REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
SEPT. 21-22, 2026, MEETING

***ACTION ITEMS*.**

1. **Legislative items.**

   - **None.**

2. **Nonlegislative items.**

   - **Include tennis in Division III live streaming**.

      a. Recommendation. That the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee approve that Division III men's and women's team championship preliminary round hosts live stream and receive the current NCAA stipend to live stream preliminary round matches.

      b. Effective date. 2026-27 championships.

      c. Rationale. While the Championships Committee acknowledges that funding for the live steaming is set for the current budget cycle based on its June recommendation to fund the tennis preliminary rounds starting in FY28, the committee nonetheless believes tennis should be aligned with the other team championships. Doing so not only increases the visibility of the championships but also enhances the experience for the student-athletes and spectators.

      d. Estimated budget impact. $48,000. The Championships Committee supports funding up to the level of other sports, except football, which is $1,000 per day of competition (up to $3,000 total since all preliminary rounds in tennis are currently contested over two to three days depending on the side of the regional pod). While the 16 tennis regionals (eight per gender) are three-day events, the Championships Committee recommends the stipend not exceed the funding limit established for other sport preliminary rounds.

         Note: This expense would be a one-year impact as funding for men's and women's tennis to be included in the live streaming initiative was included in the Division III budget planning process approved by the Councils during their summer meeting for the 2027-28 championships. The funding requested would be for the 2026-27 championships.

      e. Student-athlete impact. The recommendation would provide more exposure for the student-athletes who participate in the championships.

***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 and the schedule of guest presenters.

2. **Recent Championships Committee reports.** The committee approved the reports from its Aug. 11 videoconference and Aug. 17 electronic vote as presented.

3. **Championships tracking document**. The committee reviewed an updated version of this document that tracks progress made during the last year and previews key focus items for 2026.

4. **Debrief of meeting with sport committee chairs**. Committee members discussed their session with sport committee chairs prior to this meeting and noted the value of doing this in alternate years to increase communication among committees and share concerns and opportunities. Among takeaways for the Championships Committee during this session to consider in future agendas are: (1) Evaluate consistency in bracketing (i.e., baseball, softball and women's volleyball reseed teams that advance to the finals site while other sports do not); (2) Consider notifying hosts prior to the selection announcement (i.e., once the bracket is finalized but prior to the actual announcement) that they are hosting (with the requisite expectation of confidentiality) in order to provide hosts more time to prepare; (3) Review consistency across sports regarding days of rest; (4) Review squad size/travel party size across sports; (5) Review the provision of NCAA patches (i.e., determining the proper number and assuring they arrive on site in time); (6) Assess how/whether to take advantage of technological advances in championship operations and administration; (7) Positive feedback about the Coaches Connect program for those sports that currently use program; and (8) Review the recusal policy during selection meetings.

5. **Governance and member services**.

    a. **Division III Analysis Working Group update**. The committee discussed and provided feedback on the following championships-specific topics referred from the Division III Analysis Working Group:

        - Division III Championships Production (i.e., monetize championship content through a centralized free streaming platform run with a media partner). The committee discussed the pros and cons of paywalls and paid advertising for Division III championship livestreams. It also was reminded that due to existing broadcast agreements, there is time to plan the best path forward.

        - Division III Championships Selection Criteria. The Division III Analysis Working Group acknowledged that with the adoption/implementation of the NCAA Power Index (NPI)

to select championship fields, it is imperative that the Division III membership fully understand how the metric works and how sport committees apply it during selections. Among the recommended options to consider are to aggregate the NPI resources to enhance education and understanding; establish a biennial NPI dial review; and require published rationale regarding the selection of hosts, particularly in cases when a high-NPI team is passed over for hosting. The committee discussed the work it has already done, including the creation of new NPI educational resources and the current process for reviewing NPI dials, these options at length and agreed to continue considering them during future meetings.

b. Tennis waiver request. The committee considered but ultimately did not support a request from Johns Hopkins University in men's and women's tennis to waive for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 academic years the newly adopted legislative requirement for a core member of a conference to participate in that conference's automatic qualification process to be eligible for the NCAA championship. Johns Hopkins, a core member of the Centennial Conference, participated as an independent in men's and women's tennis in 2025-26 prior to the new legislation being adopted at the 2026 NCAA Convention and already has scheduled to do so for the next two academic years, which is why the school is seeking the waiver. The After considering the institution's request, the Championships Committee was not persuaded by the institution's reasoning that a wavier was merited.

