

**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 19, 2025, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative items.**

- None.

**2. Nonlegislative items.**

**a. Division III Women's Ice Hockey Championship bracket expansion.**

- (1) Recommendation. That the Management Council approve an increase for the Division III Women's Ice Hockey Championship field size from 12 to 13 teams per Bylaw 31.3.1.1.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2025, for the 2026 championship.
- (3) Rationale. Bylaw 31.3.1.1 reads, "In team sports, overall bracket sizes shall be established based on an approximate access ratio of 1:6.0." Sport sponsorship after the 2024-25 season was at 78 teams, and the resulting ratio of 78/6.0 equals 13 teams.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Approximately \$60,000. The bracket size increase would require a fifth first-round site. See Attachment A for the cost analysis and bracket for the additional site and team.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. More student-athletes have the opportunity to compete for a national championship.

**b. Division III Men's Volleyball Championship bracket expansion.**

- (1) Recommendation. That the Management Council approve an increase the bracket for the Division III Men's Volleyball Championship field size from 19 to 21 teams per Bylaw 31.3.1.1.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2025, for the 2026 championship.
- (3) Rationale. The recommendation aligns with the current sport sponsorship and access ratio as stated in Bylaw 31.3.1.1 ("In team sports, overall bracket sizes shall be established based on an approximate access ratio of 1:6.0."). When applying the 2024-

25 men's volleyball sponsorship (127 institutions) to the team sport access ratio (1:6), the championship field should consist of 21.16 participants. The format would change only slightly from that used in 2025. Adding two teams would add two play-in matches, which would theoretically create three sites with five teams and one site with six. However, due to Division III's emphasis on geographical proximity, there may be scenarios in which a site can't host more than four teams without creating a flight. Therefore, a stipulation would be communicated with potential hosts stating that by submitting a bid they understand they may be asked to host a four-, five- or six-team competition.

(4) Estimated budget impact. An additional \$83,000 is anticipated to accommodate the bracket expansion (\$31,000 for transportation, \$42,000 for per diem, and \$10,000 for game expenses). See Attachment B for the bracket expansion cost analysis.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Adding play-in matches would provide lower-ranked teams with more competitive matchups and a realistic chance at winning an NCAA championship match.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Opening remarks and review of schedule and agenda.** Division III Championships Committee Chair Leonard Trevino welcomed the group and previewed key agenda items.
2. **Recent Championships Committee reports.** The committee approved the reports from its July 15 videoconference and July 31 electronic vote as presented.
3. **Championships discussion guide.** The committee reviewed an updated version of this document that details the status of key items to date.
4. **Playing rules structure.** Staff informed the committee that the Division III Management Council approved the committee's recommendation to adopt noncontroversial legislation establishing a new playing rules structure and process specifically for Division III (see Attachment B). The process is underway to fill spots on the new rules committees. The new structure will become effective September 1 pending approval from the Division III Administrative Committee.
5. **Championships topics.**
  - a. **In-region waiver request.** The committee reviewed but did not support a request from the University of California, Santa Cruz, to waive the in-region requirement for its women's basketball team. The committee discussed the request initially during its July videoconference but asked for additional information from the institution before reaching a decision. After further discussion, the committee noted that the schedule falls well below

the 70 percent requirement and did not believe the information supplied provided a compelling argument to support the waiver.

- b. Championship bench size.** The committee reviewed a document detailing bench size by sport. The committee noted that bench size had been addressed comprehensively in September 2022, but that several sport committees have requested modifications since then. The committee's conversation centered on bench size but also brought up squad size and travel party and how all three of these interact. The committee discussed several possible approaches to address bench size concerns and asked for staff to gather more information to add to the discussion in September.

