REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION II FOOTBALL COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 8-10, 2016, MEETING

KEY ITEMS.

- **Seeding of the final four teams (super region champions).** The committee wants to seed the four teams that reach the semifinals so that the No. 1 seed plays the No. 4 seed and the No. 2 seed plays the No. 3 seed. This would provide for the best opportunity for the top two teams to meet in the championship game.

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

      (1) **Recommendation.** Adopted noncontroversial legislation to amend Bylaw 31.3.5.1 (requirements) to specify that institutions that are affiliate members of a Division II football-playing conference may be used to satisfy the sport sponsorship requirement for earned access in football.

      (2) **Effective date.** August 1, 2017.

      (3) **Rationale.** Allowing football-playing conferences to use affiliate member institutions to count towards the sport sponsorship requirement for earned access is consistent with a proposal adopted by the membership at the 2016 NCAA Convention to amend the automatic qualification legislation to permit institutions that are affiliate members of a conference in a particular sport to be used to satisfy the sponsorship requirement for automatic qualification in that sport (Division II Proposal No. 2016-8). The committee believes that football-playing conferences should be permitted to use affiliate members to meet the earned access legislation during its review of whether automatic qualification should be used in football to select teams for the championship.

      (4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

      (5) **Student-athlete impact.** None.
2. Nonlegislative items.

   a. **Seeding the super region champions.**

      (1) **Recommendation.** That the four semifinalists in the football championship (super region champions) be seeded 1-4 (the No. 1 seed vs. the No. 4 seed and the No. 2 seed vs. the No. 3 seed) to provide the opportunity for the top two teams to meet in the championship game.

      (2) **Effective date.** 2016 championship.

      (3) **Rationale.** The football committee believes that seeding the four teams will provide for the best opportunity for the two best teams to meet in the championship game. Currently, the matchups are predetermined and rotate every three years based on the four super regions. While the No. 1 and No. 2 seeds would receive preferred status on hosting the semifinals, the host site determinations will be based on current selection and hosting criteria.

      (4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

      (5) **Student-athlete impact.** As mentioned above, the top two teams would be separated on each side of the bracket to allow the best opportunity for the top teams to meet in the championship game.

   b. **Division II Football Committee chair selection.**

      (1) **Recommendation.** That the NCAA Division II Championships Committee ratify the appointment of Michael McBroom, director of athletics at West Texas A&M University, as chair of the Division II Football Committee for the 2016-17 academic year.

      (2) **Effective date.** September 1, 2016.

      (3) **Rationale.** Mr. McBroom’s previous service and extensive knowledge of the sport will be beneficial to the committee in his role as chair.

      (4) **Estimated budget impact.** None.

      (5) **Student-athlete impact.** None.
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **2016 annual meeting report.** The Division II Football Committee reviewed and approved the 2015 meeting report as submitted.

2. **2015-16 Championship Committee reports.** The committee reviewed action and information items from 2014-15, particularly those applicable to Division II football.

3. **2016 American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) convention.** Dell Robinson reviewed issues from the Division II football coaches who attended the convention in January. He noted that the Sunday night meeting with the Coaches Connection board was helpful and should be continued annually. The football committee will interact regularly with this group through Rocky Rees, the former head coach at Shippensburg who serves as the Division II liaison for Coaches Connection.

4. **Review of the 2015 polls process.**
   
a. The committee had no issues with the weekly rankings but noted the difficulty in certain regions with so many good teams. The committee discussed the impact the new criteria had on the rankings process this year.

   b. The committee reported no issues with the online scoring system or the online balloting system during the rankings period. The committee asked about the number of regional advisory committee members for a league that has less than six teams. Staff will review and provide feedback to the committee.

5. **Review of the 2015 championship.**
   
a. The committee believes KC Sporting Park is a terrific venue to host the national championship. This year provided for a wonderful experience in a sold-out atmosphere. The committee noted the efforts of Bob Boerigter and Amber Feldman from the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA), as well as Chris Wyche at Sporting Park and members of the local organizing committee. The committee will look to adjust the locker rooms for the future so that the team on the opposite sideline will have the shorter walk to the locker room.

   b. The committee reviewed evaluations and also had videoconferences with the two championship teams. Overall, the feedback from both teams was very positive. Each noted that the playing surface was excellent, and players and coaches enjoyed the community engagement that took place on Friday. Each team believed there was enough time to properly prepare for the game while not being overwhelmed with required activities. The pre-game team walks were well received by both teams as was the banquet on Thursday night.

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c. NCAA staff provided the committee with media survey results from the championship. The committee discussed the number of media on the sidelines during the game and is comfortable with that number if the media are serving in an official capacity. Staff recommended that for 2016, overflow media seating be offered in the Bud Light Fan Zone area that can be blocked off for media. Staff also recommended using a photographer pass that can be provided to bona fide media, which does provide access to the playing field. Finally, staff noted that a coaches credential should be provided that allows access to the coaches booth in the press box, as well as additional postgame access credentials for teams.

d. The committee noted that television ratings for the championship game were flat from the previous year. The committee discussed different starting times, as this year’s game was positioned in a competitive time slot, but the committee believes that the current time slot is best for the championship. The committee also asked staff to check on television opportunities with ESPN for the semifinals to be on a linear channel as well as streamed on ESPN3.

e. The committee believes the hotel this year was much better than in previous years. Members noted, however, that the catering costs were high, though the room rate was generous. Participating teams noted the quality of the hotel and believed that the door hangers were a nice touch to the championship. The committee will reach out to potential hosts of preliminary-round games as rankings begin to ensure that a proper number of hotel rooms are being reserved in the event that an institution may host a preliminary-round game.

f. The committee believes that practice facilities are sufficient for the championship.

g. The committee noted the tremendous security around the venue, and in particular to the playing field. As noted previously, the committee will look to provide additional media overflow seating and closely monitor the number of media on the sidelines.

h. The committee thought the new schedule for the week worked well and believes no changes are warranted. The committee noted that teams should be on the field for the national anthem for all playoff games. One of the participating teams indicated that Friday late afternoon/early evening was a little crowded with many activities to fit in and asked the committee to evaluate the timing of the coaches meeting and pep rally for the future.

i. The committee was pleased with the Thursday night celebration at Sporting Park and noted that the participating teams thought it was a very positive experience. The committee liked the fight songs being played as teams entered the venue upon their arrival to the celebration.
j. The committee believes that the pep rally is a nice event on the day prior. The committee will continue to note that teams are not required to attend but that team bands and cheer squads are strongly encouraged to attend when possible.

k. The committee agreed to ask the Division II governance group to provide enough student-athlete gifts that would cover the entire travel party, not just the squad size. While the gifts are much appreciated, there are additional student-athletes who attend the banquet who are not included in the official squad size.

6. **Discussion with NCAA chief medical officer.** The football committee had a lengthy discussion with the NCAA Chief Medical Officer Dr. Brian Hainline on a number of topics related to health and safety in football. Dr. Hainline discussed the upcoming Football Health and Safety Summit and hopes to have results in late spring to share with the committee. The committee discussed the current playing and practice season model with regard to the potential for student-athletes in football to play for 16 consecutive weeks and how that could be adjusted in the future. The committee asked for feedback on a model that allows 12 weeks to play 11 games, but this also impacts the start date of practice and the acclimation period. Dr. Hainline believes that data will help those involved with the sport to make smart decisions on the health and safety of student-athletes. Dr. Hainline also expressed his concern for student-athlete mental health, and that in his opinion, it is more of an issue than concussions.

7. **Finance review.** The committee discussed travel related to the football championship and noted that the championship had nine flights this year vs. 10 the year prior, and that this year had the expanded bracket. However, charter flight costs were higher due to the long travel to and from Humboldt State for the first two rounds of the championship. The move from 500 to 600 miles for drives vs. flights reduced the number of flights that would have been necessary by three.

8. **Officials.** The committee was pleased that all conferences were provided with at least one game during the playoffs this year. There were no issues with DV Sport with regard to instant replay at the semifinals and championship. The committee is firmly behind the officials evaluation process that has been in place for several years and believes that the quality of officiating is improving annually. The committee appreciates the efforts of the officiating subcommittee, led by Phil Laurie. The committee wants to obtain additional feedback from the membership with regard to league officials working league games and should that continue to occur.

