



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COMMITTEE
JUNE 6-8, 2017, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- **None.**

2. Nonlegislative items.

- a. 2017 host honorarium. The committee approved the \$200,000 host honorarium for the Big 12 Conference as host of the 2017 Women's Final Four.
- b. Release of top 16 rankings. Feedback on the release of top 16 rankings was positive, particularly from ESPN. ESPN asked the committee to release its top 16 ranking in a bracket format and that two of the releases occur on ESPN's new Thursday national platform. The committee approved releasing three top 16 rankings; the first two on Thursdays, with the top four teams assigned to their potential regional, and the last on ESPN's Big Monday with potential regional assignments for all 16 teams.
- c. ESPN access to team huddles. ESPN asked for video access to team huddles, as has been granted during the regular season. After discussion, the committee approved giving each participating team the option of allowing ESPN video-only access to its team huddles during the tournament.
- d. Automatic qualification for the 2018 championship. The committee recommended that the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee award the following 32 conferences automatic qualification status for the 2017 championship: America East Conference; American Athletic Conference; Atlantic Coast Conference; Atlantic Sun Conference; Atlantic 10 Conference; Big East Conference; Big Sky Conference; Big South Conference; Big Ten Conference; Big 12 Conference; Big West Conference; Colonial Athletic Association; Conference USA; Horizon League; The Ivy League; Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference; Mid-American Conference; Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference; Missouri Valley Conference; Mountain West Conference; Northeast Conference; Ohio Valley Conference; Pac-12 Conference; Patriot League; Southeastern Conference; Southern Conference; Southland Conference; Southwestern Athletic Conference; The Summit League; Sun Belt Conference; West Coast Conference; and Western Athletic Conference.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Executive Session.** The committee conducted an executive session to begin the meeting.

National Collegiate Athletic Association

Supporting student-athlete success on the field, in the classroom and for life

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

2. **Welcome, introduction of new committee member(s) and announcements.** Terry Gawlik welcomed the group. Anucha Browne addressed concerns regarding how committee members are recommended to and populated by the nominating committee, then approved by the NCAA Division I Council.
3. **Review of meeting schedule.** Andrea Gaither reviewed the meeting agenda and schedule of presenters.
4. **Division I Women's Basketball Championship Sport Committee mission statement and conflict of interest policy.** Ms. Gawlik and Ms. Browne reviewed each of these statements and emphasized the need for confidentiality surrounding committee discussions, the team selection process, the site selection process and NCAA policies.
5. **Meeting with Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) representative.** Danielle Donehew discussed the momentum coming out of the 2017 championship and what a positive experience Dallas was for the sport. The WBCA had its highest convention attendance ever in Dallas this year. The success is attributed to the change in game dates, and the fact that the convention was conducted over a weekend with programming condensed from five days to four. Because the WBCA is working to build a 365-day pipeline of education and curriculum to continuously develop coaches, the former extensive five-day programming is not as necessary.

Coquese Washington is rotating off as president of the WBCA, but one of her priorities as president was to develop a mentoring program for coaches. Mentoring circles just completed their first year with 400 coaches participating. Division I membership is the largest segment within the WBCA, but the association is working to expand membership at other levels – Division II, Division III, junior college, high school, etc. Debbie Richardson echoed the success of the mentor circles, and Atlantