

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

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative items.**

- None.

**2. Nonlegislative items.**

- **Funding for the 2025 and 2026 Division III Women's Golf Championships.**

a. Recommendation. Approve funding the items listed below that are necessary as a result of the Division III Women's Golf Championships field size increasing to 34 teams and six individuals, pending the ability to secure hosts that can provide the two courses necessary to accommodate the expansion.

- Equipment for the second course. While the current budget accommodates travel and per diem for the expanded field, additional funding is necessary to purchase the equipment required to outfit the second course. (The NCAA provides the hole sign posts, blue stakes, caps for hole signs, and bracket posters for each championship course.)
- Head Rules Official stipend increase. Adding a second course to accommodate the expanded field size increases the responsibility and oversight for the head rules official. Accordingly, the stipend provided to the head rules official should equal the stipend provided to the head rules official for men's golf if the championship formats are similar.

b. Effective date. 2025 and 2026 NCAA Division III Women's Golf Championships.

*(Note: The Division III Women's and Men's Golf Committees are working on a proposal to move to a regional model beginning with the 2027 championships. If that were to be approved, the field size at the finals site would be such that only one course would be required to accommodate the field. As such, this recommendation pertains only for the next two years.)*

c. Rationale. Division III previously approved the field size increase for women's golf based on the anticipated growth in sponsorship that would merit the field being composed of 34 teams and six individuals. However, the expansion does require two courses on which to conduct the championships. The hosts identified for the 2025 and 2026 championships have indicated they can provide the two courses necessary, though negotiations are ongoing regarding budgetary parameters. Accordingly, the

recommendation to fund the items that would be necessary if the expansion is implemented is pending the ability to secure the required courses at rates that are within the championships budget.

- d. Estimated budget impact. \$4,000 for the equipment needed to outfit the second course; \$1,250 to make up the difference between the current stipend for the women's official (\$2,450) and the men's official (\$3,700).
- e. Student-athlete impact. The increase in field size allows more student-athletes the opportunity to experience a national championship. The additional funding ensures that the second course will provide the desired championship atmosphere.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

1. **Welcome and announcements.** Division III Championships Committee Chair Karen Tessmer welcomed the group and previewed the agenda.
2. **Recent Championships Committee reports.** The committee approved the report from its October 15 videoconference as presented.
3. **Sport committee reports.**
  - a. **Women's golf.**

(1) **Funding the planned field size increase.** The Championships Committee supported, in concept, expanding the championships field size to 34 teams and six individuals pending the ability for future hosts to provide the two courses necessary to accommodate the expanded field at rates that are within the championships budget. The committee also supported approving the funding necessary to purchase the equipment required to outfit the second course, and increasing the stipend provided to the head rules official for the Division III Women's Golf Championships from \$2,450 to \$3,700 to align with the stipend provided to the head rules official for the Division III Men's Golf Championships. (See Action Item 2 above.)

(2) **2025 championship course/host change.** The committee approved the recommendation from the Division III Women's Golf Committee for Christopher Newport University to host the 2025 NCAA Division III Women's Golf Championships at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, Virginia. The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority were originally selected to host the 2025 championships at Bay Oaks Country Club. However, the women's golf committee was informed that Bay Oaks Country Club could no longer accommodate the championships. The committee asked Mary Hardin-Baylor and the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority to submit alternative bids that would keep the championships in the Houston area, but neither did so and ultimately retracted their bid. Accordingly,

the committee solicited options from the membership and selected Christopher Newport University, which will be able to provide the two courses necessary to accommodate the potential expanded field size (34 teams and six individuals) for the 2025 championships.

**b. Swimming and diving.**

- **2025 diving regionals.** The Championships Committee approved the recommendation from the Division III Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving Committee for the following to host the 2025 Division III Men’s and Women’s Diving Regionals:

Region	Host	Facility
Northeast/South	Ithaca College	Kelsey Partridge Bird Natatorium; Ithaca, NY
Central	Grinnell College	Russell K. Osgood Pool; Grinnell, IA
Midwest/South/West	Wabash College	Class of 1950 Natatorium; Crawfordsville, IN
Northeast/North	Springfield College	Linkletter Natatorium; Springfield, MA

**c. Wrestling.**

- **2025 regional sites.** The Championships Committee approved the recommendation from the Division III Wrestling Committee for Averett University to host the 2025 Region IV regional and the American Rivers Conference to host the 2025 Region VI regional in Cedar Rapids, IA. With this action, sites and hosts for five of the seven regionals have now been confirmed.
- 4. Management Council updates.** Jason Verdugo updated the committee on actions taken during the Management Council’s October meeting related to championships, including the approval of a 2028 Division III Women’s Basketball Joint Championship to be conducted as part of the Women’s Final Four in Indianapolis. The council amended the Division III federated playing rules process. It also added a standard orientation for Division III committee members involved in the playing rules process and created a council subcommittee to provide additional oversight and guidance of federated playing rules that have a budgetary impact and/or impacts a fundamental Division III principle. The council also discussed the concept of deregulating the NCAA’s policies on sports betting to allow betting on professional sports.
  - 5. Soccer playing and practice season proposal.** The committee discussed and ultimately chose not to support a proposal from the Division III Men’s and Women’s Soccer Committees that would move the championship one week later. The Championships Committee based its opposition primarily on the increased burden the extended soccer season would place on

athletics personnel and facilities during an already stressful period in which the playing season for fall and winter sports overlap. But the committee also noted the lack of consensus support from the membership on the soccer proposal, particularly from those positions that would be adversely affected (e.g., athletic trainers, athletics communications personnel), the low response rate from athletics directors, and the negative weather impact on schools from northern climates. The committee also was unclear on what issue the proposal seeks to resolve and did not believe there was compelling rationale to support the change.

The discussion surrounding the soccer proposal did, however, prompt the committee to agree to work with governance committees and external constituents to conduct a comprehensive review of the division's playing and practice seasons, specifically the periods during which the sport seasons overlap, to inform whether modifications to the dates of NCAA championships should be considered. The committee noted that the Management Council during its review of the soccer proposal also suggested a comprehensive review of the division's playing and practice season legislation and the dates of the current NCAA championships is needed.

- 6. Coaches Connect program discussion.** Championships Committee members discussed and endorsed the establishment of a Coaches Connect program to enhance the education and engagement of Division III coaches in governance and championships. The committee will seek feedback from the Division III Management Council and the Division III Commissioners' Association before finalizing the concept with intended implementation in the 2025-26 academic year. The Coaches' Connect program would begin with sports that already engage coaches in a similar manner through their coaches' association (e.g., men's and women's basketball) and expand gradually over time to include all sports.

As important as coaches are in intercollegiate athletics, they as a group are sometimes cited as being the least informed constituent when it comes to governance. The Division III Championships Committee is recommending the Coaches Connect program in which representative groups of coaches in each sport (i.e., a representative from each conference) convene on a regular cadence via videoconference to be apprised of current issues and proposals or policy recommendations being considered within the Division III governance structure that would affect their sport. A Coaches Connect program would enhance coaches' engagement and fortify their role as advocates for the value of Division III athletics, and it would more actively engage coaches associations in the process.

- 7. Fall NPI feedback.** Committee members shared initial feedback regarding the implementation of the NPI in fall sports, noting mostly positive comments from their colleagues within the membership. The committee also discussed the effects of the "dials" in select sports and acknowledged that the initial two-year window for those dials to remain in place will provide broader information for review once the period nears its renewal.
- 8. Championship streaming update.** The committee received an update on live streaming enhancements for Division III championships, including a new initiative with Hudl to ensure that fall team championships live streams are on ncaa.com. In addition, all rounds of the 2024

Division III Football Championship, and the quarterfinals, semifinals and final of the 2024 Division III Women’s Volleyball Championship will be live streamed on ESPN+. Division III also is signing a four-year agreement with Tupelo, the current livestream partner for Division III championships, to stream for ESPN+ the football semifinals, the women’s volleyball quarterfinals, semifinals and final, and the men’s and women’s basketball semifinals and finals [and quarterfinals in years with joint basketball championships – 2026 (men) and 2028 (women)] at a cost of approximately \$240,000 in FY25 and \$260,000 annually from FY26 to FY28. The division had previously approved and budgeted \$500,000 annually, so the new contract with Tupelo is significantly lower.

**9. Future meeting schedule.**

- December 10, 11 a.m. –12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- February 3-4, 2025 (meeting via videoconference).
- March 18, 2025, 11 a.m. –12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- April 15, 2025, 11 a.m. –12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- May 13, 2025, 11 a.m. –12:30 p.m. (videoconference).

*Committee Chair:* Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University  
*Staff Liaisons:* Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances  
Jeff Myers, Academic and Membership Affairs  
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances

<b>NCAA Division III Championships Committee November 19, 2024, Videoconference</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.	
Jason Doviak, Alfred State College.	
Chad Eisle, Hampden-Sydney College.	
Maureen Harty, College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin.	
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University	
Duey Naatz, University of Wisconsin-Stout.	
Adaobi Nebuwa, Colby College.	
Sara Shoffner, Huntington College.	
Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University.	
Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.	
Jason Verdugo, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	

Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>
None.
<b>NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:</b>
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
Jeff Myers, Academic and Membership Affairs.
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>
Elise Boulton, Margaret Gaines-Hornberger, Louise McCleary, Bill Regan and Demetria Young.