



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II SOFTBALL COMMITTEE
JUNE 20-21, 2023, ANNUAL MEETING**

KEY ITEMS.

1. **Amend date formula.** The committee is requesting to move the Division II softball finals to the week after Memorial Day Weekend (Thursday-Wednesday). (See Action Item 2.)
2. **Maximum number of games in a day.** The committee agreed to reduce the maximum number of games to be played in a day from three to two, unless specified conditions warrant otherwise. (See Informational Item 9.)

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Request to amend the date formula.**

(1) Recommendation. Move the Division II Softball Championship finals to the week after Memorial Day Weekend (Thursday-Wednesday), resulting in the following date formula:

- Selection Announcement: Monday prior to regionals.
- Regionals (16 sites): One week before the super regionals (Thursday-Saturday).
- Super Regionals (8 sites): One week before the finals (Thursday-Friday).
- Finals: The week after Memorial Day Weekend (Thursday-Wednesday).

(2) Effective date. 2025-26 academic year.

(3) Rationale. Currently, the Division II softball selection date is one week earlier than their counterparts in both Divisions I and III. This results in Division II student-athletes playing at least one week of their regular season without the benefit of playing in the same weather conditions as the rest of NCAA softball, which are generally better in the month of May. A move to align the Division II softball championship date formula with Divisions I and III would mitigate concerns regarding poor playing conditions due to inclement weather earlier in the season and provide consistency within the sport. This policy would be permissive in nature, meaning that conferences can align their regular-season schedule in a manner with which their membership agrees, continuing to complete conference championships when they do currently, or using the additional week that would be gained with selections being moved a week later.

The NFCA conducted a survey among Division II NFCA head coaches. With 138 of the 245 member head coaches participating in the survey, 79% were in favor of aligning the Division II championship dates with Division I and III softball.

Lastly, Chattanooga Sports, which has been awarded the bid for the 2026 Division II Softball Championship, has confirmed that they would be able to accommodate hosting in the instance the championship was moved one week later.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None for the championship budget; potential for increased costs to participating institutions due to student-athletes being on campus during a vacation period.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The adjustment to the date formula has the potential to reduce missed class time due to rescheduled contests and have a positive impact both physically and emotionally on student-athletes to begin postseason after most classes have ended.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. **Review of 2022 annual meeting report.** The committee approved the 2022 meeting report as written.
- 2. **Discuss Division II softball strategic plan.** The committee reviewed the strategic plan and adjusted the short-term and long-term goals.
- 3. **Championship manuals and site selection material.** The committee reviewed and discussed necessary changes to the manuals, including the maximum number of days that can be played in a day, home/away dugout determinations, and clarifying the verbiage regarding travel party, squad, and dugout size. The committee will continue to review the manuals this summer and provide necessary updates to staff by September 1.
- 4. **Review of committee timeline.** The committee discussed the timeline and made necessary updates for the 2024 season.
- 5. **Umpires.** Steve McCown and Sally Walker provided an overview of the umpires selected for the 2023 Division II Softball Championship, recent rules changes and key learnings from this year's championship. The committee provided feedback on the umpire selection and assignment process, including strategies to better prepare umpires for their championship assignments. Finally, the committee was provided with an overview of video replay that was used for the Division II Softball Championship. The committee noted that the availability of video replay continues to resolve potential conflicts and de-escalated situations with coaches

and fans. Committee members also noted that the use of video replay eliminates the need for a four-man crew.

6. **Review of 2023 championship.** The committee reviewed participant survey results and met with Chattanooga tournament staff to discuss improvements that could be made to future championships.

The committee noted its gratitude for the exceptional efforts of Chattanooga Sports, Lee University and the University of North Georgia in hosting the championship in 2023 and looks forward to returning in 2025 and 2026.

The committee also discussed implementing KPI as a sport-specific criterion for the 2024-27 tri-annual cycle in addition to Division II results vs. teams with a winning record and in-region Rating Percentage Index (RPI). Although KPI will not be an official sport-specific criterion until the 2024-25 academic year, the national committee will be referencing KPI on an experimental basis during the 2023-24 softball season to ensure KPI provides relevant data needed for selections.

