REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I SOFTBALL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
NOV. 4, 2026, VIDEOCONFERENCE

***ACTION ITEMS*.**

- **None.**

***INFORMATIONAL ITEMS*.**

1. **Women's College World Series game order.** The committee approved a change to the game order of the Women's College World Series, effective for the 2027 championship. Previously, the loser of game 8 on Saturday evening played in the first game on Sunday afternoon while the loser of game 7 on Saturday afternoon played in the Sunday evening game. Going forward, the loser of game 8 will play in the Sunday evening game while the loser of game 7 will play in the Sunday afternoon game. Subsequently, the winner of the Sunday afternoon game will play in the first semifinal Monday and the winner of the Sunday evening game will play in the second semifinal Monday. This change supports equitable rest and recovery between Saturday and Sunday games for advancing teams and supports improved inclement weather scheduling options.

2. **Regional alignment.** The committee reviewed the current regional alignment of softball sponsoring institutions. The review recognizes that conference realignment has shifted the geographical base of some conferences. Institutions are placed into a region to assist the committee with dividing teams for evaluation throughout the season. Two committee members are assigned to each region and lead regional advisory committees that meet four times throughout the season to assist in team evaluations. Each conference is represented on its regional advisory committee. The committee tabled the discussion to its January meeting to allow time for more review and consideration of potential options before the start of the 2027 season.

3. **Roster submission deadline.** The committee approved changing the roster submission deadline for all rounds of the championship from Monday before competition to the day before competition at the administrative meeting. This will provide reasonable flexibility to coaches to confirm the squad size of 25 players for that round and aligns with common practice of other NCAA championships. This is effective for the 2027 championship.

4. **Legislative update.** The committee received a reminder regarding the Division I proposals that were introduced into the January 2027 legislative cycle by the NCAA Division I Cabinet and an update on the timing of the upcoming April and June 2027 legislative cycles.

5. **NFCA updates.** The committee reviewed the NFCA's survey results related to turf infields and in-venue technology available. Carol Bruggeman, NFCA executive director, updated the committee on the coaches association's discussions and development of recruiting calendar concepts. The NFCA will continue that work at its Dec. convention and will update the committee at its Jan. meeting.

6. **Softball Umpire Program update.** Staff updated the committee on the latest developments for the use of data analytics for umpire training, development and evaluation and will prepare an update for the NFCA coaches convention Division I caucus in December. Standards have been established for the tolerance buffer of the strike zone, and for establishing the top and bottom of the strike zone as a percentage of the batter height as posted in the official roster. These standards are necessary to account for equipment and human eye limitations in the evaluation of strike zone accuracy. There is no change to the playing rules definition of the strike zone. Staff is in the process of securing a vendor for use in evaluating the data.

7. **Annual meeting follow-up items.**

   a. **Sportsmanship.** The committee emphasized the importance of good sportsmanship during the championship and will update site representative training and the administrative meeting agenda to highlight expectations.

   b. **Review of the 2026 Women's College World Series.** The committee reviewed participant surveys that highlighted an overall positive experience with noted feedback related to the credentials, parking passes, the team event and rest and recovery for Saturday to Sunday games. Staff highlighted key points from the host recap to address feedback to support team experience improvements.

   c. **Equipment standards.** The committee referred this topic to its facility and game operations subcommittee for further discussion and potential recommendations.

8. **Concepts under discussion.** The committee reviewed three concepts under discussion to educate new committee members: four-day regional format, Women's College World Series if-necessary games to Tuesday and media and practice day revisions. All concepts have the support of the oversight committee. There is no specific implementation date at this time due to the need for additional discussions with the broadcast partner and financial planning for the increased expense that will be reviewed with other championship financial priorities.

9. **NFCA convention topics.** NCAA staff previewed topics for the NCAA presentation during the Division I caucus.

10. **Future meetings.** The oversight committee will meet Jan. 7 for its next meeting.

11. **Report of the Oct. 8 meeting.** The committee approved its Oct. 8 meeting report.

Committee Chair: *Jane Wagner, Northwestern University, Big Ten 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 Oct. 8, 2026, Videoconference
Attendees:
Jaysoni Beachum, student-athlete from Texas Tech University.
Tara Brooks, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Southeastern Conference.
Carol Bruggeman, National Fastpitch Coaches Association.
Emmy Cardenas, student-athlete from Winthrop University.
Alexis DeBoer, student-athlete from University of Washington.
Tiffany Edlin, Long Beach State University; Big West Conference.
Stef Ewing, University of Montana; Big Sky Conference.
Jessica Leger, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Sun Belt Conference.
Jesse Martin, Oklahoma State University; Big 12 Conference.
Stacy Martin, Winthrop University; Faculty Athletics Representative Association.
Steve McCown, National Coordinator of Officials.
Kevin Saal, Wichita State University; American Conference.
Kat Smith, Western Kentucky University; Conference USA.
Vickie Van Kleeck, Secretary-Rules Editor.
Holly Van Vlymen, South Dakota State University; Summit League.
Jen Vining-Smith, University of Notre Dame; Atlantic Coast Conference.
Jane Wagner, Northwestern University; Big Ten Conference.
Absentees:
Madeline Hickey, Loyola University Chicago; Student-Athlete Advocacy Committee.
Guests in Attendance:
None.
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:
John Bugner, Jennifer Samble, Liz Turner Suscha and Kelly Whitaker.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Sami Bogenschutz, Ashlee Follis, Matt Holmes, Jarom McLiver, Kristen Jacob Smith and Liz Wacienga.