Women's College World Series.

BATS AND BAT TESTING

Bats used in competition **MUST** appear on the NCAA Approved Softball Bat List. The bat list will be updated on the first Monday of April, July and December. You can access the list at [NCAA Softball Rules of the Game](#) or the [RefQuest \(RQ+\) website](#). Additional lists will be posted when a manufacturer withdraws a bat model or the results of bat testing dictate assessing strikes and/or removing a model.

Coaches are reminded that they are responsible for legally equipping their team, and bats are to be checked according to the schedule provided by the NCAA site representative. Please provide umpires with a current bat list and highlight the bats your team will be using during each game, indicating the number of bats of each model that will be on the field or in the team area during the game.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Screens and chalk should be available for teams upon arrival on the practice fields. The minimum equipment that should be provided to all teams is listed below.

On-field equipment:

- Four to six dozen defensive balls (in buckets or ball hoppers).
- One (1) front screen for on-field activity.
- Two to three (2-3) empty buckets.

Hitting-area equipment:

- One (1) screen per cage.
- One (1) three-wheel pitching machine (similar to, but not limited to, a Hack Attack or Jugs).
- Three dozen pitching machine balls (in buckets or ball hoppers).
- One (1) extension cord.
- Two (2) tees.
- Six to eight dozen BP balls.

Section 1•6 Rules

Per NCAA Bylaw 17.34, member institutions shall conduct all of their intercollegiate competition in accordance with the playing rules of the Association in all sports for which the NCAA develops playing rules. For those sports in which the Association follows rules developed by other governing bodies and are modified by the governing sports committee, the adopted playing rules shall be used. The governing sports committee will not consider any results for selection purposes not played in accordance with the NCAA rules book, or those rules adopted by an outside organization.

The 2026 and 2027 NCAA Women's Softball Rules and Interpretations shall be followed for the championship.

PROTEST PROCEDURES

Please refer to the [2026 and 2027 NCAA Women's Softball Rules Book](#), Rule 7.2 which outlines protest procedures for NCAA championship play.

LENGTH AND SCHEDULE OF GAMES

All games will be scheduled for seven innings. However, a five-inning, eight-run rule will be used in all rounds of the championship. If play is stopped before a seven-inning game is completed and the eight-run rule is not in effect, it will resume at the point of interruption. Every attempt should be made to complete regional and super-regional competition by Sunday. Competition may go to Monday when the following occurs: (1) weather or emergency situations occur that prevent completion of competition; (2) any one team has to play more than two games in a day; or (3) in order to complete competition by Sunday, it would be necessary to begin competition after approximately 11 p.m. Sunday.

If competition has to be extended to Monday, it must be completed without starting a game after 11 p.m. Monday (if the regional final begins before 11 p.m. and an "if necessary" game becomes necessary to determine the regional champion, that game will immediately follow). *NOTE: Each round gets one extra day to finish the round.*

The committee reserves the right to revise the game schedule because of inclement weather.

Regional. If inclement weather limits play, every effort has been made to complete competition by Sunday and if competition cannot be completed by Monday, the team that will advance to the super regional will be based on the following:

0 games played	Highest seed
1 game played	Highest seed
2 games played	Highest undefeated seed
3 games played	Highest undefeated seed
4 games played	Highest undefeated seed
5 games played	Highest undefeated seed
6 games played	Winner of Game 6 unless each team has one loss; therefore, the teams are tied, then: 1) Head-to-head competition 2) Highest remaining seed

Super Regional. If inclement weather limits play, every effort has been made to complete competition by Sunday, and if competition cannot be completed by Monday, the team that will advance to the Women’s College World Series will be based on the following:

0 games played	Highest seed
1 game played	Winner of Game 1
2 games played	If each team has a loss, the highest seed

Section 1.7 Uniforms

[Reference: Bylaw 22.4 in the Division I NCAA Manual.]

The home team shall select the desired uniform color first and it is the responsibility of the visiting team to wear a contrasting uniform color to the jersey of the home team. Discrepancies will be settled by the NCAA site representative in consultation with the umpire. As a reminder, when teams play back-to-back games, they must be prepared to change uniforms, if necessary. Determination of uniform colors must be approved by the NCAA site representative. Noncompliance with this policy may result in “failure to adhere to policies and procedures” as outlined in the NCAA Division I Manual. On the field, including the practice areas and dugout, each team is limited to eligible players in uniform and coaches, athletic trainers, student-athletes and managers, all of whom shall be in appropriate team colors.

LOGOS

[Refer to General Administrative Guidelines, Section 7.](#)

Section 2 • Determination of Championship Participation

Section 2•1 Championship Format

The championship provides for a field of 64 teams. Four teams will participate at each of 16 regional sites in a double-elimination tournament. The 16 teams advancing from regional competition will participate in a two-team, best-of-three super regional at eight sites. The Women's College World Series will include the eight super regional winners.

