

SPO 4 Summary Report, 2018

Game Day and Championships



Strategic Positioning Outcome Area No. 4: Game Day and Championships

The Vision: Provide outstanding Division II game day experiences at the local, conference and national levels; and create fair and equitable regional and national competition through consistent selection criteria and appropriate access.

GOALS	INITIATIVES	HOW THEY HELP
Game Day Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broadcast Agreement• Military Engagement• Game Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasizes the value and reach of digital platforms• Resources help institutions and conferences partner with military groups during athletics contests• Best practices established to help institutions stage contests that are lively, civil and entertaining
Championships Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget Allocations• Seeding Regional Champions• Regionalization Review (postseason)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presidents Council agreed to allocate an additional \$1.5 million to the base budget for annual championships enhancements• Sport committees have begun seeding after regionals to ensure best matchups at the finals site• Working group to recommend ways to apply DII regionalization principles to enhance postseason selections/pairings

Initiatives COMPLETED since the adoption of the plan in April 2015 that support these goals:

Automatic Qualification Legislation: The Division II membership overwhelmingly adopted legislation at the 2016 Convention to amend NCAA Bylaw 31.3.4 as follows: (1) Eliminate the requirement that a championship bracket must have 48 or more teams in order for automatic qualification to be considered in a sport; (2) Specify that institutions that are affiliate members of a conference in a particular sport may be used to satisfy the sponsorship requirements for automatic qualification in that sport; and (3) Eliminate the requirement that in championship sports in which automatic qualification is offered, the sport committee must reserve at least 50 percent of the championship field for at-large teams.

Transparency of Selection Criteria: Division II sport committees publish all data used in ranking teams during the season (up to eight criteria; all teams are listed in alphabetical order, by region).

Combined Women's Basketball Championships: The NCAA celebrated the 2015-16 women's basketball season – the 35th in which the NCAA has sponsored national championships in the sport – by staging the Division II and Division III national championship games in conjunction with the Division I Women's Final Four

in Indianapolis. The event was administered successfully during the Women's Final Four weekend April 3-5, 2016, in Indianapolis. Feedback was so positive that the Championships Committee is exploring whether this can be done again in the near future.

Promotion Through Digital Platforms: Division II launched a “hybrid model” media that combines the value and reach of traditional over-the-air cable and network programming with other digital platforms. The new agreement protects the national television presence Division II has become accustomed to for its football and basketball championships but essentially triples the exposure during the regular season in those and other sports. Division II also launched an online site dedicated solely to Division II sports (NCAA.com/D2).

Initiatives LAUNCHED and still being implemented since the adoption of the plan:

Review of Regionalization: The Regionalization Working Group was appointed in 2016 to consider ways to amend current bracketing procedures in order to minimize instances in which teams face a conference opponent in the first round of an NCAA championship. After two in-person meetings and extensive outreach to the Division II membership, few, if any, cost-efficient alternatives emerged to achieve that goal. However, a few new ideas emerged that led the working group to believe that alternative models applied beyond the first round may address the conference matchup issue in ways that would be more appealing both to sport committees and the membership at large. As such, the working group believes additional study could enhance the Division II championship experience for participating student-athletes. The result is that the working group will remain intact and be permitted to review championship bracketing alternatives beyond the first round, as well as additional concepts that could possibly improve the championships in all sports.

Coaches Connection Expansion: The existing program has created a successful collaboration between coaches and governance in football, women's volleyball, soccer and tennis; so much so in fact that the goal is to expand the program to all sports. The program added five sports this year: baseball, cross country, track and field, softball, and wrestling. Among accomplishments in 2016-17:

- Sport administrators, known as connectors, were hired for each of the eight sports (the three existing sports plus the five that were added in 2016-17).
- Each DII conference appointed a coach representative for each of the eight sports they sponsor.
- Each sport's connector held monthly teleconferences with the coach representatives, and minutes were distributed to conference colleagues.

The connectors attended their respective sport's national championship and the coaches association meeting.

Transportation for Community Engagement: The division has begun providing bus transportation to Division II championships for community members who participate in community engagement events.

EXISTING INITIATIVES implemented before the adoption of the plan

Division II National Championships Festivals: The division conducted its 10th National Championships Festival (the third for winter sports) in Birmingham in March 2017. Division II continues as the only division to conduct the Olympic-style events in which multiple champions are crowned at a single locale on the same day. Future festivals are scheduled for fall sports (Pittsburgh, 2018), spring sports (St. Louis, 2020) and winter sports (Birmingham, 2021).

Commitment to Sportsmanship: All Division II institutions are required to complete, sign and submit a Championships Code of Conduct Policy to help ensure sportsmanship and fair play. Division II is a leader in promoting game environments that are entertaining, civil and family friendly.

Division II Award of Excellence: Division II annually presents an Award of Excellence for an activity or event that exemplifies excellence in any of the areas covered by the six attributes of Division II – learning, service, balance, passion, sportsmanship and resourcefulness.