

**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
MARCH 31, 2026, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative Items.

- **Sport and playing rules committee reappointments and appointments.**

a. Recommendation. That Management Council approve the following sport committee and playing rules committee appointments and reappointments.

(1) Sport committee reappointments.

- (a) **Division III Men's Basketball Committee – Rahsaan Carlton** (three-year term through Aug. 31, 2029), director of athletics, Penn State Harrisburg, United East Conference.
- (b) **NCAA Division III Men's Ice Hockey Committee – Tyler Walsh** (three-year term through Aug. 31, 2029), head men's hockey coach, Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.
- (c) **NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Committee – Dani Gunderson** (three-year term through Aug. 31, 2029), assistant commissioner, Ohio Athletic Conference.
- (d) **NCAA Division III Men's Volleyball Committee – Justin Beachy** (three-year term through Aug. 31, 2029), head men's volleyball coach, Messiah University, Middle Atlantic Conferences.
- (e) **NCAA Division III Women's Volleyball Committee – Leo Sayles** (three-year term through August 31, 2029), head volleyball coach/associate athletics director for sport ministry, Grove City College, Presidents' Athletic Conference.

(2) Sport committee appointments.

- (a) **NCAA Division III Men's Basketball Committee (Region I) – Amanda DeMartino**, Harold Alfond director of athletics, Colby College, New England Small College Athletic Conference; and (Region

- VIII) – **Michael McGrath**, head men’s basketball coach, University of Chicago, University Athletic Association.
- (b) **NCAA Division III Women’s Basketball Committee** (Region II) – **Kelly Thompson**, head coach – women's basketball/assistant athletics director for compliance/senior woman administrator, Roger Williams University, Conference of New England.
- (c) **NCAA Women’s Bowling Committee** – **Heather Sterner**, head women’s bowling coach, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Liberty League.
- (d) **NCAA Division III Football Committee** (Region V) – **Michael Zapolski**, (June vacancy) director of athletics, Augustana College (Illinois), College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin; and **Mark Shook**, vice president for athletics, Hanover College, Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference.
- (e) **NCAA Division III Men’s Golf Committee** (Region V) – **Dan Rodgers**, head coach, Carnegie Mellon University, University Athletic Association; and (Region VII) **Ming Lao**, head coach, Chapman University, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.
- (f) **NCAA Division III Women’s Golf Committee** (Southeast Region) – **Bryan Hearn**, director of golf, Randolph-Macon College, Old Dominion Athletic Conference; and (West Region) **Shelby DeVore**, head women’s golf coach, Trinity University (Texas), Southern Athletic Association.
- (g) **NCAA Men’s Gymnastics Committee** – **Matthew Davis**, head coach, Springfield College, New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference.
- (h) **NCAA Division III Men’s Ice Hockey Committee** (East Region) – **Brian Dickinson**, head ice hockey coach, State University of New York at Brockport, Empire 8 (United Collegiate Hockey Conference).
- (i) **NCAA Division III Men's Lacrosse Committee** (Region III) – **Monica Polizzi**, director of athletics and campus recreation, Salisbury University, Coast-to-Coast Athletic Conference.
- (j) **NCAA Division III Women’s Lacrosse Committee** (Region VII) – **Mallory Hiefield**, assistant athletics director/senior woman administrator, Pacific University (Oregon), Northwest Conference.

