



2023 NAIA CONVENTION RECAP

New Orleans, Louisiana | March 30-April 3



We just wrapped up the 82nd NAIA National Convention earlier this week and as always, it was great to spend time with our members. More than 400 attendees joined us in New Orleans to learn about and discuss what's going on with your association.

The agenda was full of opportunities to share ideas, network with peers, and engage in professional development activities. Lots of lively and respectful discussions were had about a wide range of topics including membership recruitment, championships, and the work of our various task forces. This year delegates voted on an exceptionally large number of legislative proposals, the results of which are included on pages 8-10. We also welcomed the College of the Ozarks (Mo.) back to NAIA membership.

This year's theme was simple - *Geaux Forward*. It continues to be a difficult time in higher education, especially for smaller institutions. However, when we focus on our commonalities and work together, our association can make impressive progress.

Thank you to all of those who were able to attend this year. To those who weren't able to be with us – you were missed. Check out the convention video recap [here](#).

I hope this recap keeps you informed about important NAIA happenings, but don't hesitate to reach out to the national office with any questions or concerns. (And it's not too early to mark your calendars for next year's convention on April 5-9, 2024 in Kansas City!)

All the best,

Jim Carr
President and CEO

COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS (COP)

New Members

The COP approved **College of the Ozarks** (Mo.) for 2023-24 membership. Both **Indiana University - Purdue University Columbus** (IUPUC) and **Southern University at New Orleans** (SUNO) were approved for active membership from associate membership status.

Financial Aid Policy Clarifications

Two financial aid policy clarifications were adopted:

1. The first was to approve the standard that if a student-athlete competes in postseason competition, that student's aid will count towards a team's financial aid limits, even if the student did not compete in more than 20% of the sport's frequency of play limits.
2. The second was to approve the standard that any student who competes in three meets in either ITF and/or OTF will have their aid counted towards the team limit.

Championship Expansion Requests

COP approved two requests regarding championship expansions:

1. The first was to increase the number of teams participating in the Football Championship Series from 16 to 20.
2. The second was to expand the number of teams participating in the softball national championship from 40 to 48.

Other Action Items

- COP approved the 2023-24 NAIA and eligibility center budgets.
- Texas A&M University San Antonio was approved for an exception to the six-sport rule through the 2026-27 academic year.
- Gary Henson was reappointed to serve on the NAIA Champions of Character Foundation Board of Directors through 2025.

Discussion Item

The NAIA's legal counsel presented an analysis of potential Title IX changes, recent federal circuit court decisions, and a summary of state laws related to transgender athlete participation. The COP agreed it is critical to continue assessing the evolving legal landscape and the potential risks to the NAIA and its members. In conjunction with this legal analysis, the COP asked the task force to continue its work towards potential policy recommendations.

NAIA RISE

NAIA RISE hosted the 2nd Governance & Leadership Academy at Xavier University on March 29. The 35 attendees discussed academics, fundraising, DEI, and hosting championships. Commissioners Lori Thomas, Meg Schebler, and Mike Hall provided an overview of the NAIA's governance structure and how to engage in making legislative changes. MOAA hosted a reception at the Xavier arena.



CONFERENCE COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

The CCA voted to form a joint task force with the ADA and the national office to support and expand efforts to recruit and retain officials. Michael Schell (River States Conference), Will Wolper (American Midwest Conference), and Dr. Scott Crawford (Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference) will serve as the CCA representatives.

Commissioners shared a dialogue with the national office membership recruitment and retention team focused on aligning efforts in the recruitment of new NAIA member institutions.

FARA/CFAR ELECTIONS

- Dave Bass, Valley City State University – FARA Chair
- Kim Hays, Dalton State College – FARA Chair Elect
- Nicci Wooley, Point University – FARA Vice Chair
- Kyle Backstrand, Viterbo University – FARA Secretary
- Chris Mattingly, University of Tennessee Southern – CFAR at-large position

NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

NCC approved two policies which will be added to the 2023-2024 Official & Policy Handbook. They include clarifying what qualifies as a contract in order for an institution to receive a forfeit and a new practice for ADs to apply for unaffiliated groupings for qualification plans.

