



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2023, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items.

- **Championships per diem increase.**

- a. Recommendation. Approve a one-time spend of \$800,000 to implement the championships per diem increase planned for the 2024-25 championships a year early (i.e., the 2023-24 championships).
- b. Effective date. Immediate.
- c. Rationale. The Division III Administrative Committee asked the Championships Committee to consider this one-time spend after its review of the current budget and the funds above the mandated reserve indicated that the championships per diem increase planned for the 2024-25 championships could be implemented a year early. The Championships Committee based its recommendation on several factors, including membership surveys indicating a desire to increase per diem, it doesn't impact future budget enhancements, and it supports the Division III governance structure's focus on maximizing the division's budget and reducing the amount above the mandated reserve. Past decisions have proven that a fiscally responsible way to reduce the mandated reserve is to have one-time spends versus ongoing annual expenses.
- d. Estimated budget impact: \$800,000 (one-time expenditure). (The recommendation to increase the per diem in 2023-24 to \$125 and host per diem to \$55 would be considered a one-time spend as this amount is already approved and accounted for in future budgets beginning with the FY25 budget.)
- e. Student-athlete impact. Student-athletes participating in Division III championships this coming year would realize an immediate benefit.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Opening remarks and review of schedule and agenda.** Division III Championships Committee chair Chuck Mitrano welcomed the group, noting this is the first in-person meeting for the expanded roster, and previewed the agenda and schedule of guest presenters.

2. **Recent Championships Committee reports.** The committee approved the report from its August 15 videoconference as presented.
3. **Sport committee liaison assignments.** Committee members reviewed their sport committee liaison assignments for the coming year and filled vacancies as needed.
4. **Division III Nominating Committee report.** The Championships Committee approved the following sport committee appointments as recommended by the Nominating Committee:
 - a. **NCAA Division III Baseball Committee** – Region III (immediate appointment replacing Paul Mound): **Jimmy Habecker**, sports information director/assistant athletics director, Keuka College, Empire 8; and Region V (immediate appointment replacing David Gage): **Dave Beccaria**, head baseball coach/assistant athletics director, Haverford College, Centennial Conference.
 - b. **NCAA Division III Men's Soccer Committee** – Region VIII (immediate appointment replacing Brian Miller): **Michael Zapolski**, director of athletics, Augustana College (Illinois), College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin; and Region IX (immediate appointment replacing Travis Wall): **Brian Sisson**, director of athletics, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (one-year term due to conference rotation).
 - c. **NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Committee** – Region III: **Jacqueline Nicholson**, executive director, Rochester Institute of Technology, Liberty League; Region VII (immediate appointment replacing Cameia Alexander): **Jon Morrow**, head cross country/track and field coach, Marymount University (Virginia), Atlantic East Conference; and Region IX: **Denise Udelhofen**, director of athletics, Loras College, American Rivers Conference.
5. **Playing rules update.** The committee received an update on recent meetings of the Playing Rules Oversight Panel as information.
6. **Budget items.**
 - a. **Division III Administrative Committee.** The committee reviewed and supported the Administrative Committee's request to implement the championships per diem increase planned for the 2024-25 championships a year early (i.e., the 2023-24 championships). (See Nonlegislative Action Item.)
 - b. **Budget priorities discussion.** The committee continued discussing budget priorities in preparation for finalizing recommendations for the 2025 and 2026 fiscal years during its February 2024 meeting. In addition to reviewing results from the membership survey administered in May, the committee began deliberating possible models and related budget impacts for increasing championship access, and the potential budget impacts to increase

travel parties and per diem. The committee also discussed the legislative rationale and guiding principles for the current championship brackets.

The committee worked to develop a strategic framework regarding how to further prioritize enhancements to championships. While ultimately the task is for the Championships Committee to recommend potential enhancements based on increased revenue associated with the new broadcasting agreement. Accordingly, the committee discussed the merits/principles of each enhancement already identified and philosophically how it will impact Division III championships (in other words, not so much *how* the dollars will be spent but *why*). The committee believes these philosophical discussions are not only critical to the current budget discussion but will also lay the foundation for future budget enhancements.