## **6. Sport committee reports.**

### **a. Football.**

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 27 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2025 Division III Football Championship: American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Centennial Conference; Collegiate Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Commonwealth Coast Football; Empire 8; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Middle Atlantic Conference; Midwest Conference; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; New Jersey Athletic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Northwest Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Southern Athletic Association; Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

### **b. Men's ice hockey.**

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 10 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 NCAA Division III Men's Ice Hockey Championship: Conference of New England; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Middle Atlantic Conference; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; Northern Collegiate Hockey Association; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United Collegiate Hockey Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

### **c. Women's ice hockey.**

- **Bracket size increase.** The committee supported the women's ice hockey committee's recommendation to increase the Division III Women's Ice Hockey Championship

bracket from 12 to 13 teams effective with the 2026 championship to align with sport sponsorship. (See Action Item 1-a.)

**d. Men's and women's ice hockey.**

- **Predetermined finals sites.** The committee supported the request from the men's and women's ice hockey committees to transition both championships to predetermined finals sites in 2028 after the current pilot in which the championships rotate between non-predetermined and predetermined sites concludes.

**e. Men's lacrosse.**

**(1) Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 27 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 Division III Men's Lacrosse Championship: Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; Coastal Lacrosse Conference, College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Conference of New England; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Men's Lacrosse Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; New England Small College Athletic Conference; New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; North Atlantic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; Southern Athletic Association; State University of New York Athletic Conference; and United East Conference and USA South Athletic Conference.

**(2) Bench and squad size.** The committee considered but tabled the requests to have the bench size be at the participating institutions' discretion depending upon their roster size and to add two student-athletes to the squad size. However, the committee believes bench and squad size are items that should be determined across all sports rather than as one-off decisions. Accordingly, the committee will address these requests as part of a larger discussion later.

**f. Women's lacrosse.**

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 31 conferences receive automatic qualification to the 2026 NCAA Division III Women's Lacrosse Championship: Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Conference of New England; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Women's Lacrosse 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; 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 Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East Conference; and USA South Athletic Conference.

**g. Softball.**

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 42 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 NCAA Division III Softball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and 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 Conference 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 Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East Conference; University Athletic Association; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference

**h. Men's volleyball.**

- (1) **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 14 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 NCAA Division III Men's Volleyball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference, City University of New York Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Continental Volleyball Conference; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Middle Atlantic Conference; Midwest Collegiate Volleyball League; New England Volleyball Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; United East Conference; and United Volleyball Conference.

- (2) **Bracket expansion.** The committee supported the recommendation to expand the championship bracket from 19 to 21 teams effective with the 2026 championship. (See Action Item 2-b.)
- (3) **Championship date formula.** The committee supported the recommendation to conduct the championship finals in a Thursday-Saturday model versus the current Friday-Sunday approach.
- (4) **Additional assignor.** The committee approved the recommendation to add an assignor for the Division III Men's Volleyball Championship who will communicate with the regional assignors to determine and assign the desired officials to work the postseason matches. This will be made effective at the first budget opportunity either absorbed within the current budget or during the next budget cycle if the current budget is not adequate to cover the expense.

**7. Future meeting/videoconference dates.**

- a. September 8-9 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis).
- b. October 14, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- c. November 18, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- d. December 9, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- e. February 2-3, 2026 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis)

*Committee Chair:* Leonard Trevino, Chatham University  
*Staff Liaisons:* Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances  
Liz Turner Suscha, Championships and Alliances  
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division III Championships Committee August 19, 2025, Videoconference	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
Arturo Casas, Manchester University.	
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.	
Jason Doviak, Alfred State University.	
Chad Eisele, Hampden-Sydney College.	
Maureen Harty, College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin.	
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University.	

Duey Naatz, University of Wisconsin-Stout.
Russ Rogers, Stevens Institute of Technology.
Sara Shoffner, Huntingdon College.
Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.
Jason Verdugo, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.
Ashley Wagner, Notre Dame of Maryland University.
<b>Absentees:</b>
None.
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>
None.
<b>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</b>
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>
Margaret Gaines, Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan and Liz Suscha.