- (k) **NCAA Division III Men's Soccer Committee** (Region IV, immediate vacancy) – **Shawn Tucker**, director of athletics, Rowan University, New Jersey Athletic Conference; (Region VIII) – **Wytse Molenaar**, head coach, Albion College, Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; and (Region IX) – **Jay Mooney**, head soccer coach, University of Wisconsin-Superior, Upper Midwest Athletic Conference.
- (l) **NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Committee** (Region V) – **Sandy Lagana Bly**, associate director of athletics, McDaniel College, Centennial Conference; and (Region IX) – **Justin Newell**, vice president and director of athletics, Knox College, Midwest Conference.
- (m) **NCAA Division III Softball Committee** (Region I) – **Olivia Berry**, director of athletics, Emmanuel College (Massachusetts), Great Northeast Athletic Conference; and (Region VII) – **Becky Hilgert**, head softball coach/assistant director of athletics – compliance, Calvin University, Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association.
- (n) **NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Committee** – **Kyle Russell**, head swim coach/director of aquatics, Juniata College, Landmark Conference; and **Paul Bennett**, aquatics director/head coach, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference.
- (o) **NCAA Division III Men's Tennis Committee** (Region I, immediate vacancy) – **Craig Davidson**, head coach men's/women's tennis, University of Saint Joseph (Connecticut), Great Northeast Athletic Conference.
- (p) **NCAA Division III Women's Tennis Committee** (Region VII) – **Camden Long**, head men's and women's tennis coach, Loras College, American Rivers Conference.
- (q) **NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committee** (Region I) – **Phil Jennings**, head track and field coach, Wellesley College, New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; (Region VII) – **Luke Syverson**, head track and field coach, Berry College, Southern Athletic Association; and (Region X) – **Amber Williams**, men's cross country and track and field coach, Pomona-Pitzer Colleges, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

- (r) **NCAA Division III Women’s Volleyball Committee** (Region III) – **Derryk Williams**, head coach, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Liberty League.
 - (s) **NCAA Division III Men’s Wrestling Committee** (Region III) – **Corey Luce**, associate head coach, New York University, University Athletic Association.
- (3) **Playing rules committee appointments.**
- (a) **NCAA Divisions II and III Women’s Basketball Rules Committee** – **Kamela Gissendanner**, head women’s basketball coach, Saint Vincent College, Presidents’ Athletic Conference.
 - (b) **NCAA Divisions II and III Football Rules Committee** – **Jay Jones**, commissioner, Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference.
 - (c) **NCAA Divisions II and III Men’s Lacrosse Rules Committee** – **Andrew Delaney**, assistant athletics director for internal operations, University of Mary Washington, Coast-To-Coast Athletic Conference.
 - (d) **NCAA Divisions II and III Women’s Lacrosse Rules Committee** – **Sloane Baumgartner**, head women’s lacrosse coach, Elmhurst University, College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin.
 - (e) **NCAA Divisions II and III Men’s and Women’s Soccer Rules Committee** – **Frank Marino**, head coach, California Lutheran University, Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.
 - (f) **NCAA Divisions II and III Softball Rules Committee** – **Kaylee Fox**, head softball coach, Adrian College, Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association.
 - (g) **NCAA Divisions II and III Men’s Wrestling Rules Committee** – **Jon Laudenslager**, director of wrestling, Wilkes University, Landmark Conference.
- b. Effective date. As specified.
 - c. Rationale. The appointments have been recommended by the Division III Nominating Committee and approved by the Championships Committee, as the appointees meet specified eligibility requirements.
 - d. Estimated budget impact. None.
 - e. Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Opening remarks and review of schedule and agenda.** Division III Championships Committee Chair Shannon Howley welcomed the group and previewed key agenda items.
2. **Recent Championships Committee reports.** The committee approved the report from its Feb. 16-17 in-person meeting as presented.
3. **Championships tracking document.** The committee reviewed an updated version of this document that tracks progress made during the February meeting and previews key focus items for 2026.
4. **Sport committee liaison assignments.** The committee reviewed assignments for 2026 and filled vacancies as necessary. The committee also discussed the best ways to engage with sport committees as a liaison.
5. **Division III Nominating Committee report.** The committee reviewed and supported the recommendations as specified in Action Item 2 above.
 - **Reappointment policies – conference restriction.** The Championships Committee also discussed a request from the Nominating Committee for feedback regarding the policy that currently precludes conferences from being immediately eligible for reappointment on the same committee. The Nominating Committee is considering ideas to help improve the quality of the nominee pools for immediate and annual vacancies, but before the committee suggests additional legislative changes, the committee wants both the Management Council and Championship Committee to weigh in on potentially removing the restriction. Championships Committee members supported removing the restriction while acknowledging that the Nominating Committee would continue pursuing representation from different conferences as a first option.
6. **Governance and member services update.**
 - a. **Coast-to-Coast Conference men’s soccer and men’s basketball waiver request.** The committee discussed but did not support the conference’s request to extend its grace period in men’s basketball and men’s soccer for two years due to member attrition. The conference posed extending its grace period with five members (one below the required minimum of six) until two provisional Division III members that have affiliated with the conference reach active status. The Championships Committee understood the rationale but did not support granting a waiver that would in effect double the grace period and set an undesired precedent.
 - b. **Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference women’s ice hockey waiver request.** The Championships Committee considered the conference’s request to count

