



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL COMMITTEE
FEB. 3-4, 2026, MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Women's volleyball automatic qualification.**

- a. Recommendation. That the following conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2026 championship:

Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Atlantic East; Centennial Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; Coast-To-Coast Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois & 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 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 Inter. Athletic Conference; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; St. Louis Inter. Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East Conference; University Athletic Association; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

The anticipated pool allocations are as follows: Automatic Qualifier – 43; At-Large – 21.

- b. Effective date. September 1, 2026.
- c. Rationale. The 43 conferences meet the requirements of NCAA Bylaw 31.3.2 and have completed the automatic-qualification declaration form.

- d. Estimated budget impact. None.
- e. Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** The committee chair and championship manager welcomed the committee members.
2. **Meeting schedule and agenda.** NCAA staff reviewed the meeting schedule and agenda.
3. **2025 American Volleyball Coaches Association convention report.** The committee reviewed the report that the NCAA staff presented to the Division III coaches during the American Volleyball Coaches Association convention in December 2025.
4. **2025-26 NCAA Division III Championships Committee actions.** The committee received an update from Laura Peterson, Division III Championships Committee liaison, who discussed NPI updates; planning for the upcoming budget cycle; the second year of the bracketing pilot; the coaches connect initiative; and feedback on the role of regional advisory committees.
5. **Governance and member services update.** NCAA governance staff liaison, Corey Berg, provided an update on several topics, including the AQ waiting period, sports wagering, NIL, and the transfer portal.
6. **Volleyball playing rules update.** NCAA playing rules staff provided an update on the proposed rule changes for 2026. The committee reviewed the results from the 2025 NCAA women's volleyball rules survey and data.
7. **NPI.** The committee reviewed and discussed the dials the committee selected in summer of 2024. Members evaluated and provided feedback on areas they would like to see adjusted. The committee discussed scheduling challenges and reiterated the desire to implement a minimum SOS for teams to receive an at-large berth into the championship field, which the committee believes would encourage coaches to develop more challenging schedules. The committee would like to see a minimum added similar to RPI in Division I.
8. **Championship format.** The committee received feedback from the AVCA and membership to potentially adjust the championship format to three weekends. The committee discussed at length the pros and cons to adjusting the format and how it may impact the championship. The committee suggested surveying the membership to gather additional feedback and will continue to review in future meetings.

9. Joint championship. The committee discussed the potential of conducting a joint championship with Division I and Division II. The committee is in favor of hosting a joint championship and would like to continue conversation to gather more details.

10. Review of 2025 championship. The committee reviewed participant surveys from the championship, which was hosted by Illinois Wesleyan University. The committee commended the host for providing an excellent championship experience for student-athletes, teams and fans. The committee highlighted the thoughtfulness and extra effort the host put towards enhancing the student-athlete experience. The committee also reviewed participant surveys from the eight regional sites and identified strengths and areas to consider for an improved experience during regional competition. The committee expressed the importance of providing feedback to hosts post-championship to help continue enhancement.

a. Officials. The committee reviewed the process and timeline to select postseason officials with NCAA Division III National Coordinator of Volleyball Officials Traci Belton. The committee reviewed and approved a list of recommended regional officials. Additionally, Ms. Belton also recommended four finals officials and line judges for the 2026 finals site. NCAA staff will send contracts to those officials.

b. Banquet. The committee discussed how to continue enhancing the banquet and areas to consider for an improved experience for student-athletes, including food options and setup. The committee provided favorable feedback that awards are set up and displayed prior to team arrival. In addition, the committee agreed to continue collaborating with the AVCA to enhance the All-America award winners.

c. ESPN. The committee received an update from Lucas DuMars, broadcast liaison for Division III women's volleyball, who discussed championship viewership numbers. The 2025 championship match was the highest viewed match on record dating back to 2010. Lucas discussed the desire to continue to increase access to student-athletes and coaches. Further, Lucas discussed future goals for the championship. Continued growth and increase in viewership would be beneficial and would potentially provide more access and additional broadcast enhancements.

The committee also discussed the blackout during the second match of quarterfinals between Wisconsin-Oshkosh and Calvin. ESPN was made aware of the platform issue and provided assurance that it will not be an issue moving forward.

d. Press conference protocol. The committee discussed the importance of press conferences being held following each match at the regionals and finals sites. Further, the committee noted that each regional tournament should not only hold a press conference but additionally make it accessible on their championship's website.

- e. **Film exchange policy.** The committee reviewed and discussed Hudl film exchange. There were no major issues reported this year.
- f. **Awards.** The committee reviewed and approved the current award allotment for the 2026 championships. The committee also discussed solutions to help improve the awards presentation and providing a more inclusive ceremony.

11. National committee and regional advisory committee rosters. The committee reviewed the committee rosters and noted vacancies for 2026-27.

12. Committee chair and vice chair. The committee confirmed that Melanee Wagener, director of athletics at Mount St. Joseph University, and Josh Edmed, head coach at Connecticut College, will serve as the committee chair and vice chair, respectively, for 2026-27.

13. Annual committee meeting. The committee identified Monday-Tuesday, Feb. 1-2, as the dates for the 2027 annual committee meeting.

Committee Chair: Drew Hargrave, Haverford College.
Staff Liaison(s): Victoria Lipscomb, Championships and Alliances.

Division III Women's Volleyball Committee Feb. 3-4, 2026, Meeting
Attendees:
Josh Edmed, Connecticut College.
Alesia Bennett, Brandeis University.
Kristin Maile, Sarah Lawrence College.
Brian Granata, Arcadia University.
Drew Hargrave, Haverford College.
Caitlyn Moriarty, Berry College.
Leo Sayles, Grove City College (<i>virtual attendee</i>).
Melanee Wagener, Mount St. Joseph.
Matt Hill, University of Northwestern St. Paul.
Joial Griffith, Claremont Mudd Scripps College.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Traci Belton, NCAA Division III National Coordinator of Volleyball Officials (<i>virtual attendee</i>).
Alice Rogers, AVCA Division III Staff (<i>virtual attendee</i>).
Nancy Mueller (<i>virtual attendee</i>).
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.

Jonathan Youngblood, Championships and Alliances.
Corey Berg, GMS.
Rachel Seewald, Playing Rules (<i>virtual attendee</i>).
Lucas DuMars, Broadcast.