

**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER 9-10, 2024, MEETING**

**ACTION ITEMS.**

- None.

**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 reports from its August 20 and 29 videoconferences as presented.
3. **Updated sport committee liaisons chart.** The committee reviewed the assignments for the coming year and filled vacancies as necessary.
4. **Sport committee chairs meeting debrief.** Committee members discussed the key takeaways from their meeting with sport committee chairs the previous two days. The Championships Committee conducts this session biannually to interact in person with sport committee chairs and better understand the issues and needs related to their sport. Key themes during this year's meeting included the challenges in identifying/securing championship site representatives and managing their duties; the evolving duties of regional advisory committees; understanding the processes and timing for requesting bracket expansion; and understanding the implementation of the NPI and the process and timeline in which the dials may be modified. Championships Committee members discussed these and other issues among themselves and suggested solutions and improvements going forward.
5. **Championships topics.**
  - a. **Tennis playing rules.** The committee revisited the Division III Men's and Women's Tennis Committees' decision to adopt the seven-point scoring format (clinch-clinch) for the 2025 championships on a one-year pilot basis. The Championships Committee heard from staff about the process for modifying rules in the sports for which playing rules are administered by a non-NCAA organization, which includes tennis. While the Championships Committee does not have jurisdiction over playing rules, members expressed concern with how this decision was reached and strongly urged that the NCAA oversee the playing rules process for all sports, or if that is not practical, that mechanisms be enhanced to ensure adequate membership feedback/communication to inform other governing bodies when playing rules changes are being contemplated in those sports.

- b. **Governance scorecard.** Staff provided the results of the 2023-24 governance scorecard, which is a tool that allows Division III committee members to evaluate their experience and the NCAA staff liaisons' support of the Division III governance bodies, including sport committees. Overall, the average rating was above a four on a five point scale.
- c. **Budget priorities.** The committee received as information the final version of a budget principles and guidelines document the committee had offered feedback on earlier and was formally approved by the Division III Strategic Planning and Finance Committee and the Division III Management and Presidents Councils this summer.
- d. **Hosting recommendations and next steps.** The committee reviewed a draft document staff prepared that includes recommendations all three divisional championships committees are being asked to consider. The concepts address potential hotel location requirements, high room rate policies, permissible lodging options, and hotel release policies. While the committee recognizes the desire to put in place more objective standards for championship hotels, it ultimately determined that each location is unique and presents its own challenges and should not necessarily be the deciding factor in determining preliminary round hosts. The committee still expects that staff thoroughly vets each bid with the goal of providing the best student-athlete experience.
- e. **Championship trophies.** The committee reviewed a document listing the team trophies awarded at each Division III championship to consider the progress made on ensuring that like sports distribute trophies similarly.
- f. **ESPN+ broadcast and livestreaming updates.** Staff provided an update on the ESPN+ broadcast and livestreaming discussions that have occurred since the NCAA's new media rights agreement with ESPN took effect. The committee discussed options to involve ESPN+ with preliminary-round streaming in future years.
- g. **Championships ticketing.** The committee discussed championships ticket pricing and its desire to do a review across all Division III championships. The committee would like to see consistency across all Division III championships as much as possible in addition to a successive build from regular season contests and conference championships to NCAA tournament contests. Staff will begin to gather the Division III championships information to compare against data being collected from conference offices on both what its members charge for regular season contests and what conferences charge for post-season play.
- h. **Championships officiating fees.** The committee discussed championships officiating fees and will begin an evaluation of the fee structure starting with regular season contests, conference post-season competition and NCAA championships contests. The committee believes that each succeeding round should build off the latter and this review will enable the committee to gauge the current landscape and assess where adjustments may be required.

6. **NCAA Convention overview.** Staff provided an update of the legislative agenda for the 2025 Division III Business Session.

- **Championships Committee referral.** The Division III Management Council during its review of membership-sponsored proposals for the 2025 Convention referred the following proposal for the Division III Championships Committee to review.

NCAA Bylaws 20.02.3.3 and 20.9.2 Division Membership – Definitions and Applications – Member Conference – Composition of Conference. The proposal seeks to align NCAA Division III legislative requirements for a multisport conference with the membership size requirements for a single-sport conference and align legislative requirements for membership size for a multisport conference with the NCAA Division III legislation related to eligibility for automatic qualifiers and access to NCAA Division III championships.

The Championships Committee recommended that Management Council support the proposal based on a desire for consistency in multi-sport conference size and automatic qualification requirements. The committee raised the question of potential future impacts on larger multi-sport conferences that may desire to split into smaller conferences desiring more access to an automatic berth, but ultimately supported the concept.

7. **Sport committee reports.**

8. **Baseball.**

9. **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved that the following 40 conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2025 NCAA Division III Baseball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Collegiate Conference of the South; Conference of New England; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; Midwest Conference; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; New Jersey Athletic Conference; North Atlantic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Northwest Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Athletic Association; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East; USA South Athletic Conference; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

10. **Additional day at regionals.** The committee also was notified as information that the Baseball Committee is discussing adding a day during regional competition and plans to survey the Division III baseball membership to gauge interest before submitting a recommendation.

11. **Women's basketball.**

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved that the following 43 conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2025 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; Coast-to-Coast Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Collegiate Conference of the South; United East Conference; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Midwest Conference; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; Conference of New England; New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; New Jersey Athletic Conference; North Atlantic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Northwest Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Athletic Association; Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; University Athletic Association; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

12. **Men's and women's cross country and track and field.** The committee reviewed the report from the sport committee's annual meeting as information, noting that the committee is considering a field size increase in outdoor track and is likely to submit a formal proposal during the next budget cycle.

