REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION III MEN’S ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE
JUNE 1-3, 2015, ANNUAL MEETING

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative Items.
   - None.

2. Nonlegislative Items.
   a. Automatic Qualification.
      (1) Recommendation. That the following seven conferences be approved for automatic qualification to the 2016 NCAA Division III Men’s Ice Hockey Championship: ECAC DIII Men’s East Hockey League; ECAC DIII Northeast Hockey League; Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference; Midwest Collegiate Hockey Association; Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; New England Small College Athletic Conference; and State University of New York Athletic Conference.
      Anticipated Pool Allocations
      Pool A - 7
      Pool B - 1
      Pool C - 3
      (2) Effective Date. September 1, 2015.
      (3) Rationale. Each conference meets the requirements of Bylaw 31.3.2 and has completed the automatic-qualification declaration form.
      (4) Estimated Budget Impact. None.
      (5) Student-Athlete Impact. None.
   b. Committee Chair.
      (1) Recommendation. That Don Olson, director of athletics at the College of St. Scholastica, remain as chair of the Division III Men’s Ice Hockey Committee for his last year of committee service.
      (2) Effective Date. September 1, 2015.
      (3) Rationale. Although Mr. Olson has already served a three-year appointment as chair, the intended chair for the year accepted a position at an institution that does not sponsor men’s ice hockey and, in turn, resigned her position from the
committee. Mr. Olson is an experienced and respected leader in men’s ice hockey and willing to take on the chair role for a final year. The only other candidates for chair are coaches who also coach a spring sport and carry additional campus responsibilities.

(4) **Estimated Budget Impact.** None.

(5) **Student-Athlete Impact.** None.

c. **Survey – Nonpredetermined Finals Site.**

(1) **Recommendation.** That the committee work with the NCAA research staff to survey athletics directors, coaches, and conference commissioners of institutions sponsoring ice hockey to gather feedback on a nonpredetermined finals site selection process.

(2) **Effective Date.** October 1, 2015.

(3) **Rationale.** As recently as the last decade, the men’s ice hockey championship was awarded through a nonpredetermined site selection process (i.e., the host institution was selected upon conclusion of quarterfinal competition among the advancing teams). Currently, the women’s ice hockey championship is held at a nonpredetermined finals site. While the predetermined process allows for an extended amount of planning and promotes neutrality, the committee believes taking the championship to a hotbed of Division III ice hockey with a strong fan base will enhance the student-athlete experience, eliminate the existing challenge of limited bid interest, positively impact the championship budget in team travel and game expense, and reduce the financial burden on participating teams (i.e., avoid expensive metropolitan or resort locales such as Minneapolis and Lake Placid, New York). The feedback gathered through a survey would allow the committee to determine the hosting interest and capabilities among institutions that sponsor the sport. The survey would gauge general interest in the concept along with hosting interest and capabilities.

The committee recommends that the survey be distributed in early October before the start of the ice hockey season. In turn, the committee will review the results and consider whether to recommend a change to the Division III Championships Committee. The finals site has an assigned host through the 2018 championship; the bid process for the 2019 championship and beyond is expected to begin in 2016.

(4) **Estimated Budget Impact.** None.

(5) **Student-Athlete Impact.** None.
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. **Agenda and Meeting Schedule.** The committee chair welcomed the committee members and reviewed the meeting schedule and agenda.

2. **Key Actions of the NCAA Division III Championships Committee.** The committee reviewed the actions taken by the Championships Committee in 2014-15 relevant to the work of the men’s ice hockey committee. When discussing the reimbursement changes for the year, the committee noted that coaches communicated concern about the per diem amount and the cost of feeding participants at the finals site in Minneapolis in the post-championship survey.

3. **Report of Previous Meeting.** The committee approved the 2014 annual meeting report as submitted.

4. **2015 Championship.** The committee reviewed survey results from first-round, quarterfinals, and finals site competition and made the following observations and suggestions for improvement in future years:

   - Ridder Arena was a first-class venue for the championship and allowed for several in-venue amenities, including a videoboard and enhanced team introductions. However, administration was difficult as the host conference was not local to Minneapolis, and attendance was down.

   - Team support for needs such as skate sharpening and game videotaping can benefit from better communication with schools during planning teleconferences and in printed materials. Facility capabilities and staff resources available to visiting teams should be highlighted.

   - Site representatives, national committee members and host personnel should emphasize in advance of competition a more positive game environment when discussing student and band seating sections (i.e., place close to home bench rather than visiting team bench) and plans for security personnel.

