

**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
JULY 15, 2025, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. Noncontroversial Legislation – Bylaws 21.1 and 21.3 – Committees – Playing Rules Oversight Panel and Rules Committees Without Championships Administration Responsibilities – Establishment of New Playing Rules Structure and Process.

(1) Recommendation. That the Management Council adopt noncontroversial legislation to establish a new playing rules structure and process for Division III as outlined in the Attachment.

(2) Effective date. September 1, 2025.

(3) Rationale. Given that Division I is revising its governance structure, including how playing rules will be administered, Divisions II and III decided to establish their own playing rules structures. Playing rules currently are managed Association-wide through the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) that includes representatives from all three divisions and provides instances in which playing rules can be federated if desired. The structure in the Attachment outlines a Playing Rules Oversight Panel for Divisions II and III as well as rules committees by sport for both divisions, including composition requirements and duties. The new structure maintains the ability for the divisions to federate a playing rule and the current role of the Division III Management Council in the playing rules process.

(4) Estimated budget impact. TBD pending approval of the committee structure and meeting cadence/format.

(5) Student-athlete impact. The new structure will continue to consider playing rules that are in Division III student-athletes' best interests.

b. Alcohol sales at the 2026 Division III Men's Basketball Championship.

- (1) Recommendation. That the Management Council approve a waiver of Bylaw 31.1.11.1 (availability of alcoholic beverages – exception) to permit alcohol sales at the Division III Men's Basketball Championship game in Indianapolis as part of the joint championship with Divisions I and II.
- (2) Effective date. Only for the 2026 Division III Men's Basketball Championship.
- (3) Rationale. The current exception in Bylaw 31.1.11.1 permits alcohol sales when a Division III championship is held in conjunction with the Division I championship in the same sport and conducted at the same venue as that championship (e.g., the Division III Men's Lacrosse Championship). Consistent with that approach, a waiver is requested to permit the sale of alcohol during the 2026 Division III Men's Basketball Championship because it is being held in conjunction with Divisions I and II. The Divisions II and III championship games will be played in Gainbridge Field House (home of the Indiana Pacers and Indiana Fever) and will have all the necessary security and provisions in place as for a home game. The 2026 Men's Final Four will be played at Lucas Oil Stadium, and a waiver of the current legislation will ensure a consistent fan experience across the weekend with alcohol sales now being permitted at the Divisions I and II championships.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

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 report from its June 16-17 in-person meeting as presented.
3. **Championships discussion guide.** During its June meeting staff presented a document based on a committee request that tracks current topics the committee is addressing, items identified by the committee, and outcomes of action proposed to other committees (i.e., the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee or the Management and Presidents Councils). The committee reviewed an updated version of this document that details the status of key items to date.
4. **Playing rules structure.** The committee continued discussing the appropriate playing rules structure for Division III given the changes in Division I. The committee reviewed an updated proposal and finalized its recommendation to the Division III Management Council as specified in Action Item 2-a above.
5. **Championships topics.**

- a. **Championships update.** Liz Suscha, the newly named NCAA vice president of championships governance and policy, joined the videoconference to introduce herself and explain her new role. With nearly 18 years of experience at the national office, including more than a decade as a liaison to the Division III Championships Committee, Suscha will now help set the strategic direction for and manage issues affecting championships in all three divisions (except for Division I basketball and football). She also will provide leadership to the championships staff, serving as liaison to Division I sport oversight committees (other than basketball and football) and the Divisions II and III Championships Committees.
- b. **In-region waiver request.** The committee reviewed a request from the University of California, Santa Cruz, to waive the in-region requirement for its women's basketball team but asked staff to obtain more information from the institution before deciding.
- c. **Livestreaming update.** The committee received an update on livestreaming for Division III championships in 2024-25, noting the increased exposure through the agreements with Hudl, NCAA.com and ESPN+. Overall, the division livestreamed 810 championship contests and had 65.6 million minutes watched.

6. Sport committee reports.

a. Men's basketball.

- **Alcohol sales at the 2026 Division III Men's Basketball Championship.** The committee supported the recommendation from the Division III Men's Basketball Committee to ask the Division III Management Council for a waiver to permit alcohol sales at the 2026 Division III Men's Basketball Championship game that will be conducted in conjunction with the Division I and II championship games. (See Action Item 2-b.)

b. Women's basketball. The Championships Committee received the sport committee's report as information, noting the following key items being discussed:

- (1) **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 43 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship: Alleghany Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; Coast-to-Coast Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Collegiate Conference of the South; Conference of New England; Empire 8 Conference; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; 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 Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

