

**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
AUGUST 20, 2024, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **2028 Division III Women's Basketball Championship.**

- a. Recommendation. That the 2028 Division III Women's Basketball Championship take place at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis as part of the Women's Final Four.
- b. Effective date. March/April 2028.
- c. Rationale. As has been proven in the past, the joint championship provides an outstanding student-athlete experience for the two teams that advance to Indianapolis, as well as the opportunity for greater exposure for the division at the Women's Final Four. The Championship Committee during its September 2018 meeting supported the concept to provide a joint championship experience for men and women twice in a 10-year period (i.e., the first period was 2013-2023 and the second period will run from 2024-2034). The previous joint women's championships were held in 2016 (Indianapolis) and 2023 (Dallas), while the previous joint men's championships were held in 2013 (Atlanta) and scheduled, but cancelled, in 2020 (Atlanta) due to the pandemic. The next men's joint championship will occur in 2026 in Indianapolis. The Women's Basketball Coaches Association supports this recommendation.
- d. Budget impact. \$250,000.
- e. Student-athlete impact. The student-athletes who advance to the championship game would be able to participate in several activities surrounding the Women's Final Four, including the Salute, an introduction during the semifinals of the Women's Final Four, holding the court-sized flag during the national anthem at the Division I championship game, and the winning team being introduced during the Division I championship game as the Division III national champion. These experiences provide lifelong positive memories.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Welcome and announcements.** Division III Championships Committee Chair Karen Tessmer welcomed the group and introduced Tim Demant, the director of athletics at Whitworth College, as the committee's newest member. The committee also thanked Holly Sheilley for her service to Division III and the Championships Committee.
2. **Recent Championships Committee reports.** The committee approved reports from its June 17-18 videoconferences and August 6 electronic vote as presented.
3. **Division III Management Council update.** Holly Sheilley provided an update from the council's July meeting that included the council's approval of selection and pairings amendments that will provide team sport committees the flexibility to protect top-seeded teams in the bracket.
4. **Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee update.** Adaobi Nebuwa provided an update from the SAAC's July meeting.
5. **Budget-to-actuals.** The committee reviewed the budget-to-actuals from 2023-24 through August 19, noting that not all expenses for spring championships have been recorded but will be final by the end of the month.
6. **Championships.**
 - a. **NCAA Power Index.** The committee received a summary of the status of implementing the newly adopted NPI as a selection criterion effective for the 2024-25 academic year. The committee noted that all sport committees have set their respective NPI dials and communicated them to their sport communities and stakeholders. The committee also reviewed the remaining educational webinars, the challenges related to previous webinar links expiring, and the timing of NPI release dates to sync with previous ranking publishing schedules.
 - b. **Bracketing principles.** The committee revisited its bracketing principles discussion in the wake of the Division III Management Council during its July meeting approving steps to protect top-seeded teams. Based on these new principles (protecting top-seeded teams and flexibility in selecting host institutions), the Championships Committee sought feedback from Division III championship managers and sport committees that included a review of past brackets and sport committee deliberations.

Accordingly, after additional review and deliberation, the committee agreed on the following process for sport committees to use when pairing teams selected into the championship bracket:

- Brackets with more than 32 teams will protect eight teams. Brackets with 32 teams or fewer will protect four teams.

- In brackets with more than 32 teams, teams will be protected based on the seed lines of No. 1s and No. 2s (based on NPI ranking at the time of selection). In brackets of 32 teams or fewer, the top four teams in the NPI will be protected.
 - NPI rank 1-4 will be No 1s. NPI rank 5-8 will be No. 2s.
 - No. 1s and No. 2s will be bracketed based on quarterfinal matchups providing a possibility that the top eight teams could each advance to the round of eight.
 - No. 1s and No. 2s will be paired in the quarterfinals based on current bracketing principles (i.e., geographic proximity is maintained)
- Brackets will then be built outward based on protecting the quarterfinal matchups that will protect No. 1s and No. 2s while maintaining geographic proximity.
- Hosts will be selected based on meeting the minimum hosting requirements and maintaining geographic proximity. Seeding may be a consideration when selecting hosts but is not determinative.