2025-26 as the requisite waiting year to be eligible for an automatic qualification in 2026-27 despite having only five members sponsor the sport. The conference was unable to meet the AQ requirements due to one of its members not completing enough contests to satisfy sport-sponsorship minimums due to injuries. The committee noted the unique circumstances and understood that the conference's intent is for all six members to meet sport-sponsorship requirements next year. Accordingly, the committee approved the waiver thereby making the conference eligible for an AQ in 2026-27 conditioned upon full satisfaction of the AQ requirements. If the conference does not have at least six members sponsor the sport in 2026-27 [including four core members] then the conference would not receive the AQ.

- c. **United East Conference men's lacrosse waiver request.** The committee also considered the United East Conference's request for legislative relief for dropping below four core members in men's lacrosse due to two programs being eliminated and one program pausing its season because of low roster numbers. Championships Committee members recognized the complex circumstances but prioritized compliance with the core member requirement. As such, the committee did not support the waiver request.

(Note: Ashley Wagner recused herself from this discussion as she represents a member of the conference in question.)

7. Championships topics.

- a. **Championships ticketing review update.** The committee was updated regarding the on-going data-informed review of championships ticket prices being conducted and reviewed a potential standardized pricing model compared to the minimum pricing approach that had been proposed for 2026-27. The committee appreciated the consistency of the standardized pricing model and agreed to forward that as its preference for the Division III Management Council to consider during its April meeting. The committee will review the feedback in total and finalize changes to ticket prices for 2026-27 during its May or June meeting.
- b. **NCAA Power Index (NPI) update.** Staff updated the committee on an established internal working group charged with determining the appropriate tools and resources sport committees need to evaluate NPI dials in addition to educational resources for the membership. The committee was reminded that NPI dial adjustments must be completed and submitted for consideration by the June Championships Committee meeting for fall and winter sports and by the August Championships Committee meeting for spring sports.

8. Division III Football Committee report.

- a. **Automatic qualification.** The Championships Committee approved the following 28 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2026 NCAA 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 Small College Athletic Conference, New England Women's & 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, Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

- b. Coach-to-player communication.** The Championships Committee approved the recommendation to allow teams to use coach-to-player communication devices, which already are permitted in the regular season, for all rounds of the NCAA Division III Football Championship. For preliminary-round games, should the host institution use coach-to-player communication, or the visiting institution brings a coach-to-player communication system, the host institution will be required to have personnel assigned to implement the cutoff switch based on Rule 1-4-11-b. Hosts will garner personnel through the same process as the game clock, play clock and other game management personnel. The play clock operator can manage both the play clock and coach-to-player communication cutoff switch.
- 9. Additional items.** Due to time restrictions, the committee was unable to complete its agenda. The committee agreed to address noncontroversial items via email and move those needing further discussion to its May videoconference.
- 10. Future meeting/videoconference dates.**
 - a. May 12, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).
 - b. June 15-16 (meeting via videoconference).
 - c. August 11, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).
 - d. September 20-22 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis).
 - e. November 17, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).

Committee Chair: Shannon Howley, Montclair State University
Staff Liaisons: Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances
 Liz Turner Suscha, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division III Championships Committee March 31, 2026, Videoconference
Attendees:
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.
Bethany Dannelly, Ohio Athletic Conference.
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.
Jason Doviak, Alfred State University.
Chad Eisele, Hampden-Sydney College.
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University.
Lauren Krupnikoff, Simmons University.
Rob Larsen, Luther College (Management Council chair).
Russ Rogers, Stevens Institute of Technology.
Sara Shoffner, Huntingdon College.
Ashley Wagner, Notre Dame of Maryland University.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Gary Brown, NCAA Contractor.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Kevin Alcox, Margaret Gaines, Cara Hubert, Louise McCleary, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan, Jennifer Roe, Sabrina Scheinberg, Liz Suscha and J.P. Williams.