Regional Format. The procedures outlined below shall be used in the conduct of all 16 regional competitions.

The regionals will be conducted for a three-day period beginning Friday, May 15. (Regional competition will be conducted Thursday-Saturday for those regionals with a team that has a no-competition-on-Sunday policy.) All regional competition should be completed not later than the Sunday prior to super regionals. [Exceptions (i.e., weather) may preclude the completion of competition by Sunday; however, competition must be completed not later than Monday.]

If the regular game schedule is altered because of weather or unforeseen circumstances, the following guidelines may be used and teams will be informed by the NCAA site representative: (1) Not more than two games by any one team will be scheduled in one day (a halted game resumed on the next day counts as one); (2) If possible, games will not be scheduled to begin before 9 a.m. or after 11 p.m.; (3) If competition cannot be completed Sunday, the last time to start a regional championship game (i.e., Games 6 and "if" 7) to complete regional finals is the Monday immediately preceding the super regional at 11 p.m.; (4) If play is suspended before Games 6 and 7 and the regional competition ceases, see the rain-delay advancement formula ([page 12](#)) outlined in this manual. Prospective host institutions must submit recommended starting times for all games with the bid materials for approval by the NCAA Softball Championships Subcommittee and are subject to change.

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 following procedure will be observed subject to change by the NCAA Softball Championships Subcommittee. Once established, the game order will remain intact.

DAY 1

Game 1	No. 2 vs. No. 3
Game 2	No. 1 vs. No. 4

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)

Super-Regional Format. In all two-team super-regional tournaments, Game 1 will be played on the first day; Game 2 on the second; and Game 3 (if necessary) on the third day. If there is a weather delay during super regional competition, teams will have three days to complete the super regional competition before the inclement weather policy will be applied.

The following procedure will be observed:

Day 1	Game 1
Day 2	Game 2
Day 3	Game 3 (if necessary)

Women's College World Series Format. The eight winners of the super-regional competitions will advance to the Women's College World Series. The NCAA and its broadcast partner will determine the order in which the games will be played. The two finalist teams will play a best two-of-three championship series (WCWS Finals) to determine the national champion. The WCWS Finals format consists of single games Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (if necessary), June 3-4/5. The Women's College World Series bracket, including dates and game times, may be found in Appendix A.

START TIMES

Start times for regionals and super regionals will be recommended by the host institutions during the bid process, subject to the approval of the NCAA Softball Championships Subcommittee. Game times should be set two and one half (2.5) hours apart and must follow the championship format below. Game times are subject to change per the broadcast schedule.

Regional and super-regional game-time policies:

- Thursday or Friday games are recommended to be between noon and 9 p.m.
- Saturday games are recommended to be between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m.
- Sunday games are recommended to be between noon and 9 p.m.

The committee, in coordination with the NCAA broadcast partner, shall determine game times for the Women's College World Series.

NOTE: Only Game 7 of regional competition will begin 30 minutes after the conclusion of Game 6 or earlier by mutual consent of both teams. (Changes subject to broadcast schedule.)

TRAVEL PARTY

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](https://www.ncaa.org/championships/travel/championships-travel-information).

The official 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).

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.

Section 2•2 Results

TEAM SCHEDULES AND ROSTERS

Deadline – Jan. 15: Team schedules must be input on the stats site. Reference the schedule instructions for more information. Rosters should be updated before the team’s first contest.

RATING PERCENTAGE INDEX (RPI)

The RPI is intended to be used as one of many valuable resources provided to the committee in the selection, seeding and bracketing process. It should never be considered anything but an additional evaluation tool. No computer program that is based on pure numbers can take into account subjective concepts (e.g., how well a team is playing down the stretch, what the loss or return of a top player means to a team or how emotional a specific conference game may be).

Several independent elements are combined to produce the RPI. These elements are part of the statistical information that can be utilized by each member in an objective manner. Each committee member independently evaluates a vast pool of information available during the process to develop individual preferences. It is these opinions – developed after many hours of personal observations (e.g., games watched); review of regional rankings submitted by regional advisory committee members; discussion with coaches, directors of athletics, senior woman administrators and commissioners; and review and comparison of objective data – that dictate how each individual ultimately will vote on all issues related to the selection, seeding and bracketing process.

While the various elements of the RPI are important in the evaluation process, the tournament bracket each year is based on the subjectivity of each individual committee member to select the best at-large teams available and to create a nationally balanced championship.

Section 2•3 Selection Information

ALLOCATION OF BERTHS

The championship provides for a field of 64 teams. Thirty-one conferences are provided automatic qualification and the remaining 33 teams are selected at-large.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

Conferences that have been granted automatic-qualification privileges for the 2026 championship are:

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

AT-LARGE SELECTION

The Division I Softball Championship Subcommittee will follow Bylaw 31.3.3 in selecting at-large participants. To be eligible for an at-large selection, a team must have an overall won-lost record of .500 or better against Division I competition.

