



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 4-6, 2025, MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- Automatic qualification.

- (1) Recommendation. That the following 31 conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2025 championship: America East Conference, American Athletic Conference, Atlantic Coast Conference, Atlantic Sun Conference, Atlantic 10 Conference, Big East Conference, Big Sky Conference, Big South Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Big West Conference, Colonial Athletic Conference, Conference USA, Horizon League, The Ivy League, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, Mid-American Conference, Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, Missouri Valley Conference, Mountain West Conference, Northeast Conference, Ohio Valley Conference, Patriot League, Southeastern Conference, Southern Conference, Southland Conference, Southwestern Athletic Conference, Sun Belt Conference, The Summit League, West Coast Conference and Western Athletic Conference.
- (2) Effective date. 2025 NCAA Division I Women's Volleyball Championship.
- (3) Rationale. All eligible conferences are being recommended for automatic qualification.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Review of 2024 championship.

- a. **Site review**. The committee reviewed the surveys from the championship and noted the implementation of Taraflex at regionals was well received. Institutions continue to purchase the Taraflex courts for the regular season, which will enhance the championship experience. The new Taraflex court at the finals site added to the overall activation of the new championship look.

The committee noted that host sites would like more balls provided for the first and second rounds. Staff will follow up on the possibility of this for the 2025 championship.

The overall signage appearance at the finals site provided a beautiful backdrop for this event. This was the first year that all four locker rooms featured team-specific signage and the teams loved this enhancement. The committee asks that this continue in future years.

This year was the first year of the staggered regionals sites. There was excellent communication between ESPN, the hosts and NCAA staff. This will continue to be a point of emphasis with potential hosts. This year all eight regional semifinals were on ESPN2. Two regional finals were on ESPN2, one on ESPN and one on ABC. This format was great for the teams and the coverage of the championship.

All four regional sites provided an enhanced student-athlete experience. Staff will follow up with the sites on any outstanding items that the committee believes should be addressed. For the 2025 championship season, staff will compile a best practices document to help regional hosts as new updates are added to the championship.

- b. **Operations review.** The committee continues to agree with allowing hosts some flexibility on the format for the team banquet/dinner. This year the event was held at Churchill Downs. The committee noted that for future years, the food stations should be double-sided to allow for more guests to proceed the lines quicker. Teams really enjoyed the photo stations set up throughout the venue.

The team welcomes continue to be well received by the teams and fans. As their popularity grows, the committee noted the need to work closely with the host to ensure teams have a contact as they arrive. This will allow for concise timing of the arrivals.

Louisville continued the student lounge opportunity that had been provided by previous hosts. Each host has put its own spin on it, and this has truly been a great way for teams to relax on the practice day. The committee noted that the schedule on that day does make it hard for all the student-athletes from each team to access the lounge. Staff will work on adjusting the schedule to accommodate all the needs of the day.

On the media side, overall things went well. The coverage plan by ESPN continues to grow and enhance the championship through all rounds of competition. Adjustments were made to the media row for championship night that allowed for additional courtside seats to be sold for the finals. The use of stanchions around the court at the conclusion of the match helped to control the media and the award presentation. This will continue at future sites.

- c. **Selections/rankings.** The committee was very complimentary of the data that was prepopulated and ready at the start of selection weekend, which made the process run even

smoother than in previous years. The committee would like the RPI to be updated more often during selection weekend. Staff will follow up with the statistics staff accordingly.

This year's bracket had 31 flights in the first and second rounds, which was an increase from 2023. However, the increase was due to no top 16 seeds in the southeast part of the country as well as the expanded conferences. The committee was still able to avoid first- and second-round conference matchups.

This year the committee revealed a Top 16 once during the season. It was very well received and the execution by ESPN on its platforms really showcased the sport. The committee plans to continue with one Top 16 reveal midseason for 2025.

