

**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
JUNE 16-17, 2025, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None

2. Nonlegislative items.

- 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 reports from its May 13 videoconference and May 19 electronic vote as presented.
- 3. Division III Management Council update.** The committee received a summary of actions taken during the council's April meeting.
- 4. Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee update.** The committee was provided a summary of issues the SAAC addressed during its April meeting.
- 5. Governance updates.**
 - a. Playing rules structure.** The committee reviewed updated information regarding efforts in Division I to revise its governance structure, including how playing rules may be administered. Playing rules currently are managed with Association-wide playing rules committees and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel that includes representatives from all three divisions and provides instances in which playing rules can be federated, if desired. This structure may change, if Division I approves a new governance structure this summer. Divisions II and III are discussing needed changes if they will need to modify their playing rules structures. The Division III Championships Committee began discussing various potential models this spring and agreed that playing rules should continue being as consistent as possible among divisions but still maintain the ability to federate rules, as needed.

Subsequent feedback from the Division III Commissioners Association and the National Association of Division III Athletics Administrators executive committees indicated that the preferred model for Division III is to continue collaborating on rules changes with Division II and to closely monitor the changes in Division I to ensure consistency, where appropriate. The playing rules process would continue to be federated, with each division having the autonomy over its playing rules. A joint Division II and Division III Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP), with equal representation, would be created to give final approval of playing rules changes.

The Championships Committee discussed the structure and process at length, including potential composition requirements and duties of the proposed Division II/III PROP and the accompanying joint Divisions II and III playing rules committees by sport. Members asked staff to revise potential models based on these discussions to inform the committee's final recommendation to the Division III Management Council in July. The new process, if implemented, would become effective September 1. The committee also emphasized the need to revisit the structure in a few years to ensure it is operating effectively.

- b. National Collegiate championships stability policy.** Staff updated the committee regarding internal discussions on how National Collegiate championships transition into divisional championships. Current bylaws dictate that when a championship is established it is a National Collegiate championship for which any active member institution in good standing can be eligible. All divisions then have bylaws or policies outlining the minimum sponsorship and legislative requirements to establish new division-specific championships. However, these bylaws and policies suggest division-specific independence without considering the resulting impacts on the sport's regular season, budgeting and logistics for the new divisional championship, or the administration of the existing National Collegiate championship.

Staff noted that women's wrestling is a good example. All three divisions adopted legislation last year establishing women's wrestling as a National Collegiate championship beginning in winter 2026. However, Division III is close to surpassing the sponsorship threshold for establishing a Division III Women's Wrestling Championship and is likely to pursue legislation accordingly. Likewise, Division II is contemplating a division-specific women's bowling championship from the existing National Collegiate Women's Bowling Championship.

In either case, the new stability policy being considered would state that after divisional approval of a division-specific championship (i.e., adoption of legislation at the Convention), its effective date shall be after a minimum of two National Collegiate championships have taken place and with at least two years notice provided to the National Collegiate championship committee and sponsoring members in the sport. (So, for example, if Division III were to adopt legislation at the 2026 Convention to establish a Division III Women's Wrestling Championship, it would not begin until winter of 2028 after the 2026 and 2027 National Collegiate championships have taken place.) This policy would

apply both to newly established and existing National Collegiate championships. The two-year waiting period offers time to properly budget for the championship, coordinate the administration of the new championship (e.g., establish format and qualifications processes; host site selection; committee creation) and allows the membership time to schedule their regular-season contests and postseason tournaments accordingly.

After discussion, the Division III Championships Committee agreed with the rationale and endorsed establishing this new policy going forward. The Divisions II and III Strategic Planning and Finance Committees will be asked to formally adopt the new stability policy during their summer meetings.

6. **NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA) recommendations.** Staff also informed the committee that the CWA has formally recommended that all three divisions adopt legislation establishing two previously emerging sports – acrobatics and tumbling, and stunt – as National Collegiate championships and create sport committees for both. Both sports exceeded the minimum sponsorship threshold for being considered as National Collegiate championship sports this year and are expected to continue their growth. The Division III Management Council during its July meeting will determine whether to sponsor legislation for the 2026 NCAA Convention. Pending approval, both sports would begin to create their respective sport committees in January 2026 with spring 2027 championships as the target start date.

