



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II SOFTBALL COMMITTEE
JUNE 21-22, 2022, ANNUAL MEETING**

KEY ITEMS.

- 1. Finals site format.** The committee continued discussing the finals site format and will seek membership feedback before making a final recommendation in August 2022.
- 2. Video replay.** The committee noted the success of video replay in the first year of use at the finals site. However, the committee expressed a desire for additional cameras to ensure that video replay can be used to its maximum capability in future years.

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Referral to the Division II Nominating Committee – sport committee member temporary replacement policy.**
 - a. Recommendation. That the NCAA Division II Nominating Committee adopt a policy for temporary replacement (e.g., maternity/paternity leave, medical leave) of national sport committee members in situations in which the individual will not be able to participate in ranking calls and the selection call, as follows:
 - The committee member should recommend a current Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) member to serve as the temporary chair for the region. The temporary chair will lead the weekly RAC calls and participate on the weekly national committee ranking calls and selection call.
 - The sport committee chair should be consulted as needed.
 - The individual's conference office should elect a temporary member to the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC).
 - b. Effective date. Immediate.
 - c. Rationale. Currently, there is not a policy for temporary replacements of sport committee members. The Softball Committee had a member on maternity leave April through June and used this process to ensure the region was fully represented on the national committee. The committee felt this replacement process worked well and recommends implementation as policy for all sport committees should future similar situations arise.

d. Estimated budget impact. None.

e. Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Review of 2021 annual meeting report.** The committee approved the 2021 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, noting the upcoming triennial budget process.
3. **Division II legislative update.** The committee was updated on the notification of transfer legislation, updates to the transfer portal and the no participation opportunity waiver.
4. **NCAA Division II Championships Committee updates.** Staff provided updates on recent Championships Committee actions, including the increase to bench size from 28 to 30 in softball (with a maximum of 24 student-athletes) and the extension of the neutrality pilot for one more year in all Division II sports. Additionally, it was noted that sport committees will need to have recommendations finalized for the Championships Committee review in February 2022 as part of the 2024-27 triennial budget process. The committee also affirmed the desire to continue holding a banquet at the finals site.
5. **Division II governance update.** The committee was provided an update on the 2021-22 Division II priorities, including the work of the Division II Implementation Committee. The committee noted the increased social media presence at all Division II championships as a positive enhancement. In order to continue to improve the quality of the championship coverage, the committee expressed a desire to increase the video streaming standards for preliminary-round hosts, additional cameras at the final site and seeking an opportunity to broadcast the championship on ESPN+.
6. **Championship manuals and site selection material.** The committee reviewed and discussed necessary changes to the manuals, including requiring hosts to have two bullpens available (one on each side for home and away teams), designating a seating area for coaches to scout and clarifying the maximum fence distance requirement to align with the softball playing rules. The committee will continue to review the manuals this summer and provide necessary updates to staff by August 1.
7. **Review of committee timeline.** The committee discussed the timeline and made necessary updates for the 2023 season.

8. **Umpires.** Steve McCown and Sally Walker provided an overview of the umpires selected for the 2022 Division II Softball Championship. The committee provided feedback on the umpire selection and assignment process, including a continued desire to reward Division II umpires with finals site assignments when appropriate. The committee also noted that the new evaluation process, an online form, was successful but that additional efforts need to be made to ensure coaches complete the form in a timely manner so that information can be used for future assignments and agreed that those evaluations should remain confidential between the umpire-in-chief and the site representative until the conclusion of the round. Finally, the committee was provided with an overview of video replay that was used for the first time at the Division II Softball Championship. The committee noted that the availability of video replay resolved potential conflicts and de-escalated situations with coaches and fans. In future years, the committee would like to install additional cameras to enhance the utility of video replay as well as ensure the cameras are positioned without obstruction (e.g., netting).
9. **Review of 2022 championship.** The committee reviewed participant survey results and discussed improvements that could be made to future championships. Ideally, the committee would like to have teams arrive a day earlier so that practice, community engagement and the banquet do not take place on the same day, but the committee acknowledged the budget impact of such a change. The committee also reviewed information regarding two potential misconducts that took place and directed the NCAA staff liaison to take the appropriate next steps in that process.

The committee noted its gratitude for the exceptional efforts of the Metropolitan State University of Denver in hosting the championship in 2019, 2021 and 2022.

The committee also discussed the replacement of a committee member on leave and agreed to recommend that policy to the Division II Nominating Committee for consideration for implementation across all sport committees should this situation arise in the future. (See Nonlegislative Action Item .)

10. **Preview 2023 championship finals site.** Committee members approved the regional and super regional brackets for the 2023 NCAA Division II Softball Championship. The committee also approved a draft schedule for the 2023 championship, pending the outcome of the format discussion (See Informational Item No. 11).
11. **2023 championship format.** The committee continued discussing future finals site format options. The committee noted that the six-day format used for the 2022 championship was an improvement over the previous five-day format. However, the committee still believes that does not provide student-athletes with sufficient time for rest and recovery. The committee discussed several seven- and eight-day models, with the top priority of providing teams a day off. The committee agreed to seek feedback on a seven-day model that would allow for additional days off while also avoiding overlap with the Division I Women's College World Series. Feedback will be sought from the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA),

Division II Conference Commissioners Association, Division II Athletics Directors Association, Division II Management Council and Championships Committee. The committee will review feedback in August before making a final recommendation to the Championships Committee in September.

- 12. NCAA Playing Rules and barrel compression testing (BCT) review.** Dee Abrahamson provided a bat testing update, noting that Division II had an all-time high number of bats fail (28), which was more than the previous six years combined. There was also an increase in the number of bats taken by umpires, which was the highest number in nine years. This was also the first year that bat testing was required during the regular season. The committee expressed concerns about potential differences between bat testing machines based on the age of the machine.

Vickie Van Kleeck, NCAA softball secretary-rules editor, also joined the meeting to discuss the June 21-22 Softball Rules Committee meeting and sought committee feedback on video replay and potentially permitting use of the double first base.

- 13. NFCA report.** Brian Stanley from the NFCA and Les Stuedeman, head coach at University of Alabama in Huntsville, provided feedback from coaches regarding the 2021-22 season and championship. They noted positive feedback overall on site representatives at the preliminary rounds as well as the work of the national committee. The NFCA would like to see higher-quality video throughout the tournament, expanded camera use at the finals site to enhance video replay, and continued discussion on the finals site format to provide a high-quality student-athlete experience. The committee also expressed a desire to ensure that a representative from the NFCA be present at future championship banquets to present awards.

- 14. Regionalization map and sponsorship list.** The committee reviewed the regionalization map and sponsorship list and noted potential changes for 2022-23. 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 21-22 in Indianapolis.

- 16. Chair election.** The committee will conduct the chair election on the August videoconference.

Committee Chair: Dean Johnson, Caldwell University, Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference
Staff Liaison(s): Karen Kirsch, Championships and Alliances
Alyssa Rice, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division II Softball Committee June 21-22, 2022, Annual Meeting	
Attendees:	
Jason Anderson, Southern Arkansas University.	

Donna Fields, St. Mary's University (Texas).
Missy Frost, University of Indianapolis.
Rebekah Gasner, Montana State University Billings.
Dean Johnson, Caldwell University.
Kendall Rainey, The University of Virginia's College at Wise.
Val Silvestrini, Florida Institute of Technology.
Absentees:
Allie De Witt, Mountain East Conference.
Guests in Attendance:
Dee Abrahamson, NCAA Equipment Consultant.
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:
Karen Kirsch.
Alyssa Rice.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Ryan Jones and Angela Red.