2. **Playing rules.** Rachel Seewald, director of championships and alliances, playing rules and officiating, joined the meeting to provide an update on items discussed during the NCAA Women's Volleyball Rules Committee's recent meeting. This is not a rules change year. The committee did continue to review match length and discuss items that will continue to enhance the game overall.
3. **Officials and national coordinator.** Ryan McDowell, volleyball national coordinator of officials, joined the meeting to review the championship. The committee discussed the potential of future referees being considered as referees for championship assignments versus as an R1 or R2. This flexibility would allow for additional officiating pairs to be available on site. The committee continues to review the duties assigned to the R3, including potentially having the R3 conduct video reviews. Staff will follow up during the offseason.
4. **Television.** The committee met via videoconference with staff from ESPN to review the championship. The 2024 championship was extremely successful for ESPN. It was the most watched volleyball championship across all ESPN platforms ever. ESPN continues to lean into the stories around the student-athletes. The addition of the push to talk replay mics for officials added to the overall broadcast.

For the 2025 championship the committee agreed to have the second-round matches start 30 minutes following the conclusion of the first-round match. This is the current practice at the regional and finals sites.

5. **Committee chair.** Jennifer Saxon from the University of Mississippi will serve as the committee chair for the 2025-26 year.
6. **AVCA presentation.** Representatives from the American Volleyball Coaches Association joined the committee to discuss the recent championship. The group commended the committee for the continued dedication to enhancing the exposure and the overall bracket this year.

The AVCA supports the continued emphasis on strength of schedule and nonconference matches.

The representatives informed the committee that the AVCA is open to experimenting with potential enhancements the committee may be considering during the AVCA First Serve matches in August to see how they would apply during actual competition. The AVCA also will continue to use Bolt 6 for that event for video review.

Both the committee and the AVCA appreciate the working relationship between these groups over the years, as it has resulted in a true partnership. The collaboration between the AVCA leadership and the committee continues to help move the sport forward.

7. **Future championship items.** The committee approved some ticketing adjustments for the 2025 championship. For preliminary rounds, teams will be allowed to purchase single-session tickets. This will be implemented the same way it is at the finals. Each site will hold four team blocks for the first matches on site and two team blocks for the final match from a site. Overall revenue was up 37% for the championship. Staff will continue to review the process for courtside seats at preliminary rounds and how that is implemented during the championship.

The committee also discussed the potential of a joint championship finals site with Divisions II and III in the next bid cycle. Members expressed support for this opportunity if feasible.

The committee reviewed bench/squad/travel party sizes and made no adjustments at this time.

8. **2026 annual meeting dates.** The committee will meet February 3-5.
9. **Regional advisory committee update.** Staff will work with the conference offices to fill regional advisory committee vacancies for the 2025 season.

Committee Chair: Danielle Josetti, Marquette University
Staff Liaison(s): Kristin W. Fasbender, Championships and Alliances
Jay Jay Rackley, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division I Women's Volleyball Committee February 4-6, 2025, Meeting	
Attendees:	
Joeleen Akin, Georgia Institute of Technology.	
Laura Alexander, San Jose State University.	
Christian Bray, Harvard University.	
Danielle Josetti, Marquette University.	
Stacy Kosciak, Bowling Green State University.	
Kathy Litzau, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.	

Julie Manning, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.
Natasha Oakes, University of West Virginia.
Cari Rosiek, Coastal Carolina University.
Jennifer Saxon, University of Mississippi.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Kirsten Bernthal Booth, Creighton University, AVCA.
James Davidson, ESPN.
Ian Dunning, ESPN
Ericka Galbraith, ESPN.
Amanda Gifford, ESPN.
Jaime Gordon, AVCA.
Mallory Kenny, ESPN.
Ryan MacDowell, NCAA National Coordinator of Officials.
Laurie Mancini, ESPN.
Shawn Murphy, ESPN.
Marie Zidek, DePaul University, AVCA.
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:
Kristin W. Fasbender, Championships and Alliances.
Jay Jay Rackley, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Mary Eiland, Championships and Alliances.
Elise Boulton, Championships and Alliances.
Megan Hall, Championships and Alliances.
Kacee Murphy, Championships and Alliances.
Rachel Seewald, Championships and Alliances.
Natalie Steger, Championships and Alliances.