7. Championships topics.

- a. **Championships update.** Lynda Tealer, NCAA senior vice president of championships and alliances, joined the meeting to further update the group on the governance restructuring in Division I that will include sport committees expanding their roles to include more administrative and legislative oversight, Football and men's and women's basketball already have such oversight committees, but the goal will be for the oversight model to apply to all sports to streamline the structure. Other topics addressed were the upcoming bid cycle (three-years for sites through 2031), and a broader discussion about site selection and how that process can best benefit Division III.
- b. **Pairings and site selection policies.** The committee discussed language in the Championships Committee Handbook and the pre-championships manuals regarding pairings and site selection policies related to the two-year bracketing pilot currently underway. Committee members agreed that language regarding how the top seeds are "protected" can be misinterpreted as having the right to host, whereas in fact the protection is meant to apply only to seeding and ensuring that the top seeds don't play each other in preliminary rounds. The committee asked staff to clarify the policies throughout the handbook and manuals to indicate that protection means that the top seeds (NPI Nos. 1-4 as 1 seeds; NPI Nos. 5-8 as 2 seeds.) in brackets greater than 32 will not meet before the quarterfinals and that the top seeds in brackets with 32 teams or fewer will not meet before

the semifinals. Sport committees will continue to have the top seeds host as much as possible, but the word “protect” is not meant specifically to guarantee that privilege.

8. **Championship locker room assignments.** The committee engaged in a discussion regarding instances in past championships when a host team that was seeded lower than a visiting team was required to use a different locker room (i.e., the higher-seeded team used the host team’s locker room instead). The committee agreed that the policy in all sports should be clarified to state that the host team is allowed to retain use of its locker room regardless of that team’s seed in the bracket. The committee believes this is a benefit of hosting that has no impact on competitive equity.
- a. **Joint women’s lacrosse championships.** The committee discussed a desire being raised within the women’s lacrosse community for the women’s lacrosse championships to be a joint experience similar to the men’s lacrosse championships in which the Divisions II and III championship games are held at the same site as the Division I semifinals and final. The 2026 and 2027 Division III women’s championships (semifinals and finals) already are scheduled to be conducted jointly with Division II. The Divisions II and III Women’s Lacrosse Committees will continue collaborating with the Division I committee and the national office staff to pursue optimal outcomes.
- b. **Coaches Connect program.** The committee continued working on the logistics to implement the newly approved Division III Coaches Connect program, which is intended to further engage the coaching community in Division III governance and policy matters. Staff noted that the program is on track to begin with the 2025-26 academic year. The committee had previously agreed to begin the program with three sports and then evaluate the program’s success before expanding. Staff recommended – and the committee approved – football, women’s ice hockey, and men’s and women’s tennis (together) as the initial three sports. The grouping provides one sport for each season. Additionally, two have NCAA playing rules committees (football and ice hockey), while tennis does not, all of which provides a diverse sampling for evaluation purposes. Staff will work with conference commissioners to populate the coaches connect groups and begin the meeting cadence this fall.
- c. **Championships date formula resource.** The committee reviewed a revised document staff provided based on feedback from a previous meeting that will help inform decisions regarding future championship date formula change requests. The document includes the entirety of each playing season – the traditional segment, the nontraditional segment, and the championships segment – and details the totality of the impact on campus as it relates to concurrent sport seasons. It is the result of a request from the Division III Management Council. The resource will be forwarded to the Division III Management Council for its review in July.
- d. **Budget-to-actuals.** The committee reviewed the championships budget-to-actuals through June 9 as information.

- e. **2024-25 livestreaming.** Staff provided a preliminary update on steaming metrics from the 2024-25 championships and noted that a more complete update that includes analytics from all spring sport championships will be provided during the committee's July videoconference.

9. Sport committee reports.

a. Field hockey.

- **Use of dimple ball at preliminary-round sites.** The committee approved the field hockey committee's request to use/provide a dimple ball to those sites that play on a water-based astro surface so long as the host indicates such a desire in its bid submission and provides the appropriate quantity of practice and warm-up balls. Further, starting with the 2026 championship, the Championships Committee supported the request to require preliminary-round hosts that have a water-based astro surface to use the Kookaburra dimple ball and provide the appropriate quantity of practice and warm-up balls. Finally, the committee also supported the request to use the Kookaburra dimple ball at the final site starting immediately (2025 championship) when the championship is held at a site with a water-based astro surface (which is currently confirmed through the 2027 championship). The NCAA will provide all game and practice balls for the final sites.

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

(1) **Video replay.** The women's ice hockey committee is considering submitting a recommendation for having video replay starting in the quarterfinal round. With the site selection criteria protecting the top four teams by allowing them to host and receive a bye, that would provide an extra week to install the replay equipment at each site. The concern is that video replay is not used during the regular season, and coaches and officials would be expected to learn and understand how to use it during the most critical games of their season.

(2) **Shootouts and NPI.** The committee is discussing the fact that shootouts are required by rule but do not factor into the NPI. This was a point of contention with the membership going into last year. The Division III Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Committees are tracking on it and will address the issue when they meet jointly.