The NCC will begin work with the NEC to review how NAIA junior varsity programs operate. The NCC and NEC will review bylaws and policies surrounding JV athletes to see if there is a way to support them without burdening athletic administrators and FARs.

ATHLETICS DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

- ADA Board of Directors elected Dr. Jesse Godding, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, as third vice president.
- The ADA's partnership with NACDA continues to prosper, with paid members in NACDA nearing a record high. Through this partnership, six stipends were awarded to two ADA members to attend this NAIA convention and four members to attend the NACDA convention in June.
- ADA Board heard from Justin Gragg, NAIA Director of Officiating Initiatives, regarding the decreasing number of available officials, and a strategy the national office is promoting that facilitates students becoming certified officials.
- The ADA heard from NAIA Director of Championships Austin Bennett regarding operational strategies and onsite improvements that have been related to championship operations.

ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

- The ASA summit focused on supporting the needs of today's student-athletes including leadership, mental health, and DEI.
- Student-athletes filmed the final two sessions of The Room Leadership Series, which focus on being an effective leader and resiliency.
- The ASA concluded convention with a one mile Riverwalk with local Special Olympic athletes.
- Student-athletes also advocated for the Mandatory Day-Off Policy.

COUNCIL FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

CSA members focused on hearing from student-athletes regarding specific efforts on their respective campuses, how to establish and sustain a campus ASA, and their perspective regarding the Champions of Character program.

NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

The NAC conducted its third quarterly business meeting of the 2022-23 academic year. Below is a summary of actions taken by the Council.

Ratings Task Force

The NAC-led Ratings Task Force has met three times since January 2023 and will bring its findings to the full NAC in spring 2024.

NAIA All-America 3rd Team

The NAC approved the creation of a third team All-America in baseball, football, men's/women's bowling, men's/women's lacrosse, men's/women's tennis, softball and men's volleyball. The third team will be voted on like the first and second teams, but will also include all conference players of the year that were not selected for first or second team, regardless of position. Changes to the NAIA All-America program are effective for all NAIA sports that do not recognize All-America status by national championship finish beginning with the 2023-24 academic year. Honorable Mentions have been eliminated.

NAIA Game Contract – Forfeit Eligibility

The NAC approved that in order to be considered for a forfeit request for a non-conference game if the game is cancelled or fails to be conducted, a contract must be written and include the date, time and location of the contest and must also be signed by the head coaches and athletic directors to be valid. Text message or email correspondence will not be considered.

NAIA Hall of Fame Required Nomination Materials

Approved changes to the required materials to be nominated to the NAIA Hall of Fame.

Required Nomination Materials (no faxed materials will be accepted):

1. Official form
2. Current high-resolution photo
3. Two letters of recommendation
4. A letter from the individual's institution supporting the nomination

Letter of Recommendation Requirements:

- Must be thorough and include the title and signature of the individual who wrote the letter
- Must be submitted on letterhead if the individual is employed by a college/university

NAIA Marathon Special Event

The California International Marathon (CIM) was approved as an NAIA special event. This allows the CIM to use NAIA marks and promote the NAIA division within the event. The marathon is no longer tied to NAIA track & field or cross country. Marathon has been added to the Declaration on Intent to begin the process of becoming a recognized sport in the NAIA.

NAIA Awards Program Additions

The NAC approved both the NAIA Female Trailblazer of the Year Award and the NAIA RISE Leader of the Year Award to the NAIA National Awards Program.

Conference Tournament Deadlines

It was approved moving the deadline to complete conference tournaments to seven days prior to the start of all national championships, including first & second and opening rounds, beginning in 2024-25.

Baseball & Softball Opening Round Facility Requirements

The NAC approved adding facility footwear requirement information to the opening round bid forms to ensure the national office can communicate with qualifying teams on any restrictions at their assigned opening round.

NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL, continued

NAIA Affiliated Grouping Policy

Policy allows conference commissioners and athletics directors the opportunity to create affiliated groupings to be more regionalized, and also allows institutions to be independent. If an institution is not a member of a conference or affiliated group, their only access to a national championship is an at-large selection.

- June 1: Declaration of Intent Deadline
- June 15: First draft of Qualification Plans sent to conference commissioners
- June 20: Commissioners and athletics directors of institutions who are not per sport members are contacted to communicate they are not currently a part of a conference/grouping and provided with the following:
 1. Contact list of all athletic directors of institutions (per sport) that are not currently a member of a conference for national championship qualification
 2. Link to the Affiliated Grouping Request form to submit a grouping request to the NAC for approval at the August meeting
- July 31 – Affiliated Grouping Requests due to national office

APPROVED SPORT MOTIONS (Effective 2023-24 unless otherwise noted)

Baseball

- Moved the on-field practice day at the World Series from Thursday to Wednesday. The 10 participating teams will be allowed one hour on the championship field on Wednesday prior to the start of the Baseball World Series.
- Removed requirement of raters to follow the conference rank order during national ratings. Conference ratings will be used as a guideline for ratings.

Women's Cross Country

Increased the race distance from 5,000 to 6,000 meters, beginning with the 2023 NAIA Women's Cross Country National Championships.

Men's & Women's Cross Country

Require the distance of conference/qualifying meets to be the same as the national championship (women: 6K/men: 8k).

Football

Institute targeting review at halftime in all national playoff games. Require that all potential hosts have the capability for halftime targeting review. FCS hosts are required to have the following technology available to review targeting penalties:

1. Center high and end zone film
2. Video streaming broadcast

Men's & Women's Soccer

National championship format change:

- 16 first & second round sites
 - Single elimination
 - Eight sites will have three teams, games will be played on Thursday and Saturday
 - Eight sites will have two teams, a single game will be played on Saturday
- 16 teams will advance to the final site
 - Games will be played Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Monday at the final site

NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL, continued

Women's Soccer

- Increase All-America Selection Committee to 13 members. The committee shall include two raters from each of the five (5) ARC regions, plus the three officers of the NAIA Women's Soccer Coaches' Executive Committee
- Increase National Selection Committee to 11 members by adding the past president or an at-large representative, if the past president is not able to serve

Track & Field

- To continue utilizing "Five Alive", to not follow the recent NCAA Rule Change – NAIA Rule Modification effective immediately to be utilized during the 2023 NAIA Outdoor Track & Field National Championships
- Increase the minimum number of participants at nationals in the racewalk from 10 to 16
- Remove Article VII Section Four and Article VIII Section five from the NAIA Track & Field Coaches Constitution:

Article VII, Section Four: The Nominating Committee shall consist of a chairperson and two or more additional members. The chairperson shall be the immediate Past President. The additional members (two or three) will be selected from the Past Presidents. In addition to nominations from the Nominating Committee, nominations for office may be accepted from the floor. A candidate for the office of Secretary shall be determined by the highest number of votes. The election shall be under the direction of the chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

Article VIII, Section Five: The immediate Past President of the NAIA-TFCA shall act as the chairperson of the Past President's Committee.

Men's Volleyball

- Expand the number of players on the postseason roster to 18.

Women's Volleyball

- Pregame warm-up protocol during the final site at national championship:
 - Warm-up balls will be available for shared warm-up at 60 minutes prior to match.
 - Teams may be on their side of the court prior to 60 minutes prior to match time without volleyballs.
 - All matches will have a minimum off 30 minutes warm-up time.
- The home team for warm-ups will be determined by the highest seed as assigned when placed into pools (#1-#24). The home team will have the ability to select their bench.

The NAC will meet virtually June 20-21, 2023 to conduct their final business meeting of the academic year.



TASK FORCE UPDATES

Transfer Rules Task Force

The Transfer Rules Task Force was created in 2021 in order to address the growing public discussion of student-athlete rights as it pertains to transfer rules and restrictions. The NCAA had been reviewing the transfer rules for their student-athletes and making many public declarations that may, in the eye of the public, be perceived as lessening the restrictions for transfer student-athletes. In an effort to be a more viable choice for all potential student-athletes, this encouraged our members to revisit our transfer rules in the bylaws.