   - Finals site participant enhancements should include snack and drink packs made available to teams every day of championship rather than only on the first practice day. Depending on venue set-up, future hosts should consider a players lounge to include food and drink and entertainment for participants (e.g., table tennis, gaming
system, etc.). In addition, the team photographs were well received, but should be improved with the production of a larger photograph placed in a cardboard frame.

- Language for team ticket allocation will be updated to provide better clarity to participating teams. The committee agreed to review policies of other team sports (e.g., men’s basketball) for ideas about ticket administration.

5. **American Hockey Coaches Association Meeting.** The committee reviewed the report staff presented to the Division III coaches during the May 2015 AHCA convention.

6. **Finals Site Host Determination.** The committee discussed the challenges and benefits of conducting finals site competition at a predeterm ined site. Refer to Nonlegislative Action Item 2-c.

7. **Sport Sponsorship and Conference Alignment.** The committee reviewed the sport sponsorship list and discussed anticipated additions for the coming year and beyond. Based on anticipated growth, the committee expects sponsorship to call for a bracket size of 12 (up from 11) for the 2016-17 championship year. Upon confirmation of sponsorship growth, the committee will submit a recommendation to the Championships Committee to request an increase in bracket size.

8. **2016 Automatic Qualification (AQ) and Pool Allocation.** Refer to Nonlegislative Action Item 2-a.

9. **Size and Configuration of Bracket.** The committee discussed a proposal to change the championship format to designate championship berths by sport region if the bracket size increases to 12 teams (refer to Informational Item 7). With two-thirds of sponsoring schools in the East region, the proposal calls for eight teams from the East region and four teams from the West region with teams competing for a region championship to then advance to a single-round final championship game. While the concept would eliminate the challenge of making cross-region comparisons in the selections process, it would present additional challenges, including a possible imbalance of AQ to at-large teams (i.e., the East region holds a greater number of the AQ berths), inequity in the number of rounds of competition, and a reduction in the number of teams having a finals site championship experience.

10. **Officials.** The committee met with the NCAA national coordinator of men’s ice hockey officials to discuss the following topics: 1) the use of video replay in-game and postgame;
2) application of supplementary discipline in conjunction with the championships; and 3) the potential for officiating fee increases.

11. **Joint Discussion with Division III Women’s Ice Hockey Committee.** The committee discussed various topics with the women’s ice hockey committee, including the following:

- **Coordination of Men’s Quarterfinals and Women’s Finals Site Host Determination.** The committees discussed hosting scenarios for institutions that compete in both the women’s finals and the men’s quarterfinals, which now occur on the same weekend. (Note: This is due to a change to the men’s championship date formula that went into effect in 2015.) The committees agreed that potential hosts will be required to notify the committees before site selection which of the two rounds they will host in the event they advance in both sports and earn the opportunity to host either round. The overlapping championship schedules preclude an institution from hosting both a men’s quarterfinal and the women’s finals.

- **Selection Criteria – Division II Opponents.** The committees discussed the limited number of Division II institutions that sponsor ice hockey and concern for the health of the sport based on anticipated changes in Division III ice hockey conference alignment. Both committees acknowledged the challenge in playing Division II opponents (i.e., results considered only in secondary criteria), though they agreed on the value of helping to maintain Division II ice hockey programs. The men’s ice hockey committee asked staff to gather more information about the potential for Division II institutions to reclassify hockey programs to Division III.

12. **Governance Update.** NCAA governance staff reviewed the following topics: 1) budget planning; 2) the playing and practice seasons review; 3) 2016 legislative proposals to date; 4) Division III working groups; 5) updates from the NCAA Sport Science Institute; and 6) the upcoming launch of Division III committee training videos.

13. **2015-16 Committee Calendar.** The committee reviewed the committee calendar and asked that a teleconference be added in October or November to review committee orientation and planning for the season as well as a predetermined date for the site representative planning teleconference.

14. **National and Regional Advisory Committees.** NCAA staff reviewed the process for securing RAC appointments from conference commissioners and the list of replacements needed for the 2015-16 season.
15. **Review of championship manuals.** The committee spent limited time reviewing championship manuals, but will provide a more focused review leading up to the 2015-16 season.

*Committee Chair:* Don Olson, College of St. Scholastica, Northern Collegiate Hockey Association

*Staff Liaison:* Liz Turner Suscha, Championships and Alliances

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<th>June 1-3, 2015, Annual Meeting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Kangas, Williams College</td>
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<td>Don Olson, College of St. Scholastica</td>
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<td>Dan Stauber, University of Wisconsin-Superior</td>
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<td>Michelle Walsh, State University of New York, Geneseo</td>
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Other Attendees:

Frank Cole, NCAA national coordinator of men’s ice hockey officials;
Laura Peterson-Mlynski, NCAA;
Liz Turner Suscha, NCAA.