(3) **Championship format – field size.** The committee is considering a bracket and sport sponsorship that would support a field size increase. While sponsorship and the current access ratio support a 13-team field, the committee believes a 14-team bracket would be preferable to accommodate the date formula. The committee is weighing whether to propose an increase for 2025-26.

- (4) **Championship format – predetermined finals site.** The men's and women's committees are discussing the predetermined versus non-predetermined site rotation for the finals (every other year) and weighing whether to propose moving permanently to a predetermined site for both finals for future bid cycles.

c. Women's lacrosse.

- **Championship dates for 2027.** The committee approved the sport committee's recommendation to modify the date formula for the 2027 Division III Women's Lacrosse Championship to accommodate the joint championship with Division II as follows:
 - Selections: Sunday, May 2 (no change).
 - First/Second Rounds: Saturday-Sunday, May 8-9 (no change).
 - Third Round/Quarterfinals: Saturday-Sunday, May 15-16 (no change).
 - Semifinals/Final in combination with Division II women: Thursday-Sunday, May 27-30.

The 2027 joint championship had originally been selected and approved for May 20-23. However, after the championship site announcement Division II changed its date formula from the fourth weekend in May to always align with Memorial Day weekend, regardless of whether there are four or five weekends in May. This means for 2027, the Division II championship will fall on May 27-30. To remain aligned with Division II and to accommodate the joint championship (which is being hosted by a Division II institution), the Championships Committee supported moving the Division III championship dates to May 27-30 in 2027. This change would apply only to 2027 and not to the championship date formula in any other year. The rest of the dates (selections and preliminary rounds) stay the same as currently approved to not disrupt any planning schools and conferences have already done with non-athletics events on campus (graduation, etc.).

d. Women's volleyball.

- **AQ deadline.** The committee revisited an issue it had tabled earlier regarding the volleyball committee's desire to change the legislated AQ deadline to 8 p.m. on Saturday before selections. The current deadline is 6 p.m. local time the day of selections (Sunday) for all championships. The volleyball committee wants to move the deadline up so that teams selected have more time to travel to their regional sites on Wednesday. The Championships Committee has received this request from several sport committees in recent years but has not been compelled to change the legislated AQ deadline because doing so could cause additional missed class time, reduce

flexibility for outdoor sports with potential weather challenges, cause challenges for conferences that have contractual arrangements, and disrupt the consistency of the legislation for all sports (i.e., the committee has been hesitant to have one-offs in this area).

After discussion, the committee was still reluctant to approve this recommendation for one sport and thus denied the request. However, committee members asked staff to survey conference commissioners regarding whether the current legislated deadline of 6 p.m. local time the day of selections (Sunday) could be modified (moved earlier) for all sports without causing undue logistical concerns.

e. Wrestling.

(1) Regional alignment. The Championships Committee approved the wrestling committee's proposed regional alignment for 2025-26. The changes balance the regions due to new programs being added and some existing programs being discontinued.

(2) 2026 regional site selection. The committee approved the wrestling committee's recommendation that Loras College host the Region VI Regional in 2026.

10. Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) update. Chad Eisele, the committee's liaison to PROP, summarized the reports from the panel's most recent meetings as information.

11. Other business.

- a. Championships business tracking document.** The committee reviewed a document staff provided that tracks current topics the committee is addressing, items on the committee's radar, and outcomes of action proposed to other committees (i.e., the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee or the Management and Presidents Councils). The committee can use this as a resource and staff will plan to continue to update and include in the materials for each meeting moving forward.
- b. Committee roster.** The committee acknowledged that this is the final in-person meeting for Duey Naatz, who is retiring September 1. While Mr. Naatz will participate in the committee's monthly teleconferences before then, the committee formally thanked him in person for his significant contributions during his tenure on the committee and for the positive impact overall during his longstanding service in Division III.

12. Future meeting/videoconference dates.

- a. July 15, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- b. August 19, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- c. September 8-9 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis).
- d. October 14, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- e. November 18, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).

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- f. December 9, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- g. 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

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Attendees:	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.	
Jason Doviak, Alfred State University (via videoconference).	
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 (via videoconference).	
Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.	
Ashley Wagner, Notre Dame of Maryland University.	
Absentees:	
Arturo Casas, Manchester University.	
Jason Verdugo, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Gary Brown, NCAA Contractor (via videoconference).	
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:	
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.	
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Nate Flannery, Margaret Gaines, Cara Hubert, Caleb Kolby, Victoria Lipscomb, Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan and Lynda Tealer.	