



REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I SPORTS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
JANUARY 14, 2025, MEETING

Note: This document does not include items incorporated in the NCAA Division I Council report.

ACTION ITEM.

- **Men's and Women's Fencing – Creation of a women's championship.**

(1) Recommendation. That the NCAA Division I Council Coordination Committee approve a recommendation consistent with the NCAA Division I Board of Director's interim policy and legislative priorities to the NCAA Division I Council to introduce a proposal into the June 2025 council governance legislative cycle creating a women's fencing championship separate from the existing mixed fencing championships. A men's fencing championship among 35 sponsoring schools would remain in place under the Olympic sport exception. The women's fencing championship with a sponsorship of 44 would be held at the same site as the men's and conducted concurrently.

(2) Effective date. 2025-26 season.

(3) Rationale. Under the current scoring format, institutions that sponsor only women's fencing face a statistical impossibility to win a national championship. The separation of the two genders would allow for a more equitable championship experience and a realistic pathway for all teams to compete for national championships.

The SOC concluded that introducing a proposal to establish a women's fencing championship is consistent with the Board's interim policy and legislative priorities of "administration of postseason championships" to support the growth, development and recognition of women's championships. The SOC is supportive of the collaborative work from the USOPC/NCAA collegiate fencing sport management pilot that developed the initial proposal. As a national collegiate championship, the recommendation requires legislative support from all three divisions.

(4) Estimated budget impact. \$7,200 increase in the operational budget for four additional sets of team awards.

(5) Student-athlete impact. The proposed championship change would provide competitive equity to the nine programs and the 154 student-athletes currently representing women's-only fencing programs. These student-athletes and coaches would have a realistic pathway toward a collegiate championship which, in turn, will further incentivize grassroots participation in the sport.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and opening remarks.** Division I Sports Oversight Committee Chair Michael Kelly welcomed committee members to its inaugural meeting as a combined group with introductions of members and staff liaisons.
2. **Equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI) and the student-athlete voice.** Staff recognized the NCAA Women of the Year finalists, Muslim American Heritage Month in January, Korean American Day on January 13 and Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 20.
3. **Review of recent reports.** The committee approved the reports from the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee's October 7-8 meeting and the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Experience Committee's October 7-8 meeting as presented.
4. **Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee update.** The committee received an update on the current Division I SAAC priorities and initiatives, including a goal to promote voting rights for student-athletes at the conference level and the coordination of SAAC's annual video contest.
5. **Committee charge and operations.**
 - **Committee focus for 2024-25.** The committee reviewed the focus areas that the Competition Oversight Committee had previously applied (not in priority order) and agreed to use the same focus areas to guide its decision-making process going forward:

Student-athlete experience | Equity, diversity and inclusion | Competitive fairness | Student-athlete health and well-being | Fiscal planning
6. **Duties and responsibilities.** The committee reviewed the combined duties of the new SOC with emphasis on the previous responsibilities transitioned from its predecessor committees – the Competition Oversight Committee and the Student-Athlete Experience Committee.
7. **Committee policies and procedures.** The committee discussed policies and procedures specific to the committee, which the SOC will finalize at a future meeting.
8. **Composition update.** The committee received an update regarding the approved composition of the committee.
9. **Sport groups for subcommittee organization.** The committee discussed potential groupings of sports within the committee's subcommittee structure and will revisit this at its next meeting.
10. **Interim policy and legislative priorities.** The committee received an update regarding the policy and legislative priorities approved by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors that limit the focus of committees in the Division I governance structure to issues and initiatives that fall within the following categories:

- a. Administration of postseason championships;
- b. Implementation of the proposed settlement;
- c. Other risk mitigation; or
- d. Other significant membership needs.

11. Sport-specific legislative requests.

- a. **Fencing – involvement with local sports clubs.** The committee discussed a request from the USOPC/NCAA collegiate fencing sport management pilot to amend camps and clinics legislation in fencing. The committee determined that the request does not meet the Board's interim policy and legislative priorities. The request will be revisited once the interim period has concluded.
- b. **Women's gymnastics – summer countable athletically related activities.** The committee discussed a request from the women's gymnastics committee to allow eight hours of countable athletically related activity during the summer in women's gymnastics. The committee determined that the request does not meet the Board's interim policy and legislative priorities. However, the committee committed to discussing summer countable athletically related activities in all sports once the interim period has concluded.
- c. **Ice hockey – American Hockey Coaches Association – exhibition exemption and blanket waiver.** The committee discussed a request from the American Hockey Coaches Association to exempt the AHCA Tournament from the maximum number of contests. The committee determined that the request does not meet the Board's interim policy and legislative priorities. The request will be revisited once the interim period has concluded.
- d. **Women's lacrosse – first date of competition.** The committee discussed a request from the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaching Association to amend the first date of competition in women's lacrosse. The committee determined that the request does not meet the Board's interim policy and legislative priorities. The request will be revisited once the interim period has concluded.
- e. **Women's volleyball – first date for recruiting contacts and first preseason practice date.** The committee discussed requests from the American Volleyball Coaches Association to amend recruiting legislation and the first preseason practice date in women's volleyball. The committee determined that the request does not meet the Board's interim policy and legislative priorities. The request will be revisited once the interim period has concluded.