6. Championships topics.

a. Alcohol sales at championships. The committee revisited the discussion initiated during its June meeting to review the division's alcohol policies, noting that current policies prohibit the sale of alcohol at championships except for during joint championships with other divisions when all are at the same site.,. The committee in June agreed it would be worth surveying the membership regarding their alcohol practices and policies for regular-season and conference events. The Management Council, during its discussion of the matter in July supported that idea. Accordingly, the committee supported including questions about their on-campus and conference alcohol sales practices (e.g., current alcohol sales practices, types of alcohol sold, if limited to certain sports, etc.) as part of the upcoming membership survey. Staff will keep the committee apprised as the survey progresses.

b. Championships policy versus sport committee flexibility. The committee continued discussing the concept of designating items within championships operations that rise to the level of applying fundamentally to all sports as opposed to other items that could be left to a sport committee's discretion to regulate in the best interests of that sport (e.g., presentation of awards, postgame procedures, NCAA patches, banquets, bench size, etc.). This topic was also discussed during the session with sport committee chairs and many of the items cited in the debrief above (see Item 4) were included in this potential differentiation. The committee asked staff to compile a list of what sport committees do

operationally for the committee to review and gain more clarity on items that should apply consistently across sports and others that can be sport-specific.

7. NCAA Power Index (NPI).

a. NPI dial changes summary. Committee members reviewed an updated version of recommended NPI dial changes for 2027-28 that they previewed during their August videoconference, noting that some sport committees have opted to wait until after the 2026-27 championships to determine whether to make any changes. After review and discussion, the committee approved the modifications presented to be in place for the 2027-28 championships as reflected in the NPI Division III Weights, FAQ, and Guide.

b. NPI educational resources. Staff presented the recently finalized NPI materials to the committee and reviewed plans for sharing the materials more broadly with the membership.

8. Sport committee reports.

a. Men's and women's cross country and track and field.

(1) Cross country selection criteria – average time gap. The Championships Committee approved the recommendation to add the average time gap from the scoring student-athletes (five) to the selection criteria. Doing so will provide more clarity when comparing teams in isolation. Often when selecting the final at-large teams to the championships field there are limited data (i.e., head-to-head competition, common opponents, etc.), making it hard to compare teams. The average time gap will help determine if a team has one strong athlete (scores very low) who brings the team score down versus a stronger team that has many athletes in a smaller spread.

(2) Cross country regional realignment for 2027. The committee approved the regional alignment changes in the chart below effective for the 2027 cross country championships. This better aligns institutions with their natural sport region and should reduce travel while maintaining a balanced number of institutions in each region.

New Region	Institution	Current Region
Region II (Mideast)	Purchase College, SUNY	Region III (Niagara)
	Manhattanville University	
Region III (Niagara)	Clarkson University	Region II (Mideast)
	St. Lawrence University	
	Plattsburgh State University	
	SUNY Canton	
	SUNY Potsdam	
Region IV (Mid-Atlantic)	Allegheny College	Region VI (Great Lakes)
	Cedar Crest College	Region V (Metro) (women)
	Carlow University	Provisional, Active 2027-28
	DeSales University	Region V (Metro)

	Moravian College	
	Muhlenberg College	
	Penn State University, Altoona	Region III (Niagara)
Region V (Metro)	New York University	Region III (Niagara)
	Yeshiva University	
	Sarah Lawrence College	
	Pratt Institute	
	Lehman College	
	University of Mount Saint Vincent	
	Hunter College	
	John Jay College of Criminal Justice	
	Penn State University, Brandywine	Provisional, Active 2027-28
Region VII (South)	Regent	Provisional, Active 2028-29
	Johnson & Wales University Charlotte	Provisional, Active 2028-29
Region X (West)	Azusa Pacific University	Reclassifying, Active 2029-30

(3) Sarah Lawrence University cross country regional alignment for 2026. The committee approved Sarah Lawrence College moving from Region III (Niagara) to Region V (Metro) for the 2026 championships.

b. Men's lacrosse.

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 26 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2027 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; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic 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 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; and USA South Athletic Conference.

c. Women's rowing.

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following four conferences for automatic qualification to the 2027 NCAA Division III Women's Rowing Championships: Liberty League; Mid-Atlantic Rowing Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; and New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference.

d. Men's and women's soccer.

- **Nullification for failing to properly serve a game suspension.** The Championships Committee approved the men's and women's soccer committee's recommendation to institute nullification in the event a coach or student-athlete fails to serve a game suspension earned through card accumulation. Nullification would be applied at the time of selection. While the playing rules provide upgraded game suspension penalties for failing to properly serve game suspensions from card accumulation, there is currently no impact at the time of selections for teams that may fail to serve card accumulation suspensions during the regular season. The Championships Committee agreed with the soccer committee's rationale that it is appropriate to apply some form of penalty at the time of selections, and that the current nullification process is an adequate penalty.

e. Men's and women's tennis.