The committee also discussed which potential enhancements it should continue to consider. The committee plans to focus future discussions on increasing per diem, increasing access to championships and adding flights to separate higher ranked teams in early rounds of the championship. The committee discussed increases to travel parties but determined that increasing per diem could provide institutions with the flexibility to determine travelers on an institutional basis.

The committee reaffirmed the need to re-survey the membership now that it has narrowed its focus. The survey is tentatively planned to be distributed in October, with results available for the committee's December videoconference. Staff will present a draft of the survey for the committee to consider prior to distribution to athletics directors and commissioners.

- c. **Sport committee feedback.** The committee received an overview of the general sport committee feedback on the proposed budget enhancements.

7. Championships topics.

- a. **Governance scorecard.** The committee reviewed the annual feedback from sport committee members regarding their committee liaison and committee experience.
- b. **Selection criteria database.** The committee reviewed the timeline and planned next steps for potentially implementing a database to aid with the selection of championship brackets. Staff noted that in addition to feedback being obtained from sport committees and regional advisory committee members, which has been positive so far, two sports per season were tested to compare the metrics and the results have approximated the fields selected by the sport committees. Next steps include communicating with various membership stakeholders to ensure the database is properly vetted and then testing the remaining team sports to determine whether any modifications are necessary. The Championships Committee will formally consider whether to implement the database for the 2024-25

academic year at its February 2024 meeting when it considers all budget items for the next cycle.

- c. **Membership feedback process.** The committee reviewed, offered edits, and approved a process and membership feedback instrument for sport committees to use when they are considering proposals to modify the championship date formula in ways that either change the selection/AQ submission date or extend the length of the tournament (or both). The Championships Committee during its June meeting noted the need for more sufficient membership input on the front end of the process to support such modifications.
- d. **Championships host feedback and future hosting considerations.** The Championships Committee continued its discussion regarding ways to ensure that all sites during all rounds of a championship provide Division III student-athletes with an experience that meets expectations. Staff noted that concerns are tracked annually, and institutions are notified when they fail to meet any expectation. The Championships Committee also noted and supported a process recently developed by the Division III Women's Basketball Committee to ensure all conditions required for hosting are met by hosts of preliminary-round contests. In cases when conditions are not met, the sport committee will contact the host institution's director of athletics and tournament director to make them aware of concerns. To be eligible to host the following year, the institution in question would need to submit an action plan that addresses the specified concerns by a specified date. Hosting privileges will be reviewed annually and institutions that have continued feedback concerns, or institutions that do not submit an action plan, may no longer be able to host during that championship.

The Championships Committee not only encouraged staff to continue monitoring/tracking/notification efforts but also agreed that it should be consulted in cases when there is a repeat violator or an instance in which an institution falls significantly short of expectations.

8. Academic and membership affairs topics.

- a. **Waiver guidelines.** The committee reviewed and approved guidelines for a waiver from the in-region requirements in place for championship selection purposes (NCAA Division III Bylaw 31.3.2.1). The committee has observed that some institutions that seek relief have not exhausted opportunities to meet the legislation. The committee believes that applicant institutions should make a reasonable effort to meet the in-region requirements as defined by the legislation and that documentation of those efforts should be provided with any waiver request. The committee discussed the draft guidelines and offered feedback before approving them as amended. These and future guidance will be incorporated into the Championships Committee Policies and Operating Procedures and communicated to the membership via various methods (e.g., Championships Newsletter).

- b. **United East Conference AQ waiver request.** The committee approved the request from the United East Conference to be granted automatic qualification privileges in field hockey and men's volleyball (2023-24 would be considered as the first year of the two-year grace period for retaining automatic qualification in field hockey, and men's volleyball would be granted the AQ immediately for the 2024 championship). The committee based its approval on the fact that the United East Conference absorbed the former Colonial States Athletic Conference in its entirety and thus does not need to restart the two-year waiting period for the AQ, since the CSAC previously had AQ privileges in both sports. (Note: The reason that field hockey will be in Year One Grace is due to a member of the former CSAC subsequently discontinuing the sport and causing the United East to fall below the six-core member requirement. The conference, however, noted that it will add two sponsoring members in 2024 to regain compliance.)

9. **Sport committee reports.**

a. **Men's basketball.**

- **Joint men's basketball championship.** The committee supported, in concept, the men's basketball committee's recommendation to conduct the 2026 Division III Men's Basketball Championship game at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis as part of the Division I Men's Final Four. The Division II championship game also would be played as part of the joint championships. Previous joint championships have been successful, and Indianapolis has proven to be an outstanding host for these combined events. Because of the budget impact (approximately \$250,000), the Championships Committee will formally consider this recommendation during its February 2024 meeting when it reviews all items for the next budget cycle.

b. **Women's basketball.**

- **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 42 conferences to receive automatic qualification into the 2024 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship: Alleghany 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; Commonwealth Coast Conference; Empire 8 Conference; Great Northeast Athletic Conference; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Little East Conference; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; 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 Conference; Northwest Conference; Ohio Athletic Conference; Old Dominion Athletic Conference;

Presidents' Athletic Conference; Skyline Conference; Southern Athletic Association; Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East Conference; University Athletic Association; Upper Midwest Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

c. Men's and women's basketball.

(1) DVSport at finals sites. The Championships Committee noted the recommendation from the men's and women's basketball committees to source DVSport to provide video review equipment/staffing at the finals site at each championship. The Championships Committee noted that because of the proposal's budget impact (\$8,000 for each championship), it would need to be reviewed formally in February when the committee finalizes its recommendations for the next budget cycle.

(2) Instant replay at preliminary-round sites. The Championship Committee considered but tabled the recommendation from the men's and women's basketball committees that championship site hosts be required to provide video review as a condition of hosting preliminary-round games effective with the 2024 championships. Current policy is that video review is not allowed in the preliminary rounds because it has not been a requirement for hosting and the basketball committees want to ensure that the experience is the same for all the sites. The committees now believe this should change because the technology has become more available and affordable, and because more conferences are using or allowing it in the regular season and/or conference championships. Additionally, the semifinals and final games of both championships use it. The committees want to require it as a condition of hosting to be consistent throughout the entire championship. The minimum level to be provided is a monitor with a feed that has rewind capability.

The basketball committees believe it is a feasible request for hosts, but the Championships Committee believes more feedback should be obtained from the membership to understand how it affects schools and conferences and how it may impact the bid pool to host the championships. The Championships Committee also believes this merits consideration in other sports. The committee will reconsider this at its February 2024 meeting for potential implementation no earlier than the 2025 championships.

(3) Championship team trophies. The Championships Committee approved the recommendation from the basketball committees to provide the following team trophies at both championships to ensure that both the men's and the women's championships are providing the same awards:

- Sectional champion trophies (4), presented at the conclusion of sectional final games;
- National runner-up trophy (1), presented at the conclusion of the championship game; and
- National champion trophy (1), presented at the conclusion of the championship games.

(Note: The committee also urged the basketball committees to discuss potentially changing the term “sectional” to “regional” to align with the progression of rounds in other championships.)

d. Men’s golf.

- **Field size increase.** The Championships Committee discussed the men’s golf committee’s recommendation to approve a variable increase in the number of selected individual participants, dependent on the number of selected teams, to eliminate twosomes in the field and to improve scheduling efficiency and pace of play. The golf committee contends that currently, the championship participants (43 teams plus six individuals) compete on two golf courses simultaneously and golfers are grouped in threesomes and twosomes. With a field this size, the 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.

