



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I COMPETITION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 14, 2024, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

- **None.**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI) and the student-athlete voice. As part of its ongoing commitment to celebrating equity, diversity and inclusion, the Competition Oversight Committee begins each meeting by recognizing an influential person, group or initiative that has made a positive impact in intercollegiate athletics. For this meeting the committee acknowledged the celebration of February as Black History Month, which honors the achievements of African Americans and their remarkable contributions to enhance the American culture. As part of this recognition, the committee learned more about Dr. Nikki Franke, who became the first African American woman to coach a Division I fencing program and served in that role at Temple University for 50 years before retiring in August 2022. She was a member of two Olympic teams (1972 and 1976), was a two-time national champion in the foil competition (1975 and 1980) and is enshrined in five Halls of Fame. The committee also honored swimmer Cullen Jones, a North Carolina State University alumnus who was a four-time Olympic medalist as a member of two Olympic teams (2008 and 2012) and was the first African American to set a long-course world record when he was part of the winning 400-meter relay team at the 2006 Pan Pacific Swimming Championships.

2. Committee focus areas and decision-making priorities. As part of its standing agenda items, the committee revisited its focus areas (not in priority order) that will continue to guide its decision-making process going forward:

Student-athlete experience | Equity, diversity and inclusion | Competitive fairness |
Student-athlete health and well-being | Fiscal planning

3. Staff recognition. The chair of the committee, Michael Kelly, asked members to pause before diving into the agenda to recognize the committee's longtime leader and liaison, Joni Comstock, NCAA senior vice president of championships, who is retiring from the national office March 1 after 17 years of dedicated service overseeing the administration of more than 85 NCAA championships annually. Ms. Comstock also has led and served several NCAA committees, working groups and task forces, including the COC from its inception (as well as previous iterations of the committee). As a surprise, the committee welcomed former COC members to acknowledge Ms. Comstock's outstanding career marked by her wise counsel and steady guidance through complex issues, and her unwavering care and support for all student-athletes. The guests included former COC chairs Mitch Barnhart, director of athletics at the University of Kentucky; Kim Record, senior associate commissioner at the Atlantic 10 Conference; Lynda Tealer, deputy director of athletics at the University of Florida; and Renee Baumgartner, director of athletics at Santa Clara University. Robin Harris, executive director of the Ivy League who served multiple terms on the COC and its previous iterations, also

provided poignant remarks. Ms. Comstock expressed her sincere appreciation and gratitude to all current and former COC members who have spent years supporting the NCAA championships program.

4. **Review of recent reports.** The committee approved reports from its January 3 electronic correspondence and January 9 in-person meeting as presented.
5. **Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) update.** The committee reviewed actions from PROP's meeting at the NCAA Convention, including steps the panel took to address unsporting behavior in all sports' playing rules and the framework of the federated rules process.
6. **Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee update.** Jamie Zamrin updated the COC on items the SAAC addressed during its meeting at the NCAA Convention.
7. **Division I championships.**
 - a. **Squad size/travel party size update.** As part of the previously prescribed biannual review of squad and travel party size, the COC agreed the current process and principles for squad and travel party sizes remain generally relevant. The committee agreed to conduct the review every four years moving forward and noted that sport committees could propose changes in a non-review year if there are significant changes in the sport, the championship or the sport's playing rules.

Per the committee's request, staff provided a brief history of squad size development to help inform discussion, including a summary of the average number of roster members who participate in competition. COC members noted this to be a valuable metric, which should be used as a reference when determining appropriate squad size. The committee also confirmed that squad size positions should be matched with corresponding funded travel party positions.

COC will plan to review sport-specific squad and travel party requests and as the current travel party allocations for team personnel (i.e., non-student-athletes) at a future meeting during the budget process for 2024-25.

- b. **Automatic qualification review status.** Staff noted the annual Feb. 1 deadline for conferences to submit automatic qualification forms. Staff will review those forms and identify potential issues for COC's April meeting.
8. **Team sports subcommittee report.**
 - a. **Women's bowling.**
 - **2025 championship site.** The COC approved the bowling committee's request that the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

host the 2025 National Collegiate Women's Bowling Championship at the Suncoast Bowling Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. The original hosts, the United States Bowling Congress and the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority, informed the bowling committee they would be unable to fulfill their commitment.

b. Women's rowing.

(1) Automatic qualification. The COC approved the following 11 conferences to receive automatic bids for the 2024 NCAA Division I Women's Rowing Championships: American Athletic Conference; Atlantic Coast Conference; Atlantic 10 Conference; Big Ten Conference; Big 12 Conference; Coastal Athletic Association; The Ivy League; Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference; Pac-12 Conference; Patriot League; and West Coast Conference.

(2) Squad size/travel party. The COC considered but tabled the request from the rowing committee to add a reserve coxswain and two additional student-athletes to the squad size (28) and an additional six to the travel party (34). The COC tabled the request based on the pending review of the budget process and allocations for 2024-25.

c. Women's soccer.