Bylaw 31.3.3.1 – Countable Competition

For NCAA team-championship selection purposes, competition is countable only when the teams played are varsity intercollegiate teams of four-year, degree-granting institutions that conduct a majority of their competition in that team sport against varsity intercollegiate teams (see Bylaw 20.2.4.6) of United States four-year, degree-granting institutions. Competition against service teams, professional teams, semiprofessional teams, amateur teams, two-year colleges and club teams shall be excluded.

PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

An institution desiring to participate in the championship must complete all games (including conference tournament games) before the final scheduled selection Sunday, May 10 (preferably by 1 p.m.).

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Air Travel. If you are located more than 400 miles from the host site, please contact Short's Travel Management at 866-655-9215 as soon as possible to make your air travel arrangements. Be prepared to provide the names of the members of the travel party of 30. All transportation once on-site must be booked through STM Driven (refer to NCAA Division I Championships Transportation Policies).

Ground Travel. If you are within 400 miles from the host site, you will travel via bus and must secure your own arrangements that meet [NCAA Ground Transportation Safety Standards](#).

Lodging. The host institution reserves 30 total rooms (minimum of 25 doubles) for each team. Please obtain hotel information from the tournament director. At regionals and super regionals, all teams must stay at the designated hotel and use the appropriate number of rooms. Otherwise, you will be financially responsible for the rooms.

Section 2•4 Selection Criteria

The Division I Softball Championship Subcommittee will meet to make the final selections, regional and super-regional site determinations and pairings.

Announcement of the entire 64-team bracket will be made by the NCAA tentatively at 7 p.m. Eastern time, May 10, on ESPN2.

The Division I Softball Championship Subcommittee shall have full authority to select the at-large teams to compete in the respective regional tournaments. The committee will consider other outstanding teams from automatic-qualifying conferences for the at-large selections. The committee shall appoint regional advisory committees to assist it in evaluating teams, but recommendations of the regional advisory committee members are not binding upon the committee.

The following criteria shall be employed by a governing sports committee in selecting participants for NCAA championships competition [*Bylaw 31.3.3; Criteria for Selection of Participants*]:

- Won-lost record;
- Strength of schedule; and
- Eligibility and availability of student-athletes for NCAA championships.

In addition to Bylaw 31.3.3, the Softball Championship Subcommittee has received approval from the Sports Oversight

DIVISION I SOFTBALL

Committee to consider the following criteria in the selection of at-large teams for the softball championship (not necessarily in priority order):

CRITERIA

- Rating Percentage Index (25% the institution's winning percentage; 50% opponents' success; 25% opponents' strength of schedule); also bonus points for wins against the top 75 teams and penalty points for losses against the teams 227 and below.
- Head-to-head competition.
- Results of the RPI
 - Record against ranked teams 1-25; 26-50; 51-100; 101-150;
 - Average RPI win; and
 - Average RPI loss.
- Results versus common opponents.
- Significant wins and losses.
- End-of-season results.

The Division I Softball Championship Subcommittee may consider KPI and DSR rankings in the evaluation of teams as a resource.

- The KPI ranking is a results-based metric that ranks team resumes on a game-by-game basis, quantifying how hard it was for a team to achieve a record given their schedule. KPI ranks every team's win and loss on a positive-to-negative scale with the game values averaged for the team's KPI ranking. The best win possible is worth about +1.0, the worst loss about -1.0, and a virtual tie at 0.0. Adjustments are made to each game's value based on location of the game, opponent quality, and percentage of total points scored. KPI rankings are available here: faktorsports.com. In addition, there is a one-time bonus/penalty for playing 50% of scheduled games against teams ranked 1-50 and playing 50% of scheduled games against teams ranked 250 or below.
- Diamond Sports Rankings, known as DSR, is a predictive metric which uses a point exchange system to rank teams by their probability of defeating an average team. The DSR ranking is available [here](#).

PAIRINGS

Fifty percent of the bracket will be seeded in four groupings of 1-8. Published seeding will be in four sets of 1-8 and the pairings will honor a 1-8 assignment. The committee will identify the top 32 teams. The top 16 teams will be identified in rank order and assigned a seed grouping from 1 to 4. The top 16 will also be identified with its overall rank on the published bracket. The balance of the ranked teams, in turn, are assigned to one of the remaining seed groupings (i.e., 5 to 8). Teams from the same conference will be placed in different regionals. Once the seed assignment is finalized, it remains unchanged while placing the teams into the championship bracket.

