



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA MEN'S VOLLEYBALL COMMITTEE
JUNE 8-10, 2021, MEETING**

KEY ITEM.

- The committee selected Tim O'Brien, commissioner of the Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association, as the new chair for 2021-22.

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- **None.**

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Automatic Qualification.**

- a. Recommendation. That the following five conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2022 NCAA National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship: Big West Conference; Conference Carolinas; Eastern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association; Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association; and Mountain Pacific Sports Federation.
- b. Effective date. Immediate.
- c. Rationale. All eligible conferences are being recommended.
- d. Estimated budget impact. None.
- e. Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Approval of annual meeting report.** The committee approved the 2020 annual meeting report as submitted.
- 2. Review actions from the Division I Competition Oversight Committee (COC).** The committee reviewed COC actions, specifically updates related to COVID-19 and the Championships Finance Review Working Group.
- 3. Review of sponsorship.** The committee reviewed sponsorship for the current year, noting anticipated growth with several institutions adding the sport in the 2022 academic year and

beyond, including members of the Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) and Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC). Further review will take place once 2021-22 information is available to make sure all schools are represented and assigned to the correct region.

4. **Automatic qualification.** The committee noted that the championship would consist of five automatic qualifiers and two at-large teams, which would again provide for a seven-team field in the 2021-22 academic year, pending approval of the Division I Competition Oversight Committee (see Action Item 2 above).
5. **Future championship sites.** The committee discussed upcoming championship sites, noting that the University of California, Los Angeles, will be the finals site within the current cycle, and reviewed the newly named host sites awarded in the fall of 2020.
6. **Rules.** The playing rules staff provided updates to the committee, including a discussion of a potential rules book for men's volleyball. Staff noted that if a rules book were to be implemented, it would be about a two-year process because legislation would have to be approved. Staff also noted that there are only 11 rules modifications for men's volleyball, which is very low compared to other sports that do not use an NCAA rule book. The positions and responsibilities of a national coordinator of officials and rules interpreter were outlined and discussed as well.
7. **Officials.** The committee reviewed the timeline for selecting officials for the championship and agreed that the timing used this year will work well for 2022. Staff will continue to provide conference commissioners with information regarding the process of recommending officials as early as possible.
8. **Review of 2021 championship.**
 - a. Schedule of events. The committee reviewed the schedule of events and agreed that the current schedule works well. Members will continue to review and make adjustments based on travel time and facility availability in the future.
 - b. Opening-round matches. The committee reviewed the opening-round matches and appreciated Ohio State's willingness and flexibility in hosting and administering all three matches during the week of the championship. Following the success of gathering all seven teams at the finals site for 2021, members of the committee would like to continue having all three opening-round matches at the finals location, as this provides for the best student-athlete experience and protects bracket integrity. NCAA staff would confirm availability of the finals site to host these three extra opening-round matches relative to competition and lodging.
 - c. Semifinals/final. The committee was pleased with how the finals on the campus of Ohio State were administered given the COVID-19 environment host personnel had to navigate. Attendance numbers for the event reflected the capacity guidelines put in place

by the university and local health department. Capacity restrictions notwithstanding, Ohio State created a memorable atmosphere for the participating student-athletes, coaches and fans. The committee noted items that were administered smoothly as well as areas to be considered for improvement for upcoming championship sites.

- d. Suppliers. The committee emphasized its appreciation for the level of support, customer service and commitment to the championship that Molten, Connor Sport Court and Sports Imports provide annually. Staff will continue to work with these suppliers to update equipment and support needs for future championships.
- e. Evaluations. The committee reviewed the evaluations and noted areas for improvement; however, members also noted that the low amount of feedback from the surveys makes it difficult to identify if there are actual trends to consider.
- f. Timing sheets/protocol. The committee reviewed the existing timing sheets and pregame introduction protocols used for the 2021 championship. Members determined the documentation outlining the timing and team introduction protocols were sufficient. NCAA staff will share these protocols with conferences sponsoring the sport.
- g. USA Volleyball/American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA). In a year when the pandemic altered these relationships, the committee looks to enhance or reconnect with USA Volleyball and the AVCA as the 2021-22 season progresses. While attendance was limited and there were no ancillary events, the committee emphasized the importance of its continued commitment to growing the game and the importance of the organizations' presence at the championship and the banquet moving forward. Members also noted that USA Volleyball could serve as a tremendous resource in assisting with marketing and social media efforts for next year's championship.
- h. Television/Webcast. The committee expressed concerns with the broadcast for the championship match. In the recent past, the championship match has been aired on ESPN2 with the National Collegiate Women's Beach Volleyball Championship serving as the lead-in on that Saturday. In 2021, with the two championships still being on the same weekend, beach volleyball remained on ESPN2 as the lead-in to the men's volleyball championship match. However, the men's match was reduced (by household distribution) to ESPNU, thereby limiting the opportunity of greater exposure that had been available in recent years. For reference, the programming that followed the beach volleyball championship on ESPN2 was not a live event, but pre-produced programming unrelated to the sport of volleyball.