- (2) **Regional rankings.** The committee considered a recommendation from the Division III Women's Basketball Committee to no longer publish regional rankings given the adoption of the NPI. The Championships Committee acknowledges the concern but wants to consider its application to all team sports and noted that this will be part of the committee's overarching review of the NPI during future meetings.
- (3) **Bracketing – geographic proximity.** The committee also considered a recommendation that geographic proximity for hosting purposes be reviewed based on minimizing the collective number of flights for preliminary rounds in the women's basketball championship. The Championships Committee during its June meeting reviewed the bracket pilot currently underway and agreed to maintain those policies until after the pilot was concluded before considering any adjustments, and members reaffirmed that decision during this meeting.
- (4) **Preliminary-round site selection criteria.** The women's basketball committee is recommending that "attendance history and revenue potential, which shall be considered to assure fiscal responsibility" be eliminated as a criterion for site selection for preliminary rounds. However, the Championships Committee denied the request at this time and instead encouraged a broader review of site specifications by sport.
- (5) **2028 joint championship format.** To prepare for the joint championship in 2028 with Divisions I and II, the women's basketball committee is recommending a date formula adjustment similar to what the men's committee will use for its joint championship in 2026. The eight teams that advance from the third round would travel to Salem, Virginia, to play the quarterfinals and semifinals – two quarterfinal games on Thursday, March 16, and two quarterfinal games on Friday, March 17. The two advancing teams from Thursday would play in a semifinal game on Saturday, March 18, and the two advancing teams from Friday would play in a semifinal game on Sunday, March 19. The championship game is Saturday, April 1, at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. The Championships Committee agreed with the idea in concept but tabled a decision until the women's basketball committee can provide the financial impact for team travel and an updated daily event schedule to ensure there are no unintended consequences.

- c. **Men's and women's swimming and diving.** The committee reviewed the sport committee's report as information, noting the likelihood that the sport committee will submit a request for the next budget cycle to increase the men's participant cap.
- d. **Women's and women's track and field and cross country.**
- **Qualifying window extension.** The committee approved the sport committee's recommendation to grant a one-year exception so that the qualifying window for the 2025 Division III Men's and Women's Cross Country Championships begins nine weeks before the national championships instead of eight. Doing so allows the pre-nationals meet to count toward selection data while also allowing the sport committee to evaluate a year of selecting at-large teams to evaluate if a more permanent change to the qualifying window would be beneficial.
7. **Other business.**
8. **Future meeting/videoconference dates.**
- a. August 19, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
 - b. September 8-9 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis).
 - c. October 14, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
 - d. November 18, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
 - e. December 9, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
 - f. February 2-3, 2026 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis)

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

NCAA Division III Championships Committee July 15, 2025, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
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.	

Ashley Wagner, Notre Dame of Maryland University.
Absentees:
Arturo Casas, Manchester University.
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.
Jason Verdugo, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.
Guests in Attendance:
Gary Brown, NCAA Contractor.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Corey Bray, Alex Dickey, Nate Flannery, Margaret Gaines, Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan, Liz Suscha and Kelly Whitaker.



Division II and Division III Playing Rules Structures for Consideration and Feedback UPDATED – July 15, 2025

To address the evolving landscape of higher education and intercollegiate athletics, the NCAA Division I Board of Directors created the Division I Decision-Making Working Group. Tasked with revising the current Division I governance structure, the working group has been reviewing and re-imagining Division I's decision-making processes. Recommendations from the working group must be approved by the Division I Board of Directors. The working group shared its recommendations with the Division I Board in June, with final action to occur in August.

One concept includes expanding the Division I sport oversight committee structure beyond football and men's and women's basketball. The oversight committees would have responsibilities for championships administration and selections, legislative matters (e.g., recruiting, playing and practice seasons) and playing rules.

Under this new federated model for playing rules, the Division I sport oversight committee structure would take on the duties to establish and maintain rules of play for Division I sports.

Anticipating this change may be approved in August, Division II and Division III have been discussing a change in structure for playing rules.

The divisions have sought initial feedback from committees and affiliate groups including the divisional championships committees, conference commissioners and athletics directors' groups.

Based on the initial feedback, there was consensus that the preferred model for Division II and Division III is to continue to work together on rules changes and to closely monitor the changes in Division I to ensure consistency, where appropriate. Additionally, each sport shall maintain one common rule book.

Further, any new process comes with the understanding that the playing rules process is still a federated process, and each division has autonomy over its playing rules. Current processes to gather membership feedback on existing and new rules as well as comment periods will remain.

The divisional Management Councils will continue to oversee playing rules as they currently do under divisional legislation.

Finally, the NCAA playing rules staff will continue to provide support/serve as liaisons to the divisions on its playing rules structure.

Playing Rules Approval Process

A joint Division II and Division III Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) would give final approval on playing rules changes.

- PROP members shall serve four-year terms unless representing a committee or council (or to achieve necessary staggering of terms).

- Each division's governance structure will appoint its divisional members to serve on PROP.
- Duties of PROP:
 - a. Oversee all Division II and Division III playing rules committees. This includes approval of playing rules recommendations and oversight of other issues pertaining to playing rules;
 - b. Recommend the establishment and dissolution of playing rules committees;
 - c. Monitor playing rules maintained outside of the NCAA;
 - d. Be responsible for all research and communication pertaining to the administration of playing rules, including the advancement of budgetary recommendations from the playing rules committee and to ensure consistency among different sports, when appropriate (e.g., policies controlling fighting or abusive language);
 - e. Review all playing rules changes pertaining to finances, safety and image of the game; and
 - f. Provide input on the selection process for secretary-rules editors.