Note: The men's and women's tennis committees will be discussing a policy to establish its top eight teams based on regional rankings since it will not be using the NPI.

The process will apply for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years. The two-year pilot will allow the Championships Committee to assess the financial impact and success in protecting top-seeded teams.

- c. **Regional advisory committee roles.** The committee discussed the role of RACs given the adoption of NPI as a selection criterion that modifies duties RAC members previously were required to conduct. The committee noted that conferences must appoint individuals to a regional advisory committee to assist in the review of data transfer into the NPI system and to serve as site representatives for Division III non-predetermined preliminary-round contests. As a standard practice, the advisory committee chair conducts videoconferences with all advisory committee members to review the data and discuss potential preliminary-round host bids within the region. This information is then communicated to the national governing sport committee.

Going forward, the committee agreed that RAC members should review data transferred into the NPI system and affirm their accuracy. The committee also emphasized that RAC members are expected to serve as site representatives for preliminary-round competition. Costs associated with serving as a site rep will be reimbursed (lodging, travel, etc.). The NCAA championship administrator will provide a site representative manual, training and any additional information necessary to perform these duties.

- 7. **In-region waiver request.** The committee reviewed and supported a request from Colorado College to waive the in-region requirements for its men's lacrosse team for the 2024-25 season. The committee noted schedule changes (or regional alignment changes) that happened outside

of Colorado College's control that precluded its men's lacrosse team from meeting the in-region minimum. Accordingly, the Championships Committee agreed to grant the waiver.

8. Sport committee reports.

a. Women's basketball.

- **Joint championships.** The committee supported the recommendation to have the 2028 Division III Women's Basketball Championship be conducted as part of the Division I Women's Final Four. (See Action Item.)

b. Men's and women's basketball.

- **Video review.** The committee supported the recommendation from both basketball committees to require institutions as a condition of hosting preliminary-round competition in the Division III Men's and Women's Basketball Championships to provide a video review setup that includes at a minimum one camera angle and a rewindable stream. The committee agreed that the NCAA postseason should be an elevated, not a lesser, experience than regular-season and/or conference tournament games and as such should provide video review during all rounds of the postseason.

c. Men's and women's soccer.

Championships date formula. The Championships Committee discussed but did not act on the joint recommendation from the soccer committees to change the date formula for the Division III Men's and Women's Soccer Championships by moving the date one week later to align with the other divisions, provide more rest and recovery during the regular season, and improve the overall experience of the soccer student-athletes. The committee would like more time to review the membership responses gathered during the survey to ensure it is fully considering the change and its impact on campus. The committee will review the survey data and discuss further during its September meeting.

- **Officials selection process.** The committee also discussed but did not act on the request for a new process for selecting officials to work the soccer championships that requires a dedicated fourth official to work both semifinals and then the final game as well. The committee would like to know how other sports assign officials at the finals site and how the assignments are rotated among selected officials, if at all. Staff will help gather information and revisit this request at a future meeting.

9. Future meeting schedule.

- a. August 29 (videoconference; championship bids review)

- b. September 8-10 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis; includes meeting with sport committee chairs)
- c. October 15, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- d. November 19, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- e. December 17, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- f. February 3-4, 2025 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis).

Committee Chair: Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University.
Staff Liaisons: Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances
Jeff Myers, Academic and Membership Affairs
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.

NCAA Division III Championships Committee August 20, 2024, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.	
Chad Eisle, Hampden-Sydney College.	
Maureen Harty, College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin.	
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University	
Jason Doviak, Alfred State College.	
Adaobi Nebuwa, Colby College.	
Duey Naatz, University of Wisconsin-Stout.	
Holly Sheilley, Transylvania University.	
Sara Shoffner, Huntington College.	
Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University.	
Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.	
Jason Verdugo, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
None.	
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:	
Jeff Myers, Academic and Membership Affairs.	
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.	
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.	

Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:

Kevin Alcox, Alex Dickey, Elise Boulton, Jay Fitzwater, Margaret Gaines-Hornberger, Caleb Kolby, Victoria Lipscomb, Louise McCleary, Bill Regan, Ryan Richardson, Rachel Seewald, Kelly Whitaker and Jonathan Youngblood.