



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
MARCH 19, 2024, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

a. Administrative Regulations – NCAA Bylaw 31.3.4.2 – Selection Criteria.

- (1) Recommendation. That the NCAA Power Index (NPI) be adopted as the selection metric for selecting non-automatic qualifiers for the championship field for Division III team sports.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. The Championships Committee supports adopting the NPI as the Division III team selection metric effective for 2024-25 championships. Based on a lack of selection criteria application continuity, sport committees, with membership input, have been reviewing the Division III selection criteria since March 2022.

As the committee began to evaluate its selection criteria, the NPI was evaluated using six sports and two years of data (2021-22 and 2022-23). The committee found that when set to a default setting (75/25) the NPI produced a championship field very similar to what each sport committee had selected. The evaluation then expanded to include every team sport (except for the team portion of men's and women's tennis) with the same two years of data, and as the 2023-24 championships conclude those data were also added for evaluation purposes. In all trials the NPI produced a similar championships field.

The Championships Committee started educating sport committees and regional advisory committees beginning in the early spring of 2023 by offering webinars to sport committee chairs, entire sport committees and regional advisory committees. A recording of one of these webinars was made publicly available in addition to an FAQ document. At its most recent videoconference the Championships Committee reviewed sport-specific feedback from each Division III sport committee (team sports) that generally supported implementing the NPI as Division III's at-large team sport selection metric.

The Championships Committee is recommending implementation of the NPI beginning in the fall for the 2024-25 academic year. The committee realizes that there is still work to be done for each sport committee to finalize its specific dials and to distribute that

information widely to the membership but feels that there is more benefit to earlier implementation than delaying until 2025-26.

The committee will also need to finalize the policies surrounding the NPI specific to the intervals at which sport committees can recommend changes to its dials. The committee initially believes that a sport committee should be able to make adjustments after year one of implementation, but further adjustments would only be considered at set intervals (e.g., reviewed every budget cycle, every other budget cycle, or possibly a set number of years not tied to a budget cycle) and approved by the Championships Committee. The committee will also need to discuss if it will assign a range for the dials that all sport committees must be within and if like sports must have the same dials (e.g., men's and women's soccer or men's and women's basketball).

- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$25,000 to pay for the work that has been done to build out the NPI system for evaluation.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Adoption of the NPI will provide each team sport with consistent application of the selection metric for championships at-large berths.

b. Administrative Regulations – NCAA Bylaw 31.3.1.1 – Principles of Establishing Bracket Sizes.

- (1) Recommendation. That Bylaw 31.3.1.1 be amended to establish an access ratio of 1:6.0 in team sports.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. The Division III membership has affirmed its priority of championships access through multiple membership surveys conducted since March 2022. The Division III Championships Committee has considered various championships access models and is recommending that the approximate access ratio for team sports be amended to 1:6.0. This change in access ratio aligns championships access with the current six-core-member requirement for conferences to earn an automatic berth to team championships. It also lowers the threshold for future bracket expansion by only requiring six additional sponsoring institutions to gain an additional championship berth and allows for brackets in high-sponsored sports to reach the legislated maximum of 64 (i.e., baseball and softball).
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Approximately \$772,000.

Sport	Current Bracket Size	Bracket Size at 1:6.0	Budget Impact
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Baseball	60	64	\$195,000
Men's ice hockey	12	14	\$129,000
Women's ice hockey	11	12	\$36,000
Field hockey	26	28	\$48,000
Men's lacrosse	38	40	\$140,500
Women's lacrosse	46	47	\$72,500
Softball	62	64	\$75,000
Men's volleyball	16	19	\$76,000

- (5) Student-athlete impact. The recommendation increases the championship participation opportunities for Division III student-athletes.

2. Nonlegislative items.

a. Championships per diem increase.

- (1) Recommendation. That championships per diem be increased to \$135 in 2024-25 and to \$140 in 2025-26.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. The Division III membership affirmed per diem as its highest priority when surveyed relative to the FY25-FY26 championships budget increases. The committee supports increasing per diem to mitigate costs for institutions participating in NCAA postseason competition. After considering various funding models, the committee settled on a staggered approach to increase the current allocations per travel party member by \$10 for FY25 and by \$5 annually through FY28. Host per diems would increase by \$5 effective for FY27. The committee believes that a staggered approach provides an immediate benefit to its members while still offering flexibility in the total budget to support additional priorities.