(1) Live streaming proposal. The Championships Committee supported the request to include tennis in the current Division III streaming pilot and allow hosts to receive funding accordingly. (See Action Item.)

(2) Electronic line calling. Championships Committee noted an informational item in the tennis committee's report about potentially using electronic line scoring for the 2027 championships. The Championships Committee asked that the sport committee provide more information regarding how this would be implemented (e.g., whether it would be used only at the finals site or also at preliminary-round sites) for the committee to review during its November videoconference.

f. Men's volleyball.

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 16 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2027 NCAA Division III Men's Volleyball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Conference of New England; Continental Volleyball Conference; Empire 8 Athletic Conference; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Middle Atlantic Conference; Midwest Collegiate Volleyball League; NEWMAC Volleyball Conference; Northern Athletic Collegiate Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference; Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; and United East Conference.

g. Men's wrestling.

- **2027 regional hosts.** The committee approved Lycoming College hosting the 2027 Region II tournament and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire hosting the 2027 Region VII tournament.

9. Future meeting/videoconference dates.

a. November 17, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).
b. February 15-16, 2027 (extended videoconference).
c. March 30, 2027, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).
d. May 11, 2027, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).
e. June 14-15, 2027 (extended videoconference).
f. August 10, 2027, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).
g. September 20-21 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis).
h. November 16, 2027, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (videoconference).

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

NCAA Division III Championships Committee Sept. 21-22, 2026, Meeting
Attendees:
Celine Cunningham, Dickinson College.
Bethany Dannelly, Ohio Athletic Conference.
Tim Demant, Whitworth University.
Jason Doviak, Alfred State University (via videoconference).
Chad Eisele, Hampden-Sydney College.
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University.
Lauren Krupnikoff, Simmons University.
Rob Larsen, Luther College (Management Council chair).
Erienne Roberts, University of Chicago.
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 (via videoconference).
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:

Kevin Alcox, Ray Gaddis, Margaret Gaines, Will Hopkins, Victoria Lipscomb, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan and Liz Suscha.

NCAA DIVISION III NPI RECOMMENDATIONS

The following NPI dial changes were approved to be effective for 2027-28 championships.

NPI WEIGHTS						
Sport	Win%/SOS	Home/Away Win/Loss	QWB	QWB Multiplier	Overtime (Ties)	Retained Wins
FALL SPORTS						
Field Hockey*	20/80	1.1/0.9	52.5	.500	100/0	6.5
Football*	40/60	1.1/0.9	54.0	.250	100/0	5.0
Men's Soccer	~~15/85~~ 20/80	1.0/1.0	~~54.0~~ 51.5	~~.750~~ .600	~~(.500)~~ .450	10.0
Women's Soccer	20/80	1.0/1.0	~~54.0~~ 52.5	.500	(.500)	~~8.0~~ 10
Women's Volleyball	20/80	1.0/1.0	~~55.5~~ 52.5	~~.600~~ .550	100/0	~~10.0~~ 12.5
WINTER SPORTS						
Men's Basketball*	25/75	1.2/0.8 (NC) 1.1/0.9 (CF)	53.0	.667	100/0	12.5
Women's Basketball*	20/80	1.0/1.0	54.0	.667	100/0	15
Men's Ice Hockey	25/75	1.1/0.9	53.00	.500	67/33 (RS) 100/0 (PS)	9
Women's Ice Hockey	~~25/75~~ 20/80	1.1/0.9	~~53.0~~ 52.0	.500	67/33 (RS) 100/0 (PS)	9
SPRING SPORTS – Coming in August						
Baseball*	25/75	1.0/1.0	53.5	.700	100/0	12
Men's Lacrosse	25/75	1.0/1.0	52	.500	100/0	~~7~~ 8.5
Women's Lacrosse*	25/75	1.0/1.0	57	.500	100/0	8.0
Softball	25/75	1.0/1.0	~~54~~ 52	~~.500~~ .550	100/0	~~12~~ 15
Men's Volleyball*	20/80	1.1/0.9	54	.500	100/0	13
Men's Tennis	25/75	1.0/1.0	53	.500	100/0	8
Women's Tennis	20/80	1.0/1.0	54	.500	100/0	8

*Indicates sports that are not recommending any dials changes at this time.