Except for the 32 seeds, the pairings for the regionals, whenever possible, will be based on closest geographical location of the teams to the tournament sites. Teams may be moved outside their regions, if necessary, to balance the bracket or if the proximity to an opponent outside the region would be comparable and a better competitive matchup would occur. Teams from the same conference will be placed in different regionals. The committee will not reseed the teams once the initial bracket is determined. The committee will be responsible for determining the regional first-round pairings and bracket.

Super-regional pairings are determined by initial placement of teams on the bracket. Two winners of regional competitions will meet in one of eight super regional tournaments. The bracket will be developed such that if all of the top 16 seeded teams were to advance from the regional to the super-regional round, the matchups would be 1 vs. 16, 2 vs. 15, 3 vs. 14, 5 vs. 12, 6 vs. 11, 7 vs. 10 and 8 vs. 9.

Per Bylaw 31.1.3.2.5, seeded teams will have an opportunity to host regional competition provided they meet all hosting requirements and have submitted a bid to host by the April 17 deadline. Selection of teams shall be completed Sunday, May 10.

CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY/AVAILABILITY

[Reference: Certification of Eligibility/Availability in the Division I General Section and Bylaws 12.8.1 and 31.2.1.7 in the NCAA Manual.]

Only student-athletes eligible under Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 may compete in NCAA championships. In accordance with Bylaw 12.8.1, member institutions are required to certify the eligibility of their student-athletes before each academic year and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from all intercollegiate competition. Member institutions are reminded to notify the NCAA national office before the selection date for each championship of any student-athlete who may have participated in regular-season competition but subsequently is determined to be ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition. For the Division I softball championship, institutions must notify John Bugner (phone: 317-917-6529; email: jbugner@ncaa.org) before May 10.

Section 2•5 Site Selection

Any institution or conference interested in hosting a preliminary round of the 2026 NCAA Division I Softball Championship must submit a proposed budget, facility evaluation form, key contacts form, hotel(s) letter(s) of agreement and video board questionnaire (if applicable) to be considered to host. A separate proposed budget, key contacts form and hotel(s) letter(s) of agreement must be submitted for each round that an institution or conference is interested in hosting. In addition prospective hosts are required to file a Softball Facility Scorecard which can be found [here](#).

Committee/site representative per diem, mileage and luggage fees will be paid directly by the NCAA and not the host institution. Game officials will be reimbursed via the RefQuest (RQ+) system for their game fee, per diem, mileage and luggage fees. Hosts do not pay these fees.

For both the game officials and committee/site representatives, hosts will pay lodging expenses and be reimbursed by the NCAA through the budget process. However, if the NCAA manages the hotel block for the game officials, the officials' lodging expenses shall be directly billed to the NCAA. The NCAA typically manages the officials' hotel block only at the final site for championships.

All bid-related forms can be accessed via the following website: web1.ncaa.org/champsBidV20/exec/login. The deadline to submit all materials for hosting preliminary rounds is **April 17**.

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

[Reference: Bylaw 31.4 in the NCAA Manual.]

A final financial report from each championship site must be submitted via the online host reporting system to the NCAA not later than 60 days after the competition.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding the bid system, please contact the NCAA Championships and Alliances staff at 317-917-6984 or sbogenschutz@ncaa.org.

PROSPECTIVE HOSTS

Host bid information and deadlines will be included in the March NCAA Championships Monthly Newsletter.

HOST REPORTING SYSTEM

An online proposed budget must be completed for each round of competition you wish to host. For those institutions submitting bids for multiple rounds, a "copy" function is available and will allow you to transfer budget information between rounds. The appropriate round and date of competition must be indicated on each budget. Please be sure to include projected ticket sales in the Receipts section.

FACILITY EVALUATION FORM

A facility evaluation form must be completed by each institution interested in hosting preliminary-round competition.

If you submitted a facility evaluation form for this championship last year, the responses to a number of questions will auto-populate with information you submitted last year. Please verify or edit those responses as needed, and provide responses to all blank questions.

KEY CONTACTS FORM

The key contacts form and instructions are available online. Each institution should list and then maintain its key contacts associated with each sport and the institution. *NOTE: The tournament director must be institutional staff with decision-making responsibilities, preferably with oversight of the softball program.*

Personnel who will administer the competition should be listed on the key contacts form. Please pay close attention to contact names and addresses listed for receivables. Items such as signage, game balls, awards, hydration equipment, etc., will be shipped to the listed address(es). In order to receive all supplies and equipment in a timely manner, it's imperative that this information is accurate. Please include the proper shipping address for overnight deliveries. P.O. Box addresses are not acceptable.

SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN

Based upon a review of current and future championships competition venues, discussions with safety and security experts, and its own expertise and knowledge, the NCAA has established a Safety and Security Advisory Group (SSAG) to develop a compilation of Best Practices for NCAA Championships, which can be accessed [here](#). We urge each competition venue to take these Best Practices into account when developing its safety and security program.

The safety and security plan should be submitted using the document upload in the championships bid portal. Contact Sami Bogenschutz (sbogenschutz@ncaa.org) at the NCAA if you need assistance with this site.

Appendixes

Contents

Appendix A • Brackets	21
Appendix B • Sport Sponsorship	23
Appendix C • Additional Preliminary Rounds Information	28

Appendix A • Brackets



2026 NCAA® Division I Softball Championship

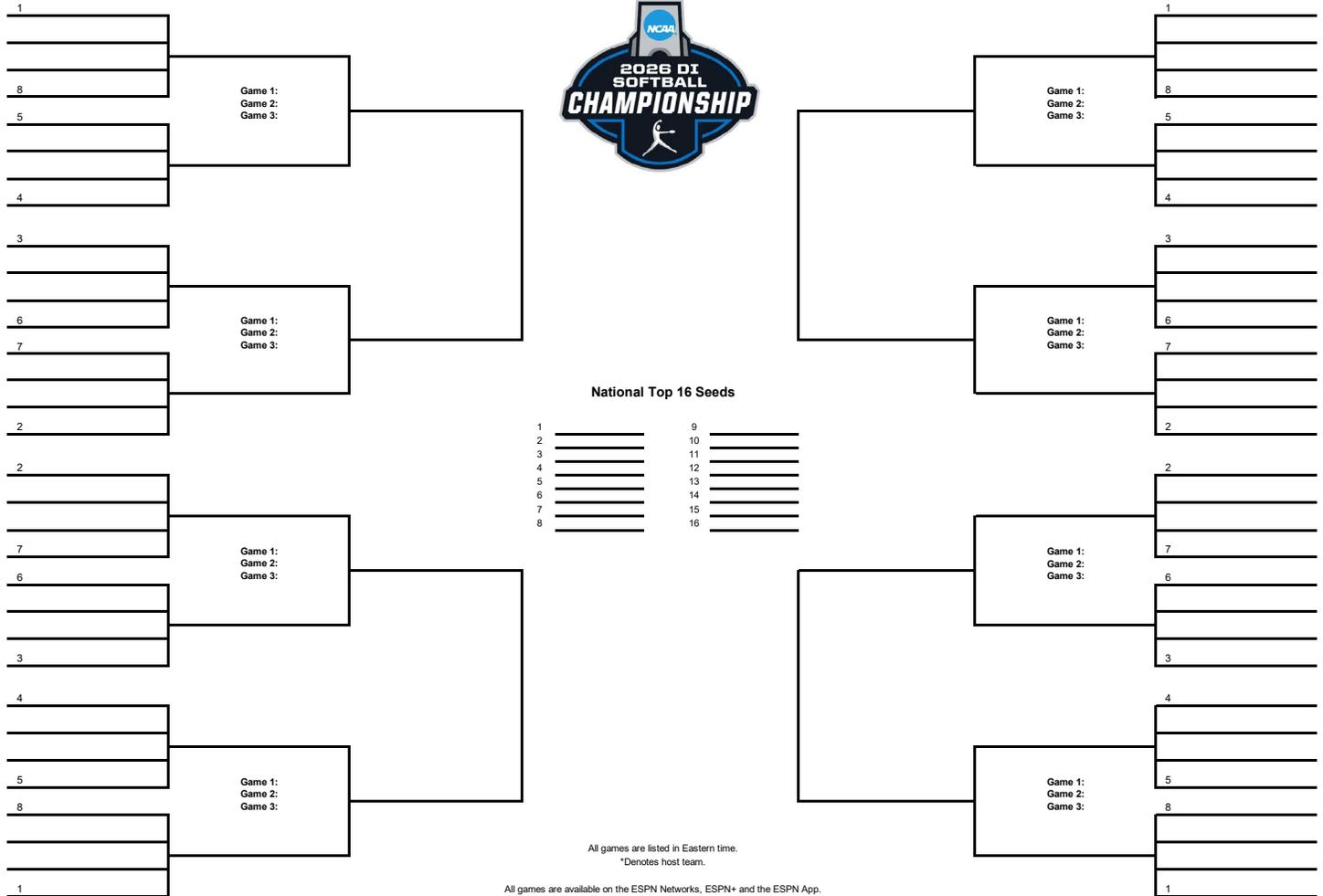
REGIONALS
May 15-17

SUPER REGIONALS
May 21-24

WOMEN'S COLLEGE WORLD SERIES
May 28 - June 4/5

SUPER REGIONALS
May 21-24

REGIONALS
May 15-17



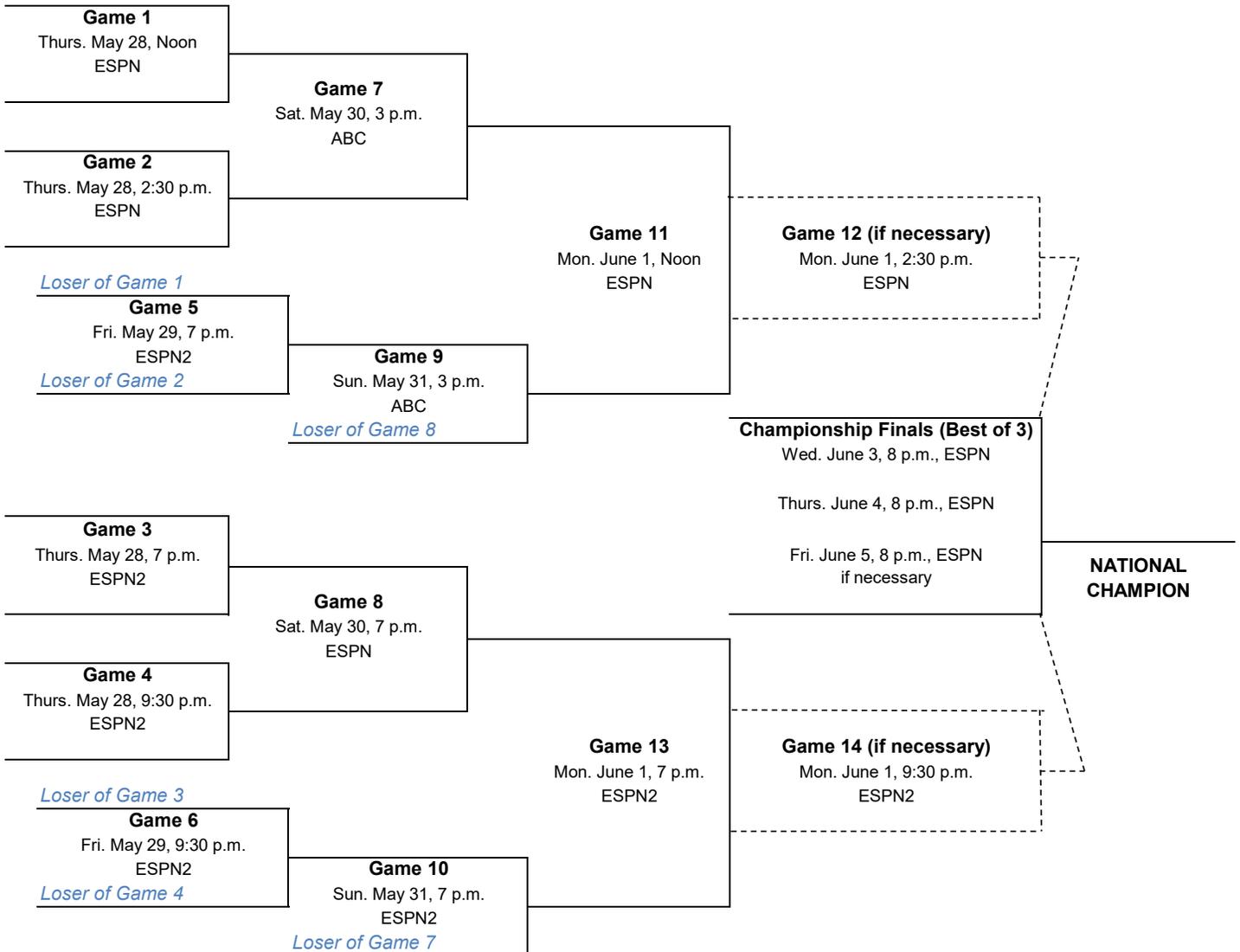
© 2026 National Collegiate Athletic Association. No commercial use without NCAA's written permission.



2026 NCAA Women's College World Series

OG&E Energy Field at Devon Park | Oklahoma City

May 28 - June 4/5



All times Eastern and subject to change. *Home Team

Bracket Notes:

1. If the winner of Game 9 defeats the winner of Game 7, then Game 12 is necessary.
2. If the winner of Game 10 defeats the winner of Game 8, then Game 14 is necessary.

Watch the championship on these networks or via the Women's College World Series app.



© 2026 National Collegiate Athletic Association. No commercial use without NCAA's written permission

Appendix B • Sport Sponsorship

EAST REGION

America East Conference (6)

University at Albany
Binghamton University
Bryant University

University of Maine
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Atlantic 10 Conference (9)

University of Dayton
Fordham University
George Mason University
George Washington University
Loyola University Chicago

University of Rhode Island
St. Bonaventure University
Saint Joseph's University
Saint Louis University

Atlantic Coast Conference (15)

Boston College
University of California, Berkeley
Clemson University
Duke University
Florida State University
Georgia Institute of Technology
University of Louisville
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

North Carolina State University
University of Notre Dame
University of Pittsburgh
Stanford University
Syracuse University
University of Virginia
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Coastal Athletic Association (11)

Campbell University
College of Charleston (South Carolina)
Drexel University
Elon University
Hampton University
Hofstra University

