



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
MARCH 31, 2021, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

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 Kiki Jacobs welcomed committee members and reviewed the key discussion items.
- 2. Recent committee reports.** The committee approved the report from its March 16 videoconference as presented.
- 3. Spring sports sponsorship update.** The committee continued reviewing the number of institutions in each spring sport that have declared whether they intend to conduct competition in a timeframe that would allow them to compete in the NCAA championship, and whether they intend to meet the reduced minimum contest requirements (50 percent by sport) by the selection date. The committee during its March 16 videoconference committed to conducting championships in most all spring sports based on these declarations but noted it would wait to decide on women's rowing, which is slightly below the desired sponsorship threshold, until its April 20 meeting, which is five weeks before the championship and consistent with the timeline the committee used to decide on championships for winter sports.
- 4. Spring sport championship formats.** Given the robust sponsorship numbers in most every spring sport, the committee continued exploring how brackets/field sizes in spring sports could be expanded beyond the previously determined 75 percent capacity in a fiscally responsible manner that would provide additional opportunities for student-athletes and produce a more "natural" bracket/field size (e.g., 48 teams rather than 45 or 47). The committee also noted that the Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee has discussed this possibility and indicated that a reasonable expansion could be accommodated in the Division III championships budget this year. Accordingly, the Championships Committee agreed to expand the brackets/field sizes for spring sports up to 85 percent capacity or to a level between 75 percent and 85 percent that best accommodates a manageable bracket size as listed in the chart

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below. The committee believes these increases continue to maintain the integrity of the bracket and protect access through conference AQs and Pools B and C without impacting the formats (i.e., not adding sites or rounds) or changing the championship dates.

Spring Sport	Standard Bracket/ Field Size	New Bracket/ Field Size
Baseball	60	48
Softball	62	48
Men's Golf	43	37
Women's Golf	29	25
Men's Lacrosse	36	31
Women's Lacrosse	44	37
Women's Rowing	8	6
Men's Tennis	44	37
Women's Tennis	49	42
Men's Outdoor Track and Field	20	17 (14 relay teams)
Women's Outdoor Track and Field	22	19 (14 relay teams)
Men's Volleyball	16	12

5. AQ grace/waiting period discussion. The committee discussed how grace and waiting periods should apply for the 2020-21 year where applicable. Members reviewed their previous statements in this regard emanating from the committee's April 2020 meeting, which were:

- **2020 waiting period statement:** The 2020 spring semester may be counted toward a conference's two-year waiting period so long as the conference can demonstrate it would have had seven institutions that would have satisfied automatic-qualification requirements, including meeting sport-sponsorship minimums, and but for COVID-19 would have competed.
- **2020 grace period statement:** So long as a conference can demonstrate it would have met the criteria for a grace period year during the 2019-20 academic year, the 2019-20 academic year will count as a grace period year. An institution or conference may submit a waiver requesting an extension of the grace period to the Division III Championships Committee. (The Championships Committee would review waiver requests on a case-by-case basis and determine if mitigation presented warrants an approval.)

Committee members noted that these statements were issued at a time when it was thought (in fact assumed) that sports in the 2020-21 academic year would resume. Given the ongoing circumstances surrounding the pandemic, the committee in reviewing that matter at this time agreed that these parameters remain largely intact in order to provide conferences with appropriate flexibility. Accordingly, the committee took the following actions in light of the challenges that conferences are facing at this time:

- **Grace Period:** The committee voted to apply a one-year extension of grace to all conferences/sports that were in year 1 or year 2 of grace during the 2020-21 academic year. The committee also noted that a conference in grace would need to satisfy the legislated AQ requirements, not the current reduced AQ standards put in place for conferences with an existing AQ, in order to get out of grace during the 2020-21 academic year.
 - **Waiting Period:** The committee determined that if a conference in the waiting period has the requisite number of institutions to satisfy the existing legislation (seven), but, for reasons due to COVID, falls below that minimum but meets the AQ requirement for the current academic year (which is reduced in 2020-21), the conference would satisfy the waiting period requirements during the 2020-21 academic year. If they would have been in the second year of the waiting period, but did not meet the reduced minimums, the conference will have the opportunity to satisfy the second waiting year during the 21-22 year and would not have to restart the waiting period.
6. **Regional rankings discussion.** Given the reduced sponsorship during this unusual year, the committee discussed whether sport committees should be allowed to adjust regional ranking numbers outside of the prescribed 15-21 percent. In some cases when potential AQs are removed, a sport committee could have few to no teams left in the rankings. Accordingly, the committee agreed to continue encouraging sport committees to stay within the 15-21 percent parameter if possible but to allow the flexibility to adjust to a percentage that is applicable to the given sport or circumstance. In those cases, however, the committee agreed that the sport committee would need to submit whatever adjustment it has in mind to the Championships Committee for formal approval.
7. **Selection Criteria.** The committee continued reviewing potential selection criteria adjustments to apply for spring sport championships in light of the reduced contest minimums and the likelihood that many schedules will be conference-only and agreed to issue a one-time waiver that adds won/loss percentage versus teams above .750 and above .500 to the primary and secondary criteria, respective, for this spring only. The committee urged spring sport committees in using these new criteria to consider any potential disparity when comparing teams that have played a different number of games. For example, if Team A has played a significantly larger number of games than Team B, it will by rote have had more opportunities to play against teams above .750 and .500. Staff noted that sport committees generally apply this type of evaluation when using any criterion but agreed that spring sport committees should be encouraged accordingly when applying these new criteria, particularly given the potentially wider disparity in this unusual year of games played among teams being considered.
8. **Replacement policies.** The committee reviewed replacement policies for spring sport championships should teams and /or individuals be unable to compete for COVID-19 reasons and approved the following to accommodate the time needed to coordinate travel and

