Championships 101: Snapshot of NCAA and Conference Championships
My Background

• Commissioner of the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) for 20 years.
  o 24 total sports sponsorship (11 men, 13 women).
• Hosted over 70 NCAA Division III championships since 1993.
  o Partner to the City of Salem – Municipality that has supported DIII and DII championships for 25+ years.
• Member of various committees in the NCAA Division III Structure Including:
  o Championships.
  o Convention Planning.
  o Budget.
  o Sport Committees.
    ▪ Men’s Golf.
    ▪ Football.
• Management Council.
Outline

• Championships – Their Role in Our World.
• Access Factors – NCAA Opportunities and Rules.
  o Significant investment.
• Structure of Division III championships.
• Administration of NCAA championships.
• Hosting, On the Road, Getting Paid.
• Conference championship involvement.
• Veteran advice.
Importance of Championships

• It really is what we all play for!
  o Success is based on a number of factors and winning championships is one of them.
  o Thus, they play a vital part in the administration of your departments, conferences and the NCAA.

• Championship anxiety.
  o Quality student-athlete experience.
  o Costs.
  o Location/travel.
  o Wins and losses.
  o External pressures.
NCAA Investment in Championships

• New NCAA contract $10 billion over 14 years (2.5% increase).
  o Division III receives 3.18% of the Association’s annual revenue.

• Division III budget of $28.5 million in 2015-16.
  o 75% championships (approximately $21.5).
  o 25% non-championship Initiatives (approximately $7).
NCAA Division III Championships

- NCAA sponsors championships in 28 sports for Division III.
  - 14 men and 14 women (men’s volleyball most recent).
  - Members also have the ability to compete in 9 association-wide championships.
- Conferences qualify for automatic qualification into the NCAA Tournament.
- Specs for automatic qualification for DIII Conferences.
  - Seven conference sponsoring teams or more.
  - Multi-sport or single-sport conferences are eligible.
  - Can have associate members help meet the minimum.
How Many? How Do You Qualify?

• This information is located in NCAA Bylaw 31 – Championships Regulations.

• Ratios are used to determine field sizes
  o Team sports – 6.5:1.
  o Tennis and Golf – 7.0:1 and 7.5:1.
  o Individual Sports – 1:16 to 1:24.
  o The field sizes are based on the previous year sponsorship numbers.
Field Composition

- Field Sizes are determined by the ratios on last slide.
- Sports vary in size for various reasons.
- Brackets are made up of three sections.
  - Pool A – Conferences with automatic bids.
  - Pool B – Independents in the sport and conferences members that do not have an AQ (there is guaranteed access here).
  - Pool C – Non conference champions, independents and remaining teams from non-AQ leagues.

** Important to note – that as conference numbers grow – the number of Pool C slots will diminish unless the field is expanded. There is a guarantee for a minimum of Pool C bids in a tournament field. Access to Pool B is guaranteed as well.
Administration of NCAA Championships

• Conference commissioners – handle automatic qualifications.
• NCAA sport-by-sport Regional Advisory Committees (regional).
  o AQ conferences have a rep in their regions (coaches and admin).
• NCAA Sport-by-Sport National Committee (coaches and admin).
• NCAA Championships Committee (9 member committee).
  o Corey Borchardt – current chair, commissioner of Upper Midwest.
  o Liz Suscha – NCAA staff liaison with DIII Championships Committee.
• NCAA Management Council.
Hosting

• Bid Process – Predetermined vs. Selection.
  o Deadlines and other events on campus.
• Prepare – Follow the NCAA Manual for hosting.
• **Hosting a championship takes a village.**
  o Arrange a host committee to cover all aspects of the event.
• **REMEMBER – IT’S NOT YOUR EVENT!**
• Emphasize communication.
  o Conference call with participants.
  o Confirm travel plans with opponent.
  o Secure local and campus police well in advance.
• Lean on your NCAA Representative (assigned to your site).
  o Arrange a host committee to cover all aspects of the event.
• Go overboard to make your opponents feel at home. Nothing goes further than quality hospitality.
  o Remember – The best team will win that day!
• Make friends on campus – security, dining services, B&G, Finance, etc. – you are going to need their help!
• Keep quality records for your financial reporting following the championship.
On the Road

• Plan ahead – Make sure you reach out to Shorts early and often if necessary .
• Bus Travel will be supplied through Go Ground – Official Ground Transportation supplier for the NCAA.
• Establish who will handle – logistics – Let the coaches coach.
• Gather hotel information as soon as you can.
• Quickly communicate information to parents on arrangements (travel and hotel).
On the Road, continued…

• Website update – alumni and fans have access to hotel information on line.

• If long bus ride or cross country flight - ask for another per diem (or half day).

• Secure finances – through school – how does the school handle cash advances?

• Academic notification – professors have little or no idea about postseason timing.

• Be well aware of the travel party and per diem for the championship.
  o Participants and Official Travel Party composition.
Getting Paid

• Very important to be aware of deadline for financial reporting.
• Same whether you are hosting or on the road.
• NCAA is very helpful – recently streamlining forms to better assist with the end product.
• Receipt for all expenses – upload them into the budget reporting system.
  o Vital to have these organized.
Conference Championship Tips

• A functioning championships and games committee in a conference is a vital part of the planning and execution of events. Everyone is on the same page.

• Checklists are big. We provide a checklist for all members spelling out their requirements when hosting a round of the conference championship.

• We require conference calls with the participating teams in formats where multiple teams advance to one location (final four, 6-team basketball tournament).
Conference Tips

• Require that hosts provide the visiting team with a championship hosting form spelling out travel arrangements (parking), ticket prices, locker room location, game manager contact, officials assignments and anything specific to your facility.

• We ask that hosts produce and equitable environment—providing a quality experience that recognizes the visiting and home team equally.

• Guidelines are vitally important for planning and changes to championship structure. Create a comprehensive guide for each sport so the pieces are there even if you are not.
  o Create consistency from one championship to the next so conference members are working with the same guidelines and expectations regardless of the sport.
Veteran Advice

• I wish I had prepared myself more for the advance calls and planning when I bid on the national round of the Division III Championship. There were lots of items on the agenda and personnel was at a premium. Rally the troops and have too many not too few workers.

• The budget planning process is intensive. You should make sure you have your line items covered. Don’t be afraid to list things that can add to the atmosphere for the competitors. Schools can augment the experience with additional hospitality.

• Make sure you account for all possibilities when planning to host. Alternate locations for competition/practice, emergency plans and unforeseen travel problems that may arise.
Veteran Advice, continued…

- I have found that Shorts Travel does the best they can to accommodate the travel party and making it comfortable to fly. Busing has become easier as Go Ground has improved its offerings. Flying commercial can be a challenge while charters are fantastic!

- Traveling in conference championships was bad enough with last minute notice but the turnaround with NCAA championship play in the early rounds is fast. You have to be prepared for prep and planning to arrange travel. It is good to have an assistant/administrator work with you on planning and communication. Sometimes it is only a few days turnaround.
Veteran Advice, continued…

• Send an administration representative with your teams for national competition. It is not required anymore, but definitely helps with planning and execution should something go wrong. We want our coaches coaching and not serving as travel agent, concierge and bus coordinator while on the road!

• Pay special attention to the timing of championships – spring events typically run during exams and graduations which can throw a monkey wrench whether hosting or on the road!

• Make sure you remind the student-athletes, coaches and support staff to have fun. Sometimes it is a once in a lifetime experience that they will cherish forever. Don’t waste it on what ifs – regardless of the outcome.
Questions and Follow-Up