



**REPORT OF THE  
NCAA COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ATHLETICS  
FEBRUARY 14, 2023, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**ACTION ITEMS.**

**1. Legislative Items.**

- **Consideration of stunt as an emerging sport in Divisions I and III.**
  - a. Recommendation. That the Divisions I and III governance bodies sponsor legislation to add stunt as an emerging sport for women.
  - b. Effective date. Immediate.
  - c. Rationale. In February 2022, the Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA) recommended that all three divisional bodies sponsor legislation to add stunt as an emerging sport for women. New information became available in December 2022 that the committee discussed, resulting in a recommendation that all three divisions refer the matter back to CWA for additional review.

Divisions I and III supported the committee's recommendation. After careful consideration, the Division II Management Council and Presidents Council voted against the recommendation and agreed the division should vote on the proposal during the Division II business session as intended. The proposal was adopted, and stunt was added as an emerging sport for women for Division II, effective August 1, 2023.

In January, the committee reviewed correspondence from USA Cheer, the sport governing body, as well as the sport's coaching association noting that the health and safety protocols surrounding the sport were sound. The organizations asserted that the concerns cited by the committee in December 2022 did not relate directly to the sport.

After further review and discussion, CWA determined it had sufficient information to address the previous concerns. The committee agreed to unanimously recommend that Divisions I and III reconsider approving stunt as an emerging sport for women.

- d. Estimated budget impact. Costs will vary by institutions that choose to sponsor the sport.
- e. Student-athlete impact. This recommendation would increase participation opportunities for female student-athletes at Divisions I and III institutions.

**2. Nonlegislative Items.**

- **None.**

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

- 1. Welcome and announcements.** Committee on Women's Athletics chair, Ragean Hill, welcomed the committee and introduced new members Katherine Loh, faculty athletics representative at Florida Southern College, representing the Division II Management Council; Marybeth Lamb, director of athletics at Bridgewater State University, representing the Division III Management Council; and Laura Amaya, volleyball student-athlete at Roberts Wesleyan University, representing the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.
- 2. Review of previous reports.** The committee approved reports from its September 27 and December 16, 2022, videoconferences, as presented.
- 3. Emerging Sports for Women Program developments.**
  - a. Emerging Sports for Women Program Process Guide.** The committee reviewed the program overall, including its history, intent and the principles outlined in the process guide. The committee reviewed its role to review sport applications based on the objective criteria set forth in the guide and to inform the three NCAA divisions about whether a sport has the potential to become a championship sport. With increased interest in the program and the need to closely review all applications and existing sports consistently, the committee agreed to establish a subcommittee of CWA members to review the process guide and recommend modifications to the full committee.
  - b. NCAA Convention vote on stunt.** The committee noted that Divisions I and III supported the recommendation to refer their proposal back to CWA, while Division II adopted the proposal for stunt to become an emerging sport in that division effective August 1, 2023. The committee reviewed the transcript from the Division II business session during the stunt discussion when several members spoke in support and opposition of the proposal. The committee noted there is some precedent for emerging sports moving forward without support from all three divisions, as equestrian is an emerging sport only in Divisions I and II. The committee reviewed correspondence sent to stunt leadership after the December 16, 2022, videoconference informing them of the committee's decision. CWA members also reviewed responses from USA Cheer and the coaches association, which emphasized that their protocols related to athlete safety were sound.

Additionally, the committee reviewed information that stunt was recognized by the USOPC as a new member of its Affiliate Organization Council in January. This council includes sport organizations that are not currently Olympic or Paralympic sports, but that work together to grow sport opportunities. The committee had a

discussion given all the information provided and determined to move forward with its recommendation to Divisions I and III to sponsor legislation to add stunt as an emerging sport for women (see Action Item No. 1).

- c. **Emerging sports presentation at 2023 NCAA Convention.** The committee reviewed highlights from the emerging sports presentation at the NCAA Convention during which the five current emerging sports (Acrobatics and Tumbling, Equestrian, Rugby, Triathlon, and Wrestling) provided information about their programs. The committee will receive annual updates from the sports during its spring and fall meetings.

4. **Squash application to the Emerging Sports for Women program.**

- a. **Analysis of applicant's ability to meet objective requirements.** The committee received a report from its squash review subcommittee, which met in February to review the objective requirements as outlined in the process guide. Squash was on the original emerging sport list in the early 1990s when the program began but was removed in 2011 due to lack of growth. This is the first time a sport on the list has been removed and then reapplied to the program.

The squash application was missing some information in the school support letters and sponsorship information. Without those schools, squash does not meet the required number of schools per the guide requirements. The subcommittee noted, however, that this information could be easily obtained (signatures, additional scheduling and budget information, etc.) and recommended contacting squash leadership to allow them to provide that information to the subcommittee for review before the CWA's May meeting.

- b. **Additional application feedback.** Subcommittee members shared anecdotally that squash did not appear to be a top priority for institutions in sponsorship letters. They also noted concerns regarding demographics, which prompted the full committee to encourage the newly appointed process guide subcommittee to consider drafting language stating that applicants with less diverse demographics submit a diversity plan with their application.
- c. **Next steps in review and communication to squash leadership.** The committee asked staff to contact squash leadership on the committee's behalf to request the additional information noted above. The committee will decide at its May meeting whether to recommend squash as an emerging sport to the divisions. The committee did not feel it was necessary to invite representatives from squash leadership to present at the May meeting.

5. **NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee updates.** Highlights from the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee's meetings at the NCAA Convention were noted.

Updates from the Divisions I and III SAAC meetings were not provided as members representing the two committees were unable to attend the videoconference.