7. **Preview 2024 championship finals site.** Committee members discussed the 2024 Division II Softball final site and Division II Festival logistics.

To assist future championship hosts, the committee drafted an equipment list, outlining the equipment needed for practice, warmups and games at the finals site. The committee also outlined volunteer positions final site hosts will need to ensure are filled for the championship.

8. **2024 championship format.** The committee reviewed the new date formula for Division II Festival years, noting super regionals will now take place on the Tuesday and Wednesday prior to the finals. The committee also approved the regional and super regional brackets for the 2024 NCAA Division II Softball Championship in addition to a draft schedule for the 2024 championship.

9. **Maximum number of games in a day.** The committee discussed and agreed to reduce the maximum number of games to be played in a day from three to two, noting a team may be required to play three games in a day in the instance they complete a halted game and play up to two additional games in the same day or play three games in one day on the rain date (Sunday) to complete competition. The committee made this change in the interests of supporting student-athlete health and safety.

10. **NCAA Playing Rules and barrel compression testing (BCT) review.** Dee Abrahamson provided a bat testing update, noting bat testing data continues to be analyzed to determine the appropriate frequency it should take place during championship competition. Vickie Van Kleeck, NCAA softball secretary-rules editor, also joined the meeting to discuss rules changes approved by the Softball Rules Committee. She also noted that beginning January 2024, all

11. levels of softball will be using balls with the same core. Suppliers such as Rawlings have been aware of this change for the past three years and have begun transitioning their inventory to balls with the correct compression. The national committee recommended having suppliers notify sponsoring institutions regarding this change for the upcoming season.
12. **NFCA report.** Brian Stanley from the NFCA and Les Stuedeman, head coach at University of Alabama in Huntsville, provided feedback from coaches regarding the 2022-23 season and championship. They noted positive feedback overall regarding site representatives at the preliminary rounds as well as the work of the national committee. The NFCA would like the national committee to explore implementing a host report card to provide hosts tangible feedback regarding their staff, venue and overall championship experience to ensure hosts are being held accountable and providing the best championship experience possible for participating teams.
13. **Division II governance update.** The committee was provided an update on the 2022-23 Division II priorities and Division II 50th Anniversary initiatives that will begin August 7, 2023, and culminate with the 2024 Division II Baseball Championship finals. The committee also discussed with governance staff the increased social media presence at all Division II championships as a positive enhancement and ways to continue to improve this for future championships.
14. **Regionalization map and sponsorship list.** The committee reviewed the regionalization map and sponsorship list and noted potential changes for 2023-24. Staff noted both the regionalization map and sponsorship list will be updated in August.
15. **2023 annual meeting dates.** The committee will hold its next annual meeting June 17-18 in Indianapolis.
16. **Chair election.** Val Silvestrini was reelected to serve as chair for the 2023-24 academic year.

Committee Chair: Val Silvestrini, Florida Institute of Technology, Sunshine State Conference
Staff Liaison(s): Alyssa Rice, Championships and Alliances
Deja West, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division II Softball Committee June 20-21, 2023, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Jason Anderson, Southern Arkansas University.	
Susan Cassidy-Lyke, Molloy University.	
Dixie Cirillo, Colorado School of Mines.	
Allie De Witt, Mountain East Conference.	
Missy Frost, University of Indianapolis.	
Rebekah Gasner, Montana State University Billings.	

Kendall Rainey, The University of Virginia's College at Wise.
Val Silvestrini, Florida Institute of Technology.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Dee Abrahamson, NCAA Equipment Consultant.
Cassidy Brinkley, Chattanooga Sports.
Brant Donlon, Chattanooga Sports.
Stef Ewing, California State University, San Marcos.
Steve McCown, National Coordinator of Officials.
Brian Stanley, NFCA.
Les Stuedeman, University of Alabama in Huntsville.
Vickie Van Kleeck, NCAA Softball Secretary-Rules Editor.
Sally Walker, NCAA Regional Advisor.
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:
Alyssa Rice.
Deja West.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Ryan Jones and Maritza Jones.