Additionally, the committee made some broadcasting and webcasting observations given the gender equity review that is currently being conducted. The entire Division I Women's Volleyball Championship is streamed (early rounds) or broadcast on the ESPN family of networks. The entire National Collegiate Women's Beach Volleyball Championship is broadcast on the ESPN family of networks. In contrast, the National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship opening-round matches are produced by the in-house streaming service provided by the host(s), the semifinals are streamed on NCAA.com, and the championship match is broadcast on the ESPN family of networks for the championship match (details are outlined in the first paragraph of this section).

The committee also discussed encouraging participating sports information directors to facilitate further access to ESPN during practice and walk throughs in an effort to identify additional story lines and possibly improve the pre-produced video packages highlighted throughout the broadcast.

- i. Social media. Again, with consideration of the gender equity review, the committee also expressed concerns with the lack of social media presence as there is a wide gap between what is provided (platforms and coverage) for national collegiate men's volleyball vs. Division I women's volleyball and national collegiate beach volleyball. The handles for men's volleyball on Twitter/Instagram/Etc. are generic for NCAA volleyball; whereas, separate NCAA women's volleyball accounts were created (which took their 100,000+ followers with them). Men's volleyball had limited activity/content produced for those handles (internally or externally). The number of engagements/posts per sport per our social media group were: Division I women's volleyball (3,800); national collegiate beach volleyball (1,400); national collegiate men's volleyball (58).
- j. Attendance/financial summary. The committee discussed the attendance and financial implications from the championship and noted that attendance relative to capacity limitations due to COVID-19 would affect the gate revenues that are typically generated within a normal year. Attendance restrictions aside, the atmosphere was tremendous given that only a couple of teams were proximate to the finals site.
- k. Selection show. The committee reviewed the content involved with the selection show for this year's championship and discussed opportunities to further enhance the production for 2022.

9. Preview of 2022 championship.

- a. Site visit. NCAA staff will plan on conducting a site visit for this championship, hosted by the University of California, Los Angeles.
- b. Ancillary events. While there were no ancillary events for 2021, the committee looks forward to reimplementing some form of a banquet gathering to celebrate the student-athletes in 2022. The committee discussed ideas for such events that would add to the championship experience for participants and fans, including USA Volleyball and AVCA involvement in interactive areas such as coaches clinics, All-American and NCAA Elite 90 presentations, etc.
- c. Participant manual. The committee reviewed the participant manual and made changes as necessary for staff to incorporate and distribute. Staff will work with the championship host to solidify changes and site-specific information.
- d. Uniform color designation. The committee adjusted its policy for uniform designation. These updates will be included in the participant manual for teams to reference and apply during the championship.

- e. Championship bracket expansion/format. With anticipated growth to the sport, the committee has initiated discussions relative to strategies that would include opportunities for bracket expansion and potential changes to the format. The committee will review the sponsorship numbers for the 2021-22 academic year before formalizing any requests.

10. Strategic plan. The committee reviewed goals for the men's volleyball championship and identified accomplishments as well as areas to re-focus on within its short- and long-term strategies.

11. Review of manuals. The committee discussed the committee operations, host operations, pre-championship and site representative manuals and noted updates as necessary for staff to incorporate and distribute.

12. Committee. The committee reviewed the timeline and recommended changes as necessary for staff to incorporate and distribute for the upcoming year. Members noted that Lenny Kaplan will be rotating off the committee and that the nominating committee has provided a replacement for the East Region. Additionally, the committee recommended that Tim O'Brien serve as the new committee chair for 2021-22 (see key item above).

13. Other business.

- a. Start time request. The committee discussed a requested start time for the championship match. Understanding that the match will be taking place in the Pacific time zone, the committee wants to ask ESPN for a start time in the range of 4-6 p.m. local time.
- b. Future meeting date. The committee agreed to conduct its 2022 annual meeting June 14-16.

Committee Chair: Lenny Kaplan, New Jersey Institute of Technology
Staff Liaison: Ethan Walker, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Men's Volleyball Committee
June 8-10, 2021, Meeting
Attendees:
Ryan Booher, King University.
Lenny Kaplan, New Jersey Institute of Technology.
John Kosty, Stanford University.
David Matlin, University of Hawaii, Manoa.
Tim O'Brien, Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association.
Guests in Attendance:
None.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Ethan Walker, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Ben Brownlee, Championships and Alliances.
Nick Strah, Championships and Alliances.