The Championships Committee discussed the issue but did not take a position, noting that because of the proposal’s budget impact it would need to be reviewed formally in February when the committee finalizes its recommendations for the next budget cycle.

e. Women’s golf.

- (1) **Automatic qualification.** The committee approved the following 24 conferences to receive automatic qualification into the 2024 NCAA Division III Women’s Golf Championships: American Rivers Conference; American Southwest Conference; Centennial Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference; Landmark Conference; Liberty League; Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association; Middle Atlantic Conference; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; North Coast Athletic Conference; Northeast Women’s Golf 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; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

(2) Championship format. The Championships Committee discussed the women's golf committee's recommendation that after 36 holes the field be cut to 15 teams and six individuals. The Championships Committee understands the golf committee's rationale for making the recommendation but agreed that the format change is significant enough to require additional membership feedback. [The Championships Committee previously agreed that any request to modify the championship date formula in ways that either change the selection/AQ submission date or extend the length of the tournament (or both) should be vetted in advance with the membership – see Informational Item 7-c.]

f. Men's and women's golf.

- **Director of Course Setup.** The Championships Committee approved the recommendation from the golf committees to add a rules official to oversee the course setup at each championship. The committee believes that having an experienced official to set-up the course and review how the course is playing throughout the championship will ensure the quality of the championship for the student-athletes. The Championships Committee also noted that the expense for adding the rules official (\$1,000 per championship) will be absorbed into the current budgets for men's and women's golf.

g. Men's ice hockey.

- **Bracket expansion.** The committee agreed to table the recommendation from the men's ice hockey committee to expand the bracket for the 2024 Division III Men's Ice Hockey Championship to 13 teams until it obtains more accurate budget impacts. The recommendation to increase the bracket is based on sponsorship having grown to meet the 1:6.5 ratio threshold. The Championships Committee has previously considered bracket expansion outside of the budget cycle but wants more budgetary information before making a final decision during a future videoconference.

h. Women's rowing. The committee received the report from the rowing committee's annual meeting as information, noting the ongoing discussion regarding potential bracket expansion to help with the formation of heats at the championship.

i. Softball.

(1) Automatic qualification. The committee approved the following 41 conferences for automatic qualification to the 2024 NCAA Division III Softball Championship: Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference; American Rivers Conference; American

Southwest Conference; Atlantic East Conference; Centennial Conference; City University of New York Athletic Conference; College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin; Commonwealth Coast Conference; 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 Conference 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; Southern Athletic Association; Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; State University of New York Athletic Conference; United East Conference; Upper Midwest Athletic Conference; USA South Athletic Conference; and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

(2) Super regional date change. The Championships Committee considered the softball committee’s recommendation that super regional competition dates be changed from Friday/Saturday to Thursday/Friday. However, the Championships Committee previously agreed that any request to modify the championship date should be vetted in advance with the membership (see Informational Item 7-c). Accordingly, the Championships Committee asked the softball committee to obtain additional feedback in that regard.

(3) Seventh umpire at finals site. The Championships Committee approved the softball committee’s recommendation that an umpire be added to the finals site to create a seven-person crew, effective with the 2024 championship. The Championships Committee also noted that the expense for adding the seventh umpire (approximately \$3,000) will be absorbed into the current budget for softball.

j. Men’s and women’s cross country and track and field. The committee reviewed the report from the sport committee’s annual meeting, noting the discussion regarding the travel party allowance for non-athletes. The sport committee anticipates forwarding a recommendation to increase, at a minimum, the number of non-athletes permitted when 1-5 student-athletes qualify.

k. Women’s volleyball.

(1) Selection criteria. The Championships Committee considered a request from the volleyball committee for the autonomy to select three additional criteria to consider for ranking and selection purposes, as the current selection criteria do not allow for additional criteria to be considered during the ranking and selection process. The

Championships Committee understands the volleyball committee's concern but noted that the current selection criteria are defined by legislation. The committee asked that the three additional criteria be specifically identified before the recommendation is considered.

- (2) **Secondary criteria.** The Championships Committee also noted the volleyball committee's desire to add nonconference win-loss record to the secondary criteria but recommended that the volleyball committee defer this recommendation pending its review of the criteria in Item 1 above.
- (3) **Regional rankings.** The Championships Committee considered but did not support the volleyball committee's request to adjust the regional rankings to "once ranked, always ranked." The Championships Committee noted that the "once ranked, always ranked" approach was eliminated last year, and the committee prefers the alternative method of publishing the first ranking as an alphabetical listing of teams under consideration stay in place longer before any change is considered (for all sports). The Championships Committee also advised the volleyball committee to see how the selections database initiative as noted in Informational Item 7-b plays out, as that could impact the rankings process.
- (4) **Officials fee increase.** The Championships Committee discussed the volleyball committee's request to increase fees for line judges and referees but noted that increased officials' fees in all sports are being considered for the next budget cycle.
- (5) **Additional championship awards.** The Championships Committee discussed the volleyball committee's request to increase the number of participant medallions and mini trophies per team to match the bench size and add a national runner-up trophy at the championship. The Championships Committee noted that championship awards overall – including not only the number of awards but also when they are presented – are being reviewed across all sports.

10. Other business.

- a. **Minimum ticket prices.** The committee discussed the variance in ticket prices among sites/rounds of championships and believes an additional review of this issue is warranted. However, the committee noted that the NCAA is currently engaged in a comprehensive business review that includes revenues generated from championships. The committee agreed to review this issue at a future meeting, if necessary, after the completion of the business review.
- b. **Minimum conference contest requirements.** The committee discussed whether there should be a legislated minimum conference schedule to earn automatic qualification. The committee reviewed its previous discussions regarding this topic, including a prior determination to not recommend such a requirement due to the variability of conference

schedules and competition. While the committee believes this topic has value, members agreed that it would be best decided by the membership through a membership-sponsored proposal.

- c. **2025 and 2026 lacrosse championships update.** Staff updated on the committee on developments in the ongoing debate regarding the proposed joint men's and women's lacrosse championships in 2025 and 2026. As proposed, all three men's lacrosse championship finals and the Division I women's finals would be held at Gillette Stadium both years, with the Divisions II and III women's finals being played at nearby campus sites. However, the Divisions II and III Women's Lacrosse Committees have continually expressed concerns about how the arrangements could compromise their student-athletes' experiences. The committees are currently engaging with a member institution that has expressed interest in possibly hosting the Divisions II and III women's championship finals in both 2025 and 2026 and may submit a recommendation accordingly in the coming weeks.
- d. **Committee chair.** The committee noted that Chuck Mitrano, the current chair, will complete his term on the committee after the NCAA Convention in January. The committee elected Karen Tessmer to succeed Mr. Mitrano at that time.

11. Future meeting/videoconference dates.

- a. October 24, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- b. November 21, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- c. December 12, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (monthly videoconference).
- d. February 5-6, 2024 (in-person meeting; Indianapolis).

Committee Chair: Chuck Mitrano, Empire 8

Staff Liaisons: Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances

J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division III Championships Committee September 11-12, 2023, Meeting	
Attendees:	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
Chad Eisele, Hampden-Sydney College.	
Chuck Mitrano, Empire 8.	
Maureen Harty, College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin.	
Shannon Howley, Montclair State University.	
Adaobi Nebuwa, Colby College.	
John Neese, Hardin-Simmons University.	
Holly Sheilley, Transylvania University.	
Sara Shoffner, Huntingdon College.	

Karen Tessmer, Worcester State University.
Leonard Trevino, Chatham University.
Jason Verdugo, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Gary Brown, NCAA Contractor.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
J.P. Williams, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Margaret Gaines, Caleb Kolby, Victoria Lipscombe, Louise McCleary, Katie Mucci, Jeff Myers, Bill Regan, Ryan Richardson, Rachel Seewald and Kelly Whitaker.