13. **Men's lacrosse.**

14. **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved that the following 27 conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2025 NCAA Division III Men's Lacrosse Championship: Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; Coastal Lacrosse Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Conference of New England; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Men's Lacrosse Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; New England Small College Athletic Conference;

New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; North Atlantic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; Southern Athletic Association; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East Conference; and USA South Athletic Conference.

15. **Bench personnel.** The sport committee asked that the Championships Committee revisit the bench size for men's lacrosse and consider approving that the bench limit be increased to include any rostered player. In September 2022, the Championships Committee agreed that bench sizes would be revisited in fiscal year 2027; however, the committee determined that an evaluation may be necessary earlier and it will begin to collect information from each sport committee with potential changes beginning in the 2025-26 academic year. (Note: Staff has been notified internally that leaving the bench size to an institution's discretion may be a health and safety liability and that a specified limit is preferred.)

16. **Women's lacrosse.**

- **2025 championship site.** The committee approved the sport committee's recommendation for the 2025 Division III Women's Lacrosse Championship finals that will be conducted as part of the joint championship with Division II. (The specific site announcement is pending a review and anticipated approval from the Division II Championships Committee in early October.)

17. **Men's soccer.**

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved that the following 42 conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2024 NCAA Division III Men's Soccer Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; Coast-to-Coast Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Collegiate Conference of the South; Conference of New England; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Midwest Conference; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; New Jersey Athletic Conference; North Atlantic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Northwest Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Athletic Association; Southern California

Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East; University Athletic Association; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; and USA South Athletic Conference.

#### 18. Women's soccer.

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved that the following 43 conferences receive automatic qualification for the 2024 NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; Coast-to-Coast Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Collegiate Conference of the South; Colonial States Athletic Conference; United East Conference; Empire 8; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Middle Atlantic Conference Commonwealth; Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Midwest Conference; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; Conference of New England; New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference; New Jersey Athletic Conference; North Atlantic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference; Northwest Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Athletic Association; Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; University Athletic Association; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

#### 19. Men's and women's soccer.

- **Championships date formula.** The Championships Committee reviewed the joint recommendation from the soccer committees to change the date formula for the Division III Men's and Women's Soccer Championships by moving the date one week later to align with the other divisions, provide more rest and recovery during the regular season, and improve the overall experience of the soccer student-athletes. The new format would be as follows:
  - First Round: Weekend before Thanksgiving (Saturday).
  - Second Round: Weekend before Thanksgiving (Sunday).
  - Third Round: Weekend after Thanksgiving weekend (Saturday).
  - Quarterfinals: Weekend after Thanksgiving weekend (Sunday).
  - Semifinals: Two weekends after Thanksgiving weekend (Saturday).
  - Finals: Two weekends after Thanksgiving weekend (Sunday).

The new formula would be effective September 1, 2026, to provide enough time for institutions and conferences to schedule accordingly based on the changes to the calendar. Additionally, this change would align with the start of the next bid cycle. Prospective sites have been contacted and have informed the soccer committees that the dates are available in 2026 and 2027.

After discussion, the Championships Committee agreed to seek input from the Division III Management Council before acting on the recommendation.

## 20. Men's volleyball.

- (1) **Regional alignment.** The committee approved the recommendation to adjust the men's volleyball regions as specified in the attachment effective for the 2024-25 academic year. This evens out the Eastern region sizes, which is necessary due to the growth of the sport and the increase in multi-sport conference sponsorship, both of which have skewed the current regional breakdown.
- (2) **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved that the following 14 conferences be granted automatic qualification to the 2025 NCAA Division III Men's Volleyball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Continental Volleyball Conference; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Middle Atlantic Conference; Midwest Collegiate Volleyball League; New England Volleyball Conference; Northern Athletic Collegiate Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; United East Conference; and United Volleyball Conference.
- (3) **Championship date formula.** The committee considered the recommendation to conduct the finals in a Thursday-Saturday model versus the current Friday-Sunday approach. The sport committee contends that a Saturday evening championship match would provide a greater atmosphere for everyone involved and allows participants, committee members, NCAA staff and other constituents to return home immediately following the conclusion of the championship, which is difficult in the current Sunday format due to the lack of flights. While the Championships Committee is not opposed to the concept, members noted the sport committee will need to survey the men's volleyball membership to determine support before granting final approval.

## 21. Future meeting schedule.

- October 15, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- November 19, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- December 17, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (videoconference).
- February 3-4, 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

NCAA Division III Championships Committee September 9-10, 2024, Meeting	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.	
Chad Eisle, Hampden-Sydney College.	
Maureen Harty, College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin.	
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University	
Jason Doviak, Alfred State College.	
Duey Naatz, University of Wisconsin-Stout.	
Sara Shoffner, Huntington College.	
Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University.	
Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.	
Jason Verdugo, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	
Adaobi Nebuwa, Colby College.	
<b>Guests in Attendance:</b>	
Gary Brown, contractor; Arturo Casas, Manchester University.	
<b>NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:</b>	
Jeff Myers, Academic and Membership Affairs.	
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.	
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.	
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</b>	
Kevin Alcox, Elise Boulton, Margaret Gaines-Hornberger, Anthony Holman, Corey Jackson, Louise McCleary, Bill Regan, Kelly Whitaker and Jonathan Youngblood.	