



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III SOFTBALL COMMITTEE
JUNE 22-23, 2026, MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Automatic qualification.**

- a. Recommendation. Approve the following 42 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2027 NCAA Division III Softball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference, American Rivers Conference, American Southwest Conference, Atlantic East Conference, Centennial Conference, City University of New York Athletic Conference, College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin, Collegiate Conference of the South, Conference of New England, Empire 8, Great Northeast Athletic Conference, Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference, Landmark Conference, Liberty League, Little East Conference, Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Association, Middle Atlantic Conference – Commonwealth, Middle Atlantic Conference – Freedom, Midwest Conference, Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, New England Small College Athletic Conference, New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference, New Jersey Athletic Conference, North Atlantic Conference, North Coast Athletic Conference, Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference, Northwest Conference, Ohio Athletic Conference, Old Dominion Athletic Conference, Presidents' Athletic Conference, Skyline Conference, Southern Athletic Association, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference, St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, State University of New York Athletic Conference, United East Conference, University Athletic Association, Upper Midwest Athletic Conference, USA South Athletic Conference, and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.
- b. Effective date. Sept. 1, 2026.
- c. Rationale. Each conference meets the requirements of NCAA Bylaw 31.3.3 and completed the automatic qualification declaration form.
- d. Estimated budget impact. None.
- e. Student-athlete impact. Continued opportunity for student-athletes to compete in the postseason.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Review annual meeting agenda and schedule.** The committee reviewed the meeting agenda and schedule.
2. **Review of April 1 videoconference report.** The committee reviewed and approved the April 1 videoconference report.
3. **Division III governance.** The committee received an update on several topics and issues being discussed within the governance structure, including the Division III Analysis the Division III Presidents Council authorized to review issues affecting the division and higher education in general.
4. **Softball umpire program.** The committee and the National Coordinator of Officials (NCO) discussed finals site video review and what additional camera angles could benefit the video review process. They also discussed the umpire evaluation process and response rate at each round of the tournament. The committee asked the NCO to establish a deadline each day for coaches to submit their umpire evaluation. The committee also suggested that the NCO inform the finals site team liaisons which head coaches have not completed the evaluation so the applicable team liaison can encourage their head coach to submit the evaluation. The committee also indicated that the NCAA site representative at preliminary-round sites should provide the umpire assignments to the head coaches before the head coach completes the evaluation. The role of the observing umpire was discussed (e.g., assisting with protests, assisting with video reviews and serving as an on-field umpire if one cannot finish a game).
5. **Bat testing.** The committee discussed bat testing statistics from the 2026 season. The committee requested that the bat testing program continue to provide the increased number of stickers from the 2025 season and continue to design the bat testing sticker so that it can be cut in half when needed. The committee suggested the creation of a bat testing education video that can be viewed by the site representatives and bat testers at each site. The process of what happens to failed bats was also discussed. The committee requests that the rules committee change the bat testing policy to only require bat testing before the first game of each round of the tournament so that bat testing occurs in the NCAA tournament at a similar frequency to the regular season.
6. **Rules.** The committee received an update on recent discussions and actions of the softball rules committee. Topics included the most recent softball rules survey results, and the implementation of the double first base and fence padding rules for the 2027 season. The committee noted that RefQuest will be used to educate the membership on the implementation of the new rules. The committee made suggestions for how the video review summary document can be improved related to what plays are and are not reviewable.

7. **Division III Championships Committee.** The committee received an update on the recent Championships Committee meeting during which members finalized the championships budget for the FY27-FY28 cycle that the Management and Presidents Councils will formally consider during their meetings later this summer. The committee suggested the following additional topics for Championships Committee discussion: increasing or eliminating uniform patch quantity limits, increasing or eliminating squad size limits, providing a regional champion trophy to institutions that advance to the super regional round and allowing the NPI to be updated after regional and super regional round competition so sport committees can reseed and re-bracket teams for the super regionals and have a more accurate reseeding for the finals site. The committee instructed the championship manager to discuss with the appropriate national office staff how to improve the functionality of game statistics on ncaa.com for the softball tournament games.
8. **Regionals review.** The committee suggested providing commemorative softballs (stamped with the championship logo) to each participating student-athlete and providing NCAA branded signs at the regional round team hotels. The committee requested that hosts be instructed to put the NCAA branded signs in locations in their facility so that they could be seen on the game broadcast of regional competitions. The committee discussed the number of participant medallions that are provided to each team that is eliminated during regional competition, the lack of a regional champion team trophy and the postgame ceremony when a team is eliminated after regional competition. The committee made changes to the pregame timing document used for regional competition.
9. **Super regionals review.** The committee suggested providing NCAA branded signs at super regional round team hotels. The committee requested that hosts be instructed to put the NCAA branded signs in locations in their facility so that they could be seen on the game broadcast of super regional competitions. The committee discussed the number of participant medallions that are provided to each team that is eliminated during super regional competition and the postgame ceremony when a team is eliminated. The committee suggested changes to the pregame timing used for super regional competition.
10. **Finals review.** The committee made changes to the pregame timing used for finals site competition. The committee suggested giving each team a printed bat testing log form, possibly providing more practice softballs, making media day activities (not just press conference activities) a standard component of the championship, redistributing the participant meeting agenda items so that the championship manager covers more of the items instead of the committee chair and host staff, and moving the administrative meeting and banquet start times later so there is more time after the last practice and those activities. The committee also discussed facility infrastructure requirements for the championship, adding a hotel walkthrough to the committee schedule at the finals site, using the public address announcer from the 2026 championship every year, shifting budget money to be able to hire a photographer to take pictures that will be made available to the public and teams, utilizing a committee member to be assigned to the press box during each game, and changing the start

time for game 9 to 1:30 p.m. and game 10 to 4 p.m. (and move the practices on that day to the morning).

11. **Participant survey results.** The committee suggested that each site receive the text responses provided in the participant survey.
12. **Team selection, bracketing and site selection process.** The committee reviewed the timing of test bracket creation on selection day, access to the backend of the NPI database for data cleaning purposes on selection day, and the committee requested continued creation and use the mileage sheet during the bracketing process.
13. **Regional advisory committee role.** The committee was informed that regional advisory committees (RACs) will be eliminated beginning with the 2026-27 academic year. The committee discussed how the NPI data will be cleaned by national committee members since RACs will no longer serve that role. The committee will need access to the backend of the NPI database at the beginning of the season so the committee members can review the accuracy of the data in the NPI database as soon as the season begins. The committee discussed how to cultivate a pool of site representatives (e.g., asking conference commissioners to recommend possible site representatives, asking conferences to discuss the topic during their annual softball coach meetings, conducting site representative training at the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) convention, and sending a second interest survey to the membership in April).
14. **Home team determination policy.** After discussion of several options, the committee decided to change the home team determination policy to match the Division III baseball policy except for the championship series which will follow the current coin flip policy.
15. **Inclement weather policy.** The committee discussed the concept of a hot/cold weather policy for outdoor sports like softball and did not make any changes to the current inclement weather policy related to lightening.
16. **Manuals review.** The committee directed the championship manager to assign each committee member a manual(s) to review and provide feedback by Sept. 1.
17. **National Fastpitch Coaches Association.** The committee received feedback from the NFCA Head Coach Committee regarding the championship (e.g., hotel information dissemination timing, officiating quality, selection show timing, regional host budgets, bracket reseeding after regionals, team parking at preliminary round sites, media day at the finals site, and finals site hotel quality). The committee also received NPI feedback from the NFCA Head Coach Committee (e.g., publishing strength of schedule publicly and the timing of releasing the first NPI). The committee offered to conduct NPI and site representative training sessions at the next NFCA convention.

- 18. NPI review.** The committee received an update regarding the first two years of data related to NPI use. For example, the committee reviewed data related to home/away weighting, the quality win base and bonus, and the number of retained wins. The committee identified a preliminary date for an additional NPI discussion.
- 19. Joint meeting with Division III Baseball Committee.** The committees discussed possible changes to each sport's NPI (e.g., home/away weight, retained wins, quality win base and bonus), Duties to be fulfilled upon RAC elimination, preliminary-round hosts for both sports, banquet or other similar events, fan enhancement fund use, home dugout assignment for visiting teams versus host institutions, preliminary-round video review, heat/cold policy, regional assignment of schools in conferences that span multiple regions, and mercy rule implementation.
- 20. Committee chair and vice chair election.** The committee elected Kim Camara-Harvey as the chair and Jamie Mueller as the vice-chair for 2026-27.
- 21. 2026-27 committee calendar.** The committee reviewed the committee calendar for 2026-27. The committee suggested moving the host meetings to 11 a.m. Eastern time and adding a meeting after selections and regionals to review committee assignments at finals. The committee suggested moving the championship review meeting to approximately one week after the committee's annual meeting.
- 22. Future finals sites.** The committee reviewed the dates, location, host entity and potential site visit dates for the 2027 and 2028 championships. The committee received an update on the 2028-31 championships bid and selections process.
- 23. Other topics.** The committee instructed the championship manager to collect squad size data for the 64 teams participating in the championship over the last three years to help inform a discussion about potential squad size and travel party size increase requests. The committee asked the championship manager to determine what entity has the authority to determine how frequently bats are tested during the tournament.

Committee Chair: Casie Runksmeier, Colby College, New England Small College Athletic Conference

Staff Liaison: Corey Bray, Championships and Alliances

Division III Softball Committee June 22-23, 2026, Meeting	
Attendees:	
Traci Barrett, Pacific Lutheran University.	
Dani Bishop, Brandeis University.	
Kim Camara-Harvey, Blackburn College.	
Sara Curran-Headley, State University of New York at Oneonta.	
Jamie Mueller, Wartburg College.	
Hannah Qualls, University of Mary Washington.	
Casie Runksmeier, Colby College.	
Absentees:	
Terry Small, New Jersey Athletic Conference.	
Van Zanic, Geneva College.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Dee Abrahamson, Michael Armstrong, Glenda Bates, David Beccaria, Cassie Bishop, Benjamin Coopridner, Scott Dietz, Lauren Ebstein, Jimmy Habecker, Dave Hines, Kyle Paler, Justin Scali, Joshua Schroeder, Martin Testo and Vickie Van Kleeck.	
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:	
Corey Bray.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Bill Regan, CJ Sowards, Liz Suscha, J.P. Williams and Jonathan Youngblood.	