In an effort to allow NAIA coaches better access to transfers, as well as make transferring to an NAIA institution more attractive to prospective student-athletes, the task force proposed three pieces of legislation (23-B-07: Notification to Transfer, 23-B-08: Initiating Contact with Enrolled Students, 23-B-09: Transfer Residency Requirement). All three were passed by membership at convention.

Transgender Task Force

The Transgender Task Force was formed at the request of the COP in spring 2022 to review the NAIA's current transgender policy and determine whether a new policy should be brought forward for consideration. The task force has met monthly since its formation last summer, researching transgender policies of other organizations and governing bodies, reviewing available scientific research specific to transgender participation in athletics, and following developments regarding proposed legislation and state laws.

The task force has created two positioning statements, which were used to prompt feedback from the COP. Neither statement is considered a policy, therefore no action was taken by COP at convention.

A representative from Husch Blackwell, the NAIA's legal counsel, provided an overview of the current legal landscape regarding Title IX and the potential impact on the participation of transgender athletes. There are currently 15+ states that prohibit participation on women's teams by biological men, effectively precluding transgender women from playing on women's-designated teams. This impacts a significant number of NAIA schools and potential championship locations. Additionally, more states are expected to legislate in this area.

The task force will continue its work, monitoring the legal environment, and provide an update at the 2023 fall meetings. There will be opportunities in the next few months for membership to provide feedback.

Violations & Penalties Task Force

In May 2022, the Violations & Penalties Task Force was formed to review the handling of NAIA violations and impact of penalties. The task force reported its draft recommendations to NAIA leaders at the NAIA Fall Meetings and also received feedback from a variety of conference and committee meetings. After incorporating elements of the feedback, the task force proposed legislation (23-B-04: Administrative Error, 23-B-05: Withholding of Students, 23-B-06: Penalty Procedures), all of which were approved by membership at the NAIA Business Meeting on April 3.

2023 LEGISLATION RESULTS

23-C-01	ABHE Accreditation for Membership Criteria	To include ABHE as an agency that fulfills the accreditation requirement for NAIA membership.	Approved
23-C-02	TRACS Accreditation for Membership Criteria	To include TRACS as an agency that fulfills the accreditation requirement for NAIA membership.	Approved
23-B-01	ABHE Accreditation for Membership Criteria	To include ABHE as an agency that fulfills the accreditation requirement for NAIA membership.	Approved
23-B-02	TRACS Accreditation for Membership Criteria	To include TRACS as an agency that fulfills the accreditation requirement for NAIA membership.	Approved
23-B-03	Annual Rules Education (VPTF)	Mandate rules education coursework for all identified athletic department staff, registrar and faculty athletics representative, and permit the National Conduct and Ethics Committee to review violations.	Approved
23-B-04	Administrative Error (VPTF)	Clarify references to a student who meets eligibility requirements but is not certified, limit forfeits to only those contests where a student competed who did not meet eligibility requirements, and to require a coach to be withheld when a student competes who met eligibility requirements but was not certified.	Approved
23-B-05	Withholding of Students (VPTF)	Require a student-athlete to be withheld one contest for each contest the student played in while not meeting NAIA eligibility requirements.	Approved
23-B-06	Penalty Procedures (VPTF)	Replace a conference recommendation for violations with a conference statement, shift the automatically public nature of probation to discretionary, and when probation is being discussed provide an opportunity for a hearing.	Approved
23-B-07	Notification of Contact by an Enrolled Student (TRTF)	To limit the required written notification to only those students currently enrolled at an NAIA institution, and to expand the list of athletic department staff who can provide such notification.	Approved
23-B-08	Initiating Contact with an Enrolled Student-Athlete (TRTF)	Permit NAIA coaches to initiate contact with students enrolled at non-NAIA four-year institutions.	Approved
23-B-09	Transfer Residency Requirement (TRTF)	Remove the 16-week residency requirement when a student has transferred from another four-year institution.	Approved
23-B-10	Declaration of Intent to Participate	To require institutions sponsoring an intent to participate in postseason to commit to competing in the minimum number of contests, per NAC policy.	Approved
23-B-11	Basketball Frequency of Play Limits	To create an exception permitting a basketball team to participate in one tournament during weekends or other non-scheduled class dates against NAIA opponents and not count towards the maximum game limits.	Failed
23-B-12	Baseball Scrimmage Dates	Add three additional scrimmage dates to be played prior to the end of the fall term during weekends or non-scheduled class dates.	Approved