Monmouth University
North Carolina A&T State University
University of North Carolina Wilmington
Stony Brook University
Towson University

The Ivy League (8)

Brown University
Columbia University-Barnard College
Cornell University
Dartmouth College

Harvard University
University of Pennsylvania
Princeton University
Yale University

Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (13)

Canisius College
Fairfield University
Iona College
Manhattan University
Marist University
Merrimack College
Mount St. Mary's University

Niagara University
Quinnipiac University
Rider University
Sacred Heart University
Saint Peter's University
Siena University

Northeast Conference (9)

Central Connecticut State University
Fairleigh Dickinson University, Metropolitan Campus
Le Moyne College*
Long Island University
Mercyhurst University*

University of New Haven*
Saint Francis University
Stonehill College
Wagner College

*Not eligible for NCAA championship competition.

Patriot League (7)

Boston University
 Bucknell University
 Colgate University
 College of the Holy Cross

Lafayette College
 Lehigh University
 U.S. Military Academy

MIDWEST REGION

Big East Conference (9)

Butler University
 University of Connecticut
 Creighton University
 DePaul University
 Georgetown University

Providence College
 Seton Hall University
 St. John's University (New York)
 Villanova University

Big Ten Conference (17)

University of California, Los Angeles
 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 Indiana University, Bloomington
 University of Iowa
 University of Maryland, College Park
 University of Michigan
 Michigan State University
 University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
 University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Northwestern University
 The Ohio State University
 University of Oregon
 Pennsylvania State University
 Purdue University
 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick
 University of Washington
 University of Wisconsin-Madison

Horizon League (7)

University of Detroit Mercy
 Indiana University Indianapolis
 Northern Kentucky University
 Oakland University

Robert Morris University
 University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
 Youngstown State University

Mid-American Conference (12)

University of Akron
 Ball State University
 Bowling Green State University
 University at Buffalo, the State University of New York
 Central Michigan University
 Kent State University

University of Massachusetts, Amherst
 Miami University (Ohio)
 Northern Illinois University
 Ohio University
 University of Toledo
 Western Michigan University

Missouri Valley Conference (11)

Belmont University
 Bradley University
 Drake University
 University of Evansville
 University of Illinois Chicago
 Illinois State University

Indiana State University
 Murray State University
 University of Northern Iowa
 Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
 Valparaiso University

The Summit League (7)

University of Missouri-Kansas City
 University of Nebraska Omaha
 University of North Dakota
 North Dakota State University

University of South Dakota
 South Dakota State University
 University of St. Thomas (Minnesota)

SOUTH REGION

Big 12 Conference (11)

University of Arizona
Arizona State University
Baylor University
Brigham Young University
University of Central Florida
University of Houston

Iowa State University
University of Kansas
Oklahoma State University
Texas Tech University
University of Utah

Conference USA (12)

University of Delaware
Florida International University
Jacksonville State University
Kennesaw State University
Liberty University
Louisiana Tech University

Middle Tennessee State University
Missouri State University
New Mexico State University
Sam Houston State University
University of Texas at El Paso
Western Kentucky University

Ohio Valley Conference (10)

Eastern Illinois University
Lindenwood University
Morehead State University
Southeast Missouri State University
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

University of Southern Indiana
Tennessee State University
Tennessee Technological University
University of Tennessee at Martin
Western Illinois University

Southland Conference (10)

East Texas A&M University
Houston Christian University
University of the Incarnate Word
Lamar University
McNeese State University

Nicholls State University
Northwestern State University
Southeastern Louisiana University
Stephen F. Austin State University
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Southwestern Athletic Conference (12)

Alabama A&M University
Alabama State University
Alcorn State University
University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
Bethune-Cookman University
Florida A&M University

Grambling State University
Jackson State University
Mississippi Valley State University
Prairie View A&M University
Southern University, Baton Rouge
Texas Southern University

Sun Belt Conference (12)

Appalachian State University
Coastal Carolina University
Georgia Southern University
Georgia State University
James Madison University
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

University of Louisiana Monroe
Marshall University
University of South Alabama
University of Southern Mississippi
Texas State University
Troy University

SOUTHEAST REGION**American Conference (10)**

University of Alabama at Birmingham
 East Carolina University
 Florida Atlantic University
 University of Memphis
 University of North Carolina at Charlotte

University of North Texas
 University of South Florida
 University of Texas at San Antonio
 The University of Tulsa
 Wichita State University

Atlantic Sun Conference (12)

Austin Peay State University
 Bellarmine University
 University of Central Arkansas
 Eastern Kentucky University
 Florida Gulf Coast University
 Jacksonville University

Lipscomb University
 University of North Alabama
 University of North Florida
 Queens University of Charlotte
 Stetson University
 University of West Georgia*

Big South Conference (7)