9. **Selection criteria.** The committee reviewed the new criteria implemented in 2015. The committee believed overall that it may have been more difficult to rank and select teams but will need more than one year to evaluate. The committee wants to ensure that only Division II teams are included in the criteria regarding records vs. .500 teams or better. Also, the
committee asked staff to research what a performance indicator might look like for football and to provide feedback to the committee for the future.

10. Earned access/automatic qualification. The committee discussed the merits of automatic qualification following the recent legislation adopted at the 2016 NCAA Convention to allow sport committees that administer championships with brackets of fewer than 48 teams to apply for AQ. While the football committee had been leaning toward recommending AQ for football, members decided to delay recommending AQ until further study has been completed. The committee wants to evaluate how automatic qualification would impact selections once the new realignment takes effect beginning in 2017, including how conference championship games impact AQ, and subsequently the three at-large berths that are available in each region.

11. Regional alignment. The committee discussed the new regional alignment approved in September that will be effective with the 2017 championship. The committee is very pleased with the alignment and will continue to update the membership to ensure they understand the implementation date.

12. Game times. The committee voted to adjust the starting time of all playoff games to 1 p.m. local time and will allow a slide of one hour either way as requested by the host institution.

13. Governance update. Division II Vice President Terri Steeb Gronau joined the meeting to discuss issues related to the championship in Kansas City as well as other matters. Ms. Steeb Gronau was pleased with the championship in Kansas City and the energetic atmosphere in the sold-out venue.

14. Legislation review. NCAA staff updated the committee on the recent NCAA Convention. The committee discussed the current start dates for football and learned that women’s soccer may have an interest in an earlier start date as well. The committee also discussed the potential deregulation of financial aid and a potential dead period around the American Football Coaches Association convention.

15. Coaches Connection. Rocky Rees joined the meeting via teleconference to discuss topics from the annual meeting and how he can assist the football committee through the AFCA Coaches Connection. Staff provided updates from the annual meeting, specifically regarding automatic qualification and seeding of the final four teams. Mr. Rees will report back to the Coaches Connection board for feedback.

16. Football committee reunion. The committee wants to explore a football committee reunion next year in Kansas City. Staff will work with the Division II governance structure to study logistics and costs.
17. **Annual meeting dates.** The committee will meet February 6-8, 2017, in Indianapolis.

18. **Manual updates.** The committee reviewed and updated the tournament host and committee operations manuals as necessary.

*Committee chair:* Dell Robinson, Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference  
*Staff Liaison:* Donnie Wagner, Championships and Alliances

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<tr>
<th>NCAA Division II Football Committee</th>
<th>February 8-10, 2016, Meeting</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attendees:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reid Amos, Mountain East Conference.</td>
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<td>Dick Christy, University of North Carolina, Pembroke; Peach Belt Conference.</td>
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<td>Michael McBroom, West Texas A&amp;M University; Lone Star Conference.</td>
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<td>Steven Mullins, Arkansas Tech University; Great American Conference.</td>
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<td>Joe Reich, Wingate University; South Atlantic Conference.</td>
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<td>Dell Robinson, Great Lake Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.</td>
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<td>Nick Smith, Assumption College; Northeast-10 Conference.</td>
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<td>Kent Weiser, Emporia State University; Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association.</td>
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<td><strong>Absentees:</strong></td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Guests in Attendance:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rocky Rees, Liaison to the Football Coaches Connection (via teleconference).</td>
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<td><strong>NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:</strong></td>
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<td>Donnie Wagner, Championships and Alliances</td>
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<td><strong>Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:</strong></td>
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<td>Amanda Conklin, Academic and Membership Affairs</td>
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<td>Terri Steeb Gronau, Division II Governance</td>
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<td>Brian Hainline, Chief Medical Officer</td>
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<td>Roberta Page, Championships and Alliances</td>
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<td>Phil Pierce, Championships and Alliances</td>
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<td>Juanita Sheely, Finance</td>
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<td>Natalie Steger, Championships and Alliances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katie Willett, Academic and Membership Affairs</td>
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