**6. NCAA Woman of the Year award considerations.**

- a. Feedback from award ceremony at the 2023 NCAA Convention.** The committee shared positive feedback on the first Woman of the Year award ceremony held in conjunction with the NCAA Convention. Staff noted that attendance more than doubled at the event from when it was held in the fall, and participants consistently remarked that the event contributed to the feeling of a truly national recognition. A point of improvement noted by honorees was more opportunities to get to know each other, which previously occurred when the event was over a weekend. CWA members also suggested that the event include more of an introductory period to set the tone rather than simply begin with the luncheon. CWA members felt strongly that all 30 honorees should continue to be invited to the event.
- b. Selection process, requirements and rubric for 2023.** The committee reviewed the award rubric and criteria in the four scoring categories and deliberated whether changes are needed. Feedback from the selection committee this summer indicated an interest in allowing a 0.5 scoring option on the five-point scale. The committee discussed that idea and agreed to formally request the change given how comparable the candidates are each year.
- c. Request for new subcommittee members.** The committee noted that due to term expirations in August there will be three vacancies for the selection committee. Two members volunteered to serve. The group noted that the committee still needs a Division I representative. Staff will explore options and report back to the committee in May.

**7. 2023 NCAA Convention updates and discussion relevant to CWA.**

- a. Transgender student-athlete policy update.** Staff shared that the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS), which oversees the transgender student-athlete participation policy, recommended, and the NCAA Board of Governors subsequently approved, extending Phase Two of the revised policy implementation through the 2023-24 academic year with Phase Three to be effective in the 2024-25 academic year. Phase Two requires documentation clarifying that student-athletes are meeting the standard adopted in 2010 as well as their sport's current requirements. The CWA, the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee (MOIC), and the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity (CPCDE) were asked to volunteer one member each to serve as liaisons to the CSMAS as that group continues to discuss potential changes to Phase Three that would clarify the policy and provide greater consistency among sports. CWA will determine its appointee via email and share the representative with the committee in May.

- b. **Equity analysis referral.** Staff noted that the recommendation the committee submitted in conjunction with MOIC to require the divisions to evaluate the equity impact before approving legislation was referred back to the two committees for clarification. Staff is working on possible implementation options and CWA will revisit the matter during its joint meeting with MOIC in May.

**8. Other business.**

- a. **Request to CWA from the Equal Distance Team.** The committee reviewed correspondence from leaders of the Equal Distance Team advocating that the race distances in men's and women's cross country be the same. The letter notes this group previously contacted the sport committees, which did not find that changing the distances was necessary at this time. NCAA staff has engaged with the liaisons to the applicable sport committees who provided additional information and context on this request.

CWA members agreed to revisit this issue during its May meeting to give them an opportunity to discuss preferences with their cross country coaches and student-athletes, and for staff to meet with sport committee liaisons to help inform a possible recommendation.

- b. **USOPC/NCAA Para-College Inclusion Project committee representative selection.** Staff provided an update on the USOPC/NCAA Para-College Inclusion Project created to engage schools with adaptive sports to collectively increase Paralympic sport understanding, awareness and connection across the college landscape. Recent developments include partnering with the NCAA Office of Inclusion and the NCAA Eligibility Center to build a resource hub that will include relevant information; developing a database of high school and collegiate adaptive sport programs to be placed on a new website; and compiling adaptive sport management best practices related to awareness and promotions at the campus and national levels. Staff also updated the committee on efforts to showcase paralympic competitions during collegiate events in basketball, tennis, and track and field in 2023. The USOPC is seeking input and engagement from the NCAA diversity, equity and inclusion committees to help implement these initiatives and requested that a member from CWA, MOIC and CPCDE serve in this capacity. CWA will determine its appointee via email and share the representative with the committee in May.
- c. **2023 NCAA Inclusion Forum.** Staff noted that registration for the 2023 NCAA Inclusion Forum, April 21-23, in Indianapolis is open. CWA members were provided instructions for committee member registration.

9. **Future meetings.** Staff noted that dates for CWA's May meeting and the joint May meeting with the MOIC should be finalized soon.

10. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m. Eastern time.

Report of the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics

February 14, 2023, Videoconference

Page No. 6

*Committee Chair:* Ragean Hill, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.  
*Staff Liaisons:* Maison Hubbard, Academic and Membership Affairs.  
Micaela Liddane, Championships and Alliances.  
Gretchen Miron, Office of Inclusion.

<b>NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics February 14, 2023, Videoconference</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Laura Amaya, Roberts Wesleyan University.	
Greg Bamberger, Fairmont State University.	
Renee Bostic, State University of New York at New Paltz.	
Donna Price Henry, University of Virginia's College at Wise.	
Ragean Hill, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.	
Marybeth Lamb, Bridgewater State University.	
Monica M. Lebron, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.	
Katherine Loh, Florida Southern College.	
Miguel Martinez-Saenz, St. Francis College Brooklyn.	
Miriam Merrill, Pomona-Pitzer Colleges.	
LaWanda Miller, Fayetteville State University.	
Kellianne Milliner, West Chester University of Pennsylvania.	
Renie Shields, Saint Joseph's University.	
Marion Terenzio, State University of New York at Cobleskill.	
<b>Absentees:</b>	
Gabby Elliott, Denison University.	
Robert Nelson, California State University, Sacramento.	
Maya Riddlesprigger, California State University, Fullerton.	
Chuck Sack, Neumann University.	
<b>NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:</b>	
Maison Hubbard and Gretchen Miron.	
<b>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance for Portions of the Meeting:</b>	
Zandria Conyers, Amanda Conklin, Kina Davis, Gail Dent, Niya Blair Hackworth, Maritza Jones, Corbin McGuire, Chelena Meadows, Jean Merrill, Stacey Preston, Bill Regan, Stephanie Quigg, Geoff Silver, Jared Tidemann and Amy Wilson.	