successfully follow NCAA championships medical protocols, including COVID-19 testing requirements before departure from campus and upon arrival at the competition site:

Policies to apply *before* the announcement of the team championship bracket.

- Should an automatic qualifier, as determined by each conference, be unable to meet the medical protocols and participate in its first game of the championship, then the conference may designate a replacement team, as determined by its AQ policy submitted by the deadline.
- The replacement AQ team will be appropriately seeded and placed into the bracket prior to announcement of the championship bracket.
- Any potential at-large team unable to meet the medical protocols and participate in its first game of the championship must notify the sport committee prior to the announcement of the bracket.

Policies to apply *after* the announcement of the team championship bracket.

- Consideration to replace a team (AQ or at-large) unable to participate due to COVID-19 and confirmation of the replacement team must take place within 24 hours after the selection announcement.
- An eligible conference may replace its AQ, if the team is unable to meet medical protocols to participate, with its pre-approved contingency replacement team.
- The replacement team must meet all medical protocols and will take the exact place in the bracket of original conference AQ team.
- If the replacement team, based on the approved contingency plan, is already in the field, the committee will replace the AQ with the at-large team ranked first among those not selected.
- For any at-large team unable to meet medical protocols related to COVID-19:
 - The at-large team ranked first among those not selected will be notified and must be able to meet all medical protocols.
 - The replacement team will take the exact place in the bracket of the original at-large team.
 - Bracketing principles pertaining to conference matchups will not apply if a replacement team is used.
 - No replacements will be made beyond 24 hours after the selection announcement.

Policies to apply after the announcement of *individuals* selected to the field.

- If an individual sport participant must withdraw from the championships (due to positive COVID-19 test result or other limiting circumstance), the sport committee shall follow its standard procedure for individual replacements (i.e., medical scratch).

- Replacement of an individual participant must occur within 24 hours after the selection announcement.

Once the tournament has begun, no teams will be used to replace a team that has a COVID-19 or any other issue and can no longer participate in the championship. Their opponent would advance to the next round via the NCAA's "No Contest" rule. This is consistent with normal championship policy.

- 9. Men's and women's tennis report.** The committee approved that the minimum number of tennis participants required per match to be eligible for the 2021 championships be reduced from six (per NCAA Bylaw 20.11.3.8) to four to match the ITA rule that allows for a contest to count with only four student-athletes.

- 10. SCIAC waiver request.** The committee discussed but did not support a request from the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference to waive the four-core institution requirement to retain the conference's AQ in men's and women's tennis and women's lacrosse due to health and safety restrictions being imposed locally that affect SCIAC member schools' ability to compete. The committee acknowledged that when the reduced minimum requirement of four core members was established there would likely be circumstances (i.e., local/state restrictions) that would preclude conferences from meeting the minimums this year. The committee was sympathetic to the SCIAC's situation but agreed that there needed to be an end date for such allowances and noted that conferences will be back in good AQ standing going into next year regardless of AQ status for 2020-21.

11. Future videoconference/meeting dates.

- a. April 13 (videoconference).
- b. April 20 (videoconference).
- c. May 18 (videoconference).
- d. June 21-22 (quarterly meeting; videoconference).
- e. September 13-14 (quarterly meeting; videoconference).
- f. February 1-2, 2022 (quarterly meeting; potentially in person, Indianapolis).

Committee Chair: Kiki Jacobs, Roger Williams University

Staff Liaisons: Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances

J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances

Julie Sargent, Academic and Membership Affairs

March 31, 2021, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Robin Baker, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.	
Jason Fein, Bates College.	
Bridgett Finn, Lebanon Valley College.	
Kiki Jacobs, Roger Williams University.	
Chuck Mitrano, Empire 8.	
Michelle Morgan, John Carroll University.	
John Neese, Hardin-Simmons University.	
Holly Sheilley, Transylvania University.	
Penny Siqueiros, Wesleyan College (Georgia).	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Gary Brown, NCAA Contractor.	
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:	
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.	
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.	
Julie Zike, Academic and Membership Affairs.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Laura Klee, Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Liz Suscha and Demetria Woodard.	