Recommended composition of PROP:

The panel shall consist of 12 members, including six members from Division II and six members from Division III. A conference may not have more than one representative on the panel. Individuals with only coaching responsibilities and no administrative responsibilities are not eligible to serve.

- One appointed by the Division II Championships Committee.
- One appointed by the Division III Championships Committee.
- One appointed by the Division II Management Council.
- One appointed by the Division III Management Council.
- One appointed by the Division II Conference Commissioners Association.
- One reserved for a Division III Conference Commissioners Association member and appointed by the Division III Nominating Committee.
- The remaining three representatives from Division II and three representatives from Division III will be appointed at-large through the division's nominating committee process.

Playing Rules Committees

- Each division's governance structure will appoint its divisional members to serve on the rules committees (e.g., nominating committee process).
- Composition of rules committees shall include at least 25% of the positions to be filled by athletics directors, associate or assistant athletics directors, senior woman administrators, individuals who are employed full time as administrators by member conferences, or individuals who are employed both part time as administrators by member conferences and full time by member institutions.
- At least 50% of the total positions on each rules committee shall be filled by coaching staff members.
- A conference may not have more than one representative on a rules committee, unless there are two or fewer conferences sponsoring the sport.
- As its duties, each rules committee shall establish and maintain rules of play in its sport consistent with the sound traditions of the sport and of such character as to ensure good sportsmanship and safe participation by the competitors. Playing rules committees shall have the authority to permit rules experimentation in the nontraditional/nonchampionship season without the PROP approval. Experimentation in the regular season shall be subject to the PROP review.
- The term of office for each member will be four years.
- The secretary rules editor is a nonvoting member.
- Rules changes will typically be on a two-year cycle (consistent with current process).

Composition Numbers:

	Current	Recommended New
Baseball Rules Committee	4 Division I members 2 Division II members 2 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor
Men's Basketball Rules Committee	6 Division I members 3 Division II members 3 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor

	Current	Recommended New
	At least two representatives from each of the following four geographical regions: Districts 1 and 2; District 3; Districts 4 and 5; and Districts 6, 7 and 8 ^	For Division II, one representative from each of the four championships super regions.
Women's Basketball Rules Committee	6 Division I members 3 Division II members 3 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor At least two representatives from each of the following four geographical regions: Districts 1 and 2; District 3; Districts 4 and 5; and Districts 6, 7 and 8 ^	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor For Division II, one representative from each of the four championships super regions.
Football Rules Committee	6 Division I members 3 Division II members 3 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor At least two representatives from each of the following four geographical regions: Districts 1 and 2; District 3; Districts 4 and 5; and Districts 6, 7 and 8 ^	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor For Division II, one representative from each of the four championships super regions.
Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules Committee	6 Division I members 1 Division II member that sponsor Division I or Division II men's or women's ice hockey 4 Division III members 1 member from Division II or Division III 1 secretary rules editor Within Divisions I and III, one-half of the members shall represent men's ice hockey interests and one-half of the	2 Division II members 6 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor Within Divisions II and III, one-half of the members shall represent men's ice hockey interests and one-half of the members shall represent women's ice hockey interests

	Current	Recommended New
	members shall represent women's ice hockey interests	
Men's Lacrosse Rules Committee	4 Division I members 1 Division II members 3 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	3 Division II members 5 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor
Women's Lacrosse Rules Committee	4 Division I members 1 Division II members 3 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	3 Division II members 5 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor
Men's and Women's Soccer Rules Committee	4 Division I members 2 Division II members 2 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor Within each division, one-half of the members shall represent men's soccer interests, and one-half of the members shall represent women's soccer interests	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor Within each division, one-half of the members shall represent men's soccer interests, and one-half of the members shall represent women's soccer interests
Softball Rules Committee	4 Division I members 2 Division II members 2 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor
Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Rules Committee	4 Division I members 2 Division II members 2 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor
Men's and Women's Track and Field Rules Committee	4 Division I members 2 Division II members 2 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor
Women's Volleyball Rules Committee	4 Division I members 2 Division II members 2 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor

	Current	Recommended New
Men's Wrestling Rules Committee	4 Division I members 2 Division II members 2 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor	4 Division II members 4 Division III members 1 secretary rules editor

Future Decisions:

Once a structure and process are approved, additional decisions will be made either by national office staff or the divisional committee structure, where appropriate.

- National office and FTE support models.
- In-person and virtual meeting structures for the playing rules committees. Note: Currently, the playing rules committees that are in a rules change year meet in person. In addition, football, men's basketball, and women's basketball meet in person every year. Most committees also meet virtually outside of the annual meeting.
- Sports with rules determined by an outside entity (e.g., field hockey). At this time, the structure for non-NCAA playing rules will not change. However, the process to review and adopt playing rules may change (e.g., the membership can provide comment and feedback on all new rules versus only modifications).

Timeline:

May	Divisional Championships Committee review and discussions.
May	Feedback from affiliate organizations (e.g., conference commissioners, athletics directors).
June	Divisional Championships Committee recommendations.
July	Divisional Management Council approval.
September 1	Effective date of changes.