Charleston Southern University
 Gardner-Webb University
 Longwood University
 Presbyterian College

Radford University
 University of South Carolina Upstate
 Winthrop University

Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (8)

Coppin State University
 Delaware State University
 Howard University
 University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Morgan State University
 Norfolk State University
 North Carolina Central University
 South Carolina State University

Southeastern Conference (15)

University of Alabama
 University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
 Auburn University
 University of Florida
 University of Georgia
 University of Kentucky
 Louisiana State University
 University of Mississippi

Mississippi State University
 University of Missouri, Columbia
 University of Oklahoma
 University of South Carolina, Columbia
 University of Tennessee, Knoxville
 Texas A&M University, College Station
 University of Texas at Austin

Southern Conference (8)

East Tennessee State University
 Furman University
 Mercer University
 The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Samford University
 University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
 Western Carolina University
 Wofford College

**Not eligible for NCAA championship competition.*

WEST REGION

Big Sky Conference (6)

California State University, Sacramento
Idaho State University
University of Montana

University of Northern Colorado
Portland State University
Weber State University

Big West Conference (10)

University of California, Davis
California Polytechnic State University
University of California, Riverside
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara

California State University, Bakersfield
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Northridge
University of Hawaii, Manoa
Long Beach State University

Mountain West Conference (10)

Boise State University
California State University, Fresno
Colorado State University
Grand Canyon University
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

University of Nevada, Reno
University of New Mexico
San Diego State University
San Jose State University
Utah State University

West Coast Conference (7)

Loyola Marymount University
Oregon State University
University of the Pacific
Saint Mary's College of California

University of San Diego
Santa Clara University
Seattle University

Western Athletic Conference (7)

Abilene Christian University
California Baptist University
Southern Utah University
Tarleton State University

University of Texas at Arlington
Utah Tech University
Utah Valley University

Appendix C • Additional Preliminary Rounds Information

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 and Host Operations Manuals, may not be eligible to host the following year, even if they are a seeded team.

ATMOSPHERE

Hosts must provide a neutral atmosphere that enhances the student-athlete experience for all participating teams (e.g., announcer, in-venue fan treatment, equitable locker rooms, access to facility and equipment).

ARTIFICIAL NOISEMAKERS

The use of artificial noisemakers, air horns, cow bells, ball buckets, etc., and electronic amplifiers by student-athletes and team personnel is prohibited while on site for competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site. See Rule 5.11 of the [2026 and 2027 NCAA Softball Rules Book](#).

Fans are also prohibited from using artificial noisemakers while on site.

RECENT CHANGES

A visible action clock is required to host regionals and super regionals starting with the 2026 championship. See the host operations manual for specifics.

The host institution must have in place a double base at first base for regionals and super regionals starting with the 2026 championship, per the playing rules.

GAME PROTOCOLS

DETERMINATION OF HOME/AWAY

The home team for the first round will be the higher-seeded team. In subsequent games, the home team will be determined according to the following formula:

1. The games committee shall designate as home team the institution that has been home team the fewest times (regionals, super regionals and finals are considered separately).
2. If two teams have been home team an equal number of times but visiting team an unequal number of times, the team that has been the visitor most often shall be designated as the home team.
3. If two teams have been both home team and visiting team an equal number of times, and if the two teams previously met, the visitor in the initial game shall be the home team in the second game.
4. If games between the same teams are back-to-back, the home team shall be the visitor from the previous game, regardless of the number of times either team has been home or visitor.
5. If two teams have been both home team and visiting team an equal number of times, the team that was the visitor in its preceding game shall be the home team, unless both teams were the visitor in their preceding games.
6. If the preceding formula does not prevail, the higher-seeded team shall have the choice of being home team or visitors.
7. When teams play back-to-back games, they must be prepared to change uniforms and dugouts, if necessary.

DETERMINATION OF TEAM/LOCKER ROOM USAGE

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 meeting room may not be used).

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.

DIVISION I SOFTBALL

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.

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.

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 teams staying on buses.

TICKETS/CREDENTIALS/AWARDS

TICKETS

Hosts are required to provide each team with 75 tickets behind team dugouts and up to an additional 25 tickets elsewhere in the stadium for regionals, and 100 premium tickets for super regionals. 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.

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 championships budget. (Additional may be requested if a team has more than 25 student-athletes on its roster.)

CREDENTIALS

Credentials will be distributed at the administrative meeting according to the travel party roster guidelines supplied by the NCAA. Only the personnel with the appropriate credential will be permitted in credential-required areas (e.g., team warmup areas, locker/team rooms). The squad size and official travel party are 25 and 30, respectively.

AWARDS

Participant medallions will be given at regional and super-regional sites to the nonadvancing teams. Each nonadvancing team will receive 22 medallions. Teams may purchase additional medallions at the following link: services.mtmrecognition.com/ncaa.