The committee is recommending the following per diem increases for FY25 and FY26 while also proactively stating its intent to increase per diem in the next budget cycle (FY27 and FY28).

- (4) Estimated budget impact: \$845,000 in 2024-25; \$643,000 in 2025-26.

Year	Student-Athlete Per Diem	Host Per Diem
2024-25	\$135	\$55

2025-26	\$140	\$55
2026-27	\$145	\$60
2027-28	\$150	\$60

- (5) Student-athlete impact. Student-athletes participating in Division III championships this coming year would realize an immediate benefit.

b. Men's golf individual qualifiers.

- (1) Recommendation. That the Division III Men's Golf Championship be increased by a variable number of selected individual participants depending on the number of selected teams so that twosomes are eliminated to improve the scheduling efficiency.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. Division III men's golf has a large finals site field at 43 teams plus six individuals (221 total participants) competing on two golf courses simultaneously. Participants are currently grouped in threesomes and twosomes. With a field this size, the Division III Men's Golf Committee must schedule tee times with morning and afternoon waves to effectively fit 21 or 22 teams onto each 18-hole course, which makes a consistent pace of play critical to the success of the first wave finishing their rounds prior to the second wave teeing off with no delay. Having twosomes in the field negatively impacts the pace of play, since the twosomes will play quicker than the threesomes. Eliminating twosomes would keep the pace of play consistent and help the efficiency of tournament scheduling.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Up to \$14,500.

The estimated budget impact depends on sport sponsorship and the field size but would be executed as outlined below.

- Fields with the number of teams divisible by three: no budgetary impact.
 - Fields divisible by three, remainder one (current sponsorship): four additional individuals needed, which would equal per diem and travel for eight (one studentathlete plus one coach).
 - Fields divisible by three remainder two: two additional individuals needed, which would equal per diem and travel for four (one student-athlete plus one coach).
- (5) Student-athlete impact. An increase of either two or four individuals to balance the field would allow more student-athletes and institutions access to the championship

and more opportunity for them to compete against players outside of their geographical region. Also, if a balanced field helps the logistical efficiency of the tournament regarding pace of play, the quality of the championship will improve.

c. Women's golf field size increase.

- (1) Recommendation. That the women's golf field size be increased from a maximum of 31 teams to a maximum of 34 teams.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. The women's golf championship field size currently allows for up to 31 teams based on potential sport sponsorship. Expanding the field size to allow for up to 34 teams would align the women's golf championship with the current sport sponsorship potential allowed per the 1:7.0 access ratio. Bracket sizes are established based on the sport sponsorship achieved in the previous academic year. The women's golf championship would need to achieve the minimum sport sponsorship requirement (e.g., the number of institutions meeting the Bylaw 20 minimums) prior to expanding in the following academic year. The funding requested would allow the women's golf championship to be funded to its maximum potential.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$59,000.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The recommendation increases the championship participation opportunities for Division III student-athletes.

d. Wrestling field size increase.

- (1) Recommendation. That the wrestling championships field size be increased from 180 to 210, including the additional of a seventh regional site.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. Wrestling sport sponsorship has increased from 88 sponsoring institutions in 2012-13 to 122 in 2022-23 (according to the NCAA membership database) and is anticipated to increase to 129 programs by the 2025-26 academic year. Increasing the field size from 180 to 210 student-athletes and expanding from six to seven regional qualifying sites would allow for more manageable regional sizes and would continue to be contested over a two-day period.

The current six-region format established in 2012 evenly distributes the 180 qualifiers throughout the 10 weight classes, resulting in three championship

qualifiers per weight class. The proposed increase to seven regionals will consist of 16-19 teams per region, evenly distributing the top three place winners per weight class into the 210 allocations. Due to the automatic qualifier regional format, this even distribution is critical to advance wrestlers. It is important to note that the current qualifier format is based on an even number of qualifying wrestlers from each region; therefore, no selection criteria, regional rankings in the regular season or at-large procedure is necessary.

The Division III Wrestling Committee also believes that expanding to a seventh regional site could increase the number of qualified bids it receives as current hosts consistently express the difficulty experiences when trying to accommodate the number of teams competing at each regional site.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$104,000.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The recommendation increases the championship participation opportunities for Division III student-athletes and the number of potential regional hosts required to execute regional qualifying competition.

e. Men's and women's tennis championships schedule format.

- (1) Recommendation. That the practice day between the team finals and the start of individual competition be removed. Additionally, that the individual portion of the men's and women's tennis championships be conducted over four days.
- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.
- (3) Rationale. The Championships Committee supports the tennis committee's proposal to amend its championship format that would reduce the number of days on site by one day. The tennis committee's proposal would shift the practice day by one day to occur on the same day as the championship matches for the team portion of the championships. With the newly approved day of rest, maintaining the practice day between the team championships and individual championships constricts the number of competition days for individual competitors. The tennis committees would like to follow the individual schedule used in the 2023 joint championships:
 - Day one – singles first and second round and doubles first round;
 - Day two – singles and doubles quarterfinals; • Day three – singles and doubles semifinals;
 - Day four – singles and doubles finals.

With the current practice day after the team championships, individuals must double up on each day of competition. The requested change alleviates three straight days of eight or more matches by spreading the competition over four days.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. \$28,000 (\$14,000 per gender).
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The requested change is best for the health and safety of the student-athlete. The change will provide a better opportunity for rest on competition days as some athletes competing in the individual championships will also have competed in the team championships.

f. Additional championships budget initiatives.

- (1) Recommendation. That the following championship budget initiatives be supported to enhance Division III championships:

Request Type	Sport	Change	Budget Impact
Joint Championship	M Basketball	2026 joint championship <i>[one time spend from reserves]</i>	\$250,000 <i>[FY26]</i>
Joint Championship	M Basketball	Preliminary round format change for joint championship.	\$48,000 <i>[FY26]</i>
Championship Final Site Pilot	W Ice Hockey	Predetermined final site pilot (2025 and 2027)	\$63,000
Officiating	All	Increase officiating fees by %5 over two years	\$38,500
Officiating	W Volleyball	Increase officiating fees.	\$8,800
Officiating	Track & Field (I/O)	Increase officiating fees.	\$9,900
Officiating	Wrestling	Increase officiating fees.	\$7,770
Officiating	M/W Tennis	Increase officiating fees.	\$7,040
Officiating	Softball	National Coordinator of Officials	\$13,000

- (2) Effective date. September 1, 2024.

- (3) Rationale. The Championships Committee supports the sport-specific budget requests from various sport committees as outlined above. The requests mostly relate to increasing officiating fees, but also includes the funding commitment to support the 2026 Division III Men’s Basketball Championship that will be held in conjunction with the Divisions I and II championships in Indianapolis in 2026.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. The budget impact is noted in the chart above.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The enhancements will improve championships administration which directly impacts the student-athlete experience.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. **Opening remarks and review of schedule and agenda.** Division III Championships Committee Chair Karen Tessmer welcomed the group and previewed the agenda.
- 2. **Recent Championships Committee reports.** The committee approved reports from its February 5-6 in-person meeting and February 12 electronic correspondence as presented.
- 3. **Sport committee liaison assignments.** The committee reviewed the list of sport committee liaison assignments.
- 4. **Emory women’s tennis in-region waiver reconsideration.** The committee tabled Emory University’s women’s tennis in-region waiver request to allow staff to review Emory’s schedule in more detail to determine if a waiver will ultimately be necessary.
- 5. **Championships budget initiatives.** The committee reviewed a budget overview of the championship enhancements discussed during its February meeting. The committee supported the following budget enhancements for the FY25 and FY26 budget cycle to be forwarded to the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee:
 - a. **Per diem.** The championships committee affirmed per diem as the highest priority for the FY25-FY26 budget cycle as it directly supports its member institutions participating in NCAA post-season competition. The committee is recommending a staggered approach to per diem increases as outlined below and as detailed in Action Item 2-a.

Year	Student-Athlete Per Diem	Host Per Diem
2024-25	\$135	\$55
2025-26	\$140	\$55
2026-27	\$145	\$60
2027-28	\$150	\$60

- b. Championships access.** The committee reviewed the estimated budget impact to modify the approximate access ratio from 1:6.5 to 1:6.0 for team sports effective for the 2024-25 championships. (See Action Item 1-b.) After affirming that the estimated budget impact is within budget, the committee approved the bracket increases accordingly.

The committee affirmed that for additional championship berths per the access ratio (now 1:6.0) the sport sponsorship must achieve the next whole number before the bracket is expanded (i.e., truncating). The committee also determined that the men's and women's tennis championships brackets will be based upon a 1:7.0 access ratio (previously 1:7.5) as permitted within the legislation.

- c. Sport specific budget requests.** The committee also reviewed sport specific budget requests from various sports that it had approved in concept during its February meeting and confirmed that the expenses fit within its budget capacity. As such the committee approved the requests as outlined in Action Items 2-b through 2-f. Those requests include a variable increase of selected individuals ranging from zero to four depending on the number of teams selected to the championship; an increase in the women's golf championship up to a maximum of 34 teams (sport sponsorship dependent); an increase in wrestling qualifiers from 180 to 210 in addition to a seventh regional qualifying site; an adjustment to the singles and doubles portion of the men's and women's tennis championships; and sport-specific requests related to officiating. The committee tabled the field hockey committee's request to add DVSport video review at its finals site to allow for all Division III championships to provide feedback on finals site video review capabilities and asked staff to explore the possibility of a divisional contract for all Division III sports.

The committee also wanted to highlight that while swimming and diving and track and field (indoor and outdoor) are not included in the current field size expansion proposals, it would welcome proposals from both sport committees should they feel field size expansion is needed and the concepts are fully vetted.

- 6. Web stream enhancements proposal.** Katie Mucci outlined a web stream enhancement proposal and asked the committee to endorse a survey to be sent to the membership on the topic. The goal of the web stream enhancement initiative is to expand the quality and distribution of NCAA Division III championships web streams to include earlier rounds (e.g., quarterfinals; round of 16, etc.) at campus sites to amplify the division's brand. The committee supported the survey that intends is to identify potential administrative burdens and cost implications associated with web streaming NCAA championship contests. The results of the survey would dictate future conversations and potential dollars allocated to support the expanded scope of web streaming.

7. **Short form video proposal.** NCAA staff also provided an update on an initiative from NCAA leadership that would provide institutions with resources to enhance fan and alumni engagement by using AI to automatically cut and produce video highlights for its studentathletes. The committee supported continuing to explore this concept and asked several questions about how NIL may be impacted and additionally that unintended budget costs associated with this type of enhancement are critical to vet as many institutions are in budget crisis.

8. **Selection criteria database.** The committee reviewed sport committee feedback on the NPI metric that generally supports its implementation as the division's selection metric for team sports. The committee discussed some of the concerns from sport committees related to the metric itself and also the timing of implementation. While the committee understands the concerns it believes there is support for NPI and it is recommending implementation effective for the 2024-25 academic year (See Action Item 1-a.) NCAA staff will begin working with sport committees to establish their dials and setting up educational opportunities for the membership.

The committee also acknowledged letters from conference coaching groups and appreciates the feedback from the membership.

The committee still plans to discuss policies that would impact NPI and will address at a future meeting. Those policies will include the frequency that the dials can be changed, consideration of a range in which each of the dials must be set, and if like sports need to have the same dial settings.

9. Sport committee reports.

a. Field hockey.

- (1) **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 18 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2024 NCAA Division III Field Hockey Championship: Atlantic East Conference, Centennial Conference; Commonwealth Coast Conference; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; New England Small College Athletic Conference; New England Women's and Men's Athletics Conference; New Jersey Athletic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; and United East Conference.

- (2) **DVSPORT at finals site.** The committee tabled the request to add DVSPORT video review at the field hockey finals site. Staff is asked to do a review of all Division III

championships that may benefit from adding DVSPORT video review at its finals site and to explore the possibility of a larger divisional agreement for DVSPORT to be executed at all final sites.

- b. **Men's and women's tennis.** The committee approved additional funding to cover the cost of a videoboard/scoreboard at the 2024 Division III Men's and Women's Tennis Championships.

10. Future meeting/videoconference dates.

- a. April 23, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- b. May 14, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- c. June 17-18 (meeting via videoconference).
- d. July 16, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference; tentative).
- e. August 20, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- f. August 29 (tentative; championship bids review)
- g. September 8-10 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis; will include meeting with sport committee chairs)
- h. February 3-4, 2025 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis)

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

NCAA Division III Championships Committee March 19, 2024, 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.	
Holly Sheilley, Transylvania University.	
Sara Shoffner, Huntingdon College.	
Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University.	
Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.	

Absentees:
Adaobi Nebuwa, Jason Verdugo.
Guests in Attendance:
None.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Caleb Kolby, Victoria Lipscomb, Katie Mucci, Julie Zike.