12. Review of council-governance legislation anticipated for January vote. The SOC reviewed proposals it recommended for introduction into the January 2025 legislative cycle and reviewed proposals anticipated for January vote.

13. Sport committee reports.

- a. **Baseball.** The SOC reviewed the informational report from the baseball committee meeting.
- b. **Beach volleyball.**
 - **Automatic qualification waiver request.** The SOC did not support the automatic qualification waiver request from the Coastal Collegiate Sports Association for the 2025 championship with a conference membership of four teams. The beach volleyball committee and Competition Oversight Committee previously supported a one-year waiver with similar circumstances for the 2024 championship but noted the conference would need to have six teams to maintain automatic qualification for the 2025 championship.
- c. **Cross country and track and field.** The SOC reviewed the informational reports from the cross country and track and field committee meetings.
- d. **Women's gymnastics.** The SOC reviewed the informational report from the women's gymnastics committee meeting.
- e. **Women's lacrosse.**
 - **2026 championship host.** The SOC approved Northwestern University to host the 2026 NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship at Northwestern Medicine Field at Martin Stadium. The original 2026 selected host, Gillette Stadium, is not able to host due to being selected as a host site for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- f. **Men's soccer.** The SOC reviewed the informational reports from the men's soccer committee meetings.
- g. **Softball.** The SOC reviewed the informational report from the softball committee meeting.
- h. **Men's and women's swimming and diving.** The SOC reviewed the informational reports from the men's and women's swimming and diving committee meetings.
- i. **Men's and women's tennis.**
 - **Selection penalty for exceeding countable contest limits.** The SOC approved the men's and women's tennis committee recommendation to penalize a team at selection for exceeding the legislated countable contest limits. The proposed penalties are to: remove the highest ITA-ranked win per match exceeding the limit and replace with its next best ranked win (for selection purposes only, not for seeding purposes); assess a \$2,500 fine per match exceeding the limit; suspend the head coach for the first two

rounds; and remove the opportunity to host the first two rounds if seeding earned that opportunity. There will be additional penalties for repeat offenders. The SOC agreed with the tennis committee that adding contests to gain advantage in selection and seeding is a serious issue and the proposed penalty structure will deter the behavior and help maintain fairness in the selection process.

14. Transfer portal data update. The SOC received an update from the NCAA Research staff on current transfer portal data and trends.

15. NCAA Office of Legal Affairs update. The SOC received an update from the office of legal affairs.

16. Other business. The SOC was made aware of a concept originating from U.S. Soccer to pilot a new playing season and championship model for a select number of men's soccer teams separate from the sport's current regulations and championship administration.

17. Future meetings.

- Wednesday, February 19, from 1 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time (*videoconference*)
- Wednesday, April 9, from 1 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time (*videoconference*)
- Wednesday, June 18, from 1 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time (*videoconference*)
- Wednesday, August 20, from 1 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time (*videoconference*)
- Monday, October 6, from 4 – 8 p.m. and Tuesday, October 7, from 8 – 12 p.m. (*in-person in Indianapolis*)

Committee Chair: Michael Kelly, University of South Florida
Staff Liaisons: Brandy Hataway, Academic and Membership Affairs
Liz Turner Suscha, Championships and Alliances
John Bugner, Championships and Alliances
Kristin Fasbender, Championships and Alliances
Jennifer Henderson, Academic and Membership Affairs
Karen Metzger, Academic and Membership Affairs
Russell Register, Enforcement

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Attendees:	
Joeleen Akin, Georgia Institute of Technology.	
Alisse Ali-Joseph, Northern Arizona University.	
Jennifer Condaras, Coastal Athletic Association.	

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Christine Copper, U.S. Naval Academy.
Tiffany Daniels, Southeastern Conference.
Joseph D'Antonio Jr., Coastal Athletic Association.
Raymond Harrison Jr., North Carolina State University.
Brad Hurlbut, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Metropolitan Campus.
Kimberly Johnson, Texas Christian University.
Michael Kelly, University of South Florida.
Celene McGowan, The Ivy League.
Janet Oberle, Saint Louis University.
Elizabeth Rabb, Wofford College.
Keeley Rasmussen, Long Beach State University (Student-Athlete).
Allison Rich, University of New Hampshire.
Matthew Sorbe, University of South Dakota (Student-Athlete).
Absentees:
Greg Christopher, Xavier University.
Jenna Rogers, University of Nebraska, Lincoln (Student-Athlete).
Guest(s) in Attendance:
Leah Carey, Brown University (Student-Athlete).
Katie Smith, Big Ten Conference.
Jon Steinbrecher, Mid-American Conference.
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:
John Bugner, Championships and Alliances.
Kristin Fasbender, Championships and Alliances.
Brandy Hataway, Academic and Membership Affairs.
Jennifer Henderson, Academic and Membership Affairs.
Karen Metzger, Academic and Membership Affairs.
Russell Register, Enforcement.
Liz Turner Suscha, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Lydia Bell, Amanda Conklin, Haydyn Gibson, Tracy McClendon, Susan Peal, Luke Schultheis and Lynda Tealer.