2023 LEGISLATION RESULTS, continued

23-B-13	Men's Volleyball Scrimmage Dates	Add three additional scrimmage dates to be played prior to the end of the fall term during weekends or non-scheduled class dates.	Approved
23-B-14	Baseball & Softball Practice Start Dates	Adjust the start date for practice for baseball and softball from September 1 to instead permit practice on September 1 or the start of the institution's fall term, whichever is earlier.	Approved
23-B-15	Basketball, Wrestling Practice Start Dates	Move the start date for practice in the sports of wrestling and basketball to 38 days prior to the first allowable competition.	Approved
23-B-16	Baseball & Softball Spring Start Dates for Competition	Adjust the start date for second semester countable competition from the 4th Thursday in January to the Thursday of the first full week of February.	Failed
23-B-17	[WITHDRAWN] Junior Varsity Practice Start Dates		Withdrawn
23-B-18	Institutional Day Off Policy	To require all institutions to have a policy providing each student-athlete with one day off per week from all athletic activity.	Approved
23-B-19	Summer Credits and the 24/36-Hour Rule	Eliminate references to night, correspondence and extension courses, reorganize references to how summer credits apply to the 24/36-Hour Rule, and specify non-term credit for continuing identification students must be applied to the NAIA institution's transcript in the normal manner in order to be utilized.	Approved
23-B-20	Affiliated Conference Requirements	Provide a grace period when a conference drops from six or more full or per-sport members sponsoring a given sport to five members, preserving the conference's automatic qualification berth for two years.	Approved
23-B-21	Transfer from Two-Year Institution	Clarify how two- and four-year institutions will be designated for purposes of determining identification and residency.	Approved
23-B-22	Non-Term Credits	Apply the same approach currently used for determining when an inter-term course is completed and credits may be counted for eligibility purposes to non-term credits.	Approved
23-B-23	Seasons of Competition	Prevent track and field and wrestling student-athletes from participating independently in events with collegiate teams without being charged for the competition, and requiring any such participation to count towards the student's 20% threshold if the student has been certified as eligible in the given sport during the academic year.	Approved
23-B-24	Post-baccalaureate Eligibility	Reorganize and reframe eligibility requirements for graduate and 2nd baccalaureate student-athletes, and for these students adjust some expectations related to the 24/36-Hour Rule and Progress Rule.	Approved

2023 LEGISLATION RESULTS, continued

23-B-25	Senior Exception for Graduate Students	Permit graduate students to utilize an exception similar to the existing senior exception for undergraduate students that would allow graduate students to compete while enrolled in less than full-time hours during their last term prior to graduation in their graduate program.	Approved
23-B-26	24/36-Hour Rule Junior College Exception	Remove existing limitations of the junior college exception that dictate when hours are earned prior to graduation, and clarify the exception applies only to the first term of attendance at the NAIA institution.	Approved
23-B-27	Conduct in Competition	Clarify that suspensions resulting from an ejection are required to be served during the next regularly scheduled contest.	Approved
23-B-28	National Conduct & Ethics Committee Composition	To replace one at large position with a member of the Athletic Compliance Administrators Association, and create the expectation that at least two members of the committee are females and/or minorities.	Approved
23-B-29	Registrars Association Annual Meeting	To replace the requirement that the Registrars Association business meeting occur at AACRAO with an option to meet in-person or virtually.	Approved