United Soccer Coaches proposal. The women's soccer committee shared its feedback for the United Soccer Coaches proposal under consideration by the Student-Athlete Experience Committee. In its report, the women's soccer committee offers general support for the playing season recommendations yet notes that the model would push the entire championship, including selections, back one week (same weekend as the Men's College Cup). The women's soccer committee supports the change but recognizes the need to explore the concept further with broadcast partner ESPN to determine the impact the change would have on programming and production. COC members noted the entire proposal requires more discussion and any change to the championship format (e.g., date changes or number of teams at the finals site) requires more exploration and ultimately a proposal from the women's soccer committee that accounts for the timing of conference championships, broadcast elements, and any other considerations impacting participating student-athletes.

9. Individual/team sports subcommittee report.

a. Men's and women's golf.

- **Rankings system proposal.** The COC approved the golf committees' recommendation to consider any available longstanding college golf rankings as a resource in preparation for and throughout championship selections for 2023-24 academic year only. The golf committees received feedback regarding the recent transition to the new college golf ranking system and believe using another established ranking system as a

resource will help identify any potential outliers and aid in selecting the most deserving teams and individuals for the championships.

b. **Men's and women's track and field and cross country.** The COC received the report from the sport committee's November 16 meeting as information.

c. **Wrestling.**

- **AQ waiver request.** The COC approved the wrestling committee's recommendation to grant a waiver for the Pac-12 to maintain its AQ in wrestling with only four members for 2024-25 championships. The COC reasoned that the waiver is in line with the recent precedent of approving the AQ grace period for one year for conferences with four institutions in light of recent conference realignment.

10. Other business.

- a. **Women's volleyball exemption update.** The committee revisited the potential legislative proposal to add participation in the AVCA Showcase as an exemption to first-contest legislation referred by the Division I Student-Athlete Experience Committee after AVCA provided additional feedback. The committee supported the concept and noted whether there should be consideration for other similarly timed events for the sport of volleyball.
- b. **Women's volleyball regional dates.** The committee received an informational update from the women's volleyball committee on a potential change to the regional date formula from Thursday/Saturday competition to Thursday/Saturday and Friday/Sunday competition to enhance broadcast exposure. The COC will revisit when the proposal is finalized.
- c. **Bracket expansion.** COC members followed up on the Transformation Committee's bracket expansion concept for team sports with sponsorship above 200 institutions by requesting a subcommittee be formed to further vet the concept.
- d. **Men's and Women's Gymnastics.** COC members recommended the formation of a subcommittee to explore possible synergies for men's and women's gymnastics as a result of combining, co-locating or holding the championships on consecutive dates noting that the men's championships is now included in the new ESPN broadcast agreement and the women's championship now includes a day of rest.

11. Future videoconferences/meetings.

- Wednesday, April 10, 2-3:30 p.m. (videoconference).

Committee Chair: Michael Kelly, University of South Florida

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Staff Liaisons: *Joni Comstock, Championships and Alliances*
 Jennifer Henderson, Academic and Membership Affairs
 Liz Suscha, Championships and Alliances
 John Bugner, Championships and Alliances

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Attendees:	
Jennifer Condaras, Coastal Athletic Association.	
Mike Cragg, St. John's University (New York).	
Tiffany Daniels, Southeastern Conference.	
Wendy Fallen, Big Ten Conference.	
Rodrigo Alvarez Gonzalez, Bradley University.	
Brad Hurlbut, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Metropolitan Campus.	
Kimberly Johnson, Texas Christian University.	
Michael Kelly, University of South Florida.	
Celene McGowan, The Ivy League.	
Janet Oberle, Saint Louis University.	
Elizabeth Rabb, Wofford College.	
Alecia Shields-Gadson, Delaware State University.	
Billy Walker, American University.	
Christina Wombacher, Arizona State University.	
Jamie Zamrin, Portland State University.	
Absentees:	
Gerald Harrison, Austin Peay State University.	
Raymond Harrison, North Carolina State University.	
Kathy Keene, Sun Belt Conference.	
Brandon Martin, University of Missouri-Kansas City.	
Jenna Rogers, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.	
Guest(s) in Attendance:	
Mitch Barnhart, University of Kentucky.	
Renee Baumgartner, Santa Clara University.	
Robin Harris, Ivy League.	
Kim Record, Atlantic 10 Conference.	
Lynda Tealer, University of Florida.	
NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:	
John Bugner, Championships and Alliances.	
Joni Comstock, Championships and Alliances.	
Jennifer Henderson, Academic and Membership Affairs.	
Liz Suscha, Championships and Alliances.	

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Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Amanda Conklin, Kristin Fasbender, Greg Johnson, Tracy McClendon, and Jerry Vaughn.