



REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION I SOFTBALL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
JAN. 8, 2026, VIDEOCONFERENCE

**ACTION ITEMS.**

- None.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Welcome and roll call.** The committee chair welcomed committee members to the meeting.
2. **Report approval.** The committee approved its Nov. 5 meeting reports with no changes.
3. **Playing rules update.** The secretary-rules editor shared that the updated case book is now available and previewed items on the preseason memo.
4. **Legislative update.**
  - a. **Student-athlete survey draft.** The committee reviewed a draft of a survey created by a student-athlete member of the committee to gauge student-athlete feedback on the legislative concepts under discussion. The committee chair provided a deadline for any additional feedback. The committee commended the work of the student-athlete member.
  - b. **Legislative calendar.** NCAA staff reviewed the timeline for the next legislative cycle.
5. **Legislative concepts.** The committee discussed the following legislative concepts along with supporting survey data from the coaches association:
  - a. Change the definition of a prospective student-athlete from seventh grade to ninth grade;
  - b. Establish a universal start time for communication (e.g., 10 am or Noon Central Standard) on the first permissible date of recruiting contact;
  - c. Permit any institutional staff member to provide technical and tactical instruction to student-athletes while maintaining a maximum of four off-campus recruiters at one time;
  - d. Adjust the initial contact date for prospective student-athletes; and
  - e. Adjust the notification of transfer dates (e.g., transfer portal window).

The coaches association survey results, with a 91% response rate from its members, support changing the definition of a prospective student-athlete from seventh to ninth grade, establishing a universal start time for communication on the first permissible date of contact and permitting any institutional staff member to provide technical and tactical instruction. The

coaches association noted that additional discussion and review is needed by the coaches association regarding the initial contact date as well as the notification of transfer dates before returning to the committee for further discussion. The committee provided initial feedback and will continue its review of these concepts at its meeting in March.

6. **Four-day regional format.** The committee reviewed proposed concepts to expand the regional format from three days to four days. Initial discussion focused on the benefits and challenges of the format change along with some discussion comparing the three proposed options. The committee also reviewed the coaches association feedback from 2022-23. The committee decided the concept is worth additional investigation, including discussion with broadcast partners. The committee will return to this topic in the future.
7. **Championships subcommittee schedule.** NCAA staff reviewed the upcoming schedule of ranking orientations, webinars, regional advisory committee and national ranking calls with the championship subcommittee members.
8. **Other business.** None.
9. **Future meetings.** The committee will meet on a date to be determined in March.

*Committee Chair:*     *Natalie Gonzalez Honnen, Clemson University, Atlantic Coast Conference*  
*Staff Liaisons:*     *John Bugner, Championships and Alliances*  
                              *Jennifer Samble, Governance and Member Services*  
                              *Liz Turner Suscha, Championships and Alliances*  
                              *Kelly Whitaker, Championships and Alliances*

NCAA Division I Softball Oversight Committee Jan. 8, 2026, Videoconference	
<b>Attendees</b>	
Tara Brooks, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Southeastern Conference.	
Carol Bruggeman, National Fastpitch Coaches Association.	
Alexis DeBoer, University of Washington.	
Tiffany Edlin, Long Beach State University.	
Ella Emmert, University of Kentucky.	
Natalie Gonzalez Honnen, Clemson University; Atlantic Coast Conference.	
Jessica Leger, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Sun Belt Conference.	
Jesse Martin, Oklahoma State University; Big 12 Conference.	
Stacy Martin, Winthrop University.	
Steve McCown, national coordinator of officials.	
Paige Sayler, Central Michigan University.	
Kevin Saal, Wichita State University; American Conference.	

Gina Stoll, Western Kentucky University; Conference USA.
Vickie Van Kleeck, secretary-rules editor.
Holly Van Vlymen, South Dakota State University.
Jane Wagner, Northwestern University; Big Ten Conference.
<b>Absentees:</b>
Jaysoni Beachum, Florida State University.
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>
None.
<b>NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:</b>
John Bugner, Jennifer Samble, Liz Turner Suscha and Kelly Whitaker.
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>
Matt Holmes, Luke Schultheis and Natalie Steger.