NCAA Play-in Structure

Purpose: To provide access for all eligible teams. Conference automatic qualifiers (AQ) and at-large teams (at least 50% of the bracket).

Qualification: Play-ins are created when the number of eligible AQs is greater than 50% of the bracket. (e.g. 9 AQs in a 16 team bracket)

Principles:

➢ Play-in teams and match-ups shall be determined during the committee selection process
➢ Play-in(s) are contested between the lowest ranked AQ teams (regardless of conference RPI).
   o Exception: Per bylaw 31.3.4.7.1, ‘…in sports other than men’s volleyball, men’s water polo and women’s water polo, the remaining 50 percent of the championship field shall be reserved for at-large teams.”
   o Therefore, in the championships listed above AQ and or at-large teams may participate in the play-in games.

➢ Play-in competition must be completed before the first scheduled round of the championship begins.

➢ Match-ups
   ❖ Play-in match-ups will be determined by geographic proximity.
   ❖ The higher ranked team per selection criteria will host provided they meet geographic and hosting requirements.

➢ Play-ins will be treated equal to preliminary rounds.
   ❖ The NCAA will pay travel and per diem expenses for teams competing in the play-in(s).
   ❖ All statistics will be included in the championship statistics and records.
   ❖ Teams will be included in the championship program and on championship merchandise.
   ❖ Non-advancing participants will receive participant medallions.
   ❖ The NCAA will provide a basic signage package to each site.

➢ Play-ins shall be scheduled at least two days prior to the subsequent round. There must be at least one-day rest/travel prior to the practice day of the subsequent round.
   ❖ The play-in(s) shall be scheduled at least three days prior to the subsequent round if it is not at the championship site.

➢ Bracket assignments for teams advancing out of the play-ins
   ❖ Placement in the bracket will be at the discretion of the sport committee; however, the committee must adhere to the following principles:
     ▪ If the championship has preliminary rounds,
The advancing team(s) shall be placed in the bracket per geographic proximity which creates the least number of flights.

- If the championship does not have preliminary rounds,
  - The advancing team(s) will be placed in the bracket on the appropriate seed line.

**Hosting**

- If the two teams in the play-in are within geographic proximity of each other but not within geographic proximity of the championship site:
  - The sports committee will determine the play-in host according to selection criteria and hosting requirements.

- If the two teams are within geographic proximity of the championship site the following may be designated as the play-in site:
  - The committee may elect to conduct the play-in on campus of one of the participating teams.
  - The committee may elect to conduct the play-in at the championship site (provided the championship site is available).
  - If the play-in is held at the championship site the non-advancing team(s) shall return home immediately following the play-in round.

*Note: The intent is to have the play-in games hosted on campus of one of the participating teams; however, due to geographic proximity and missed class time host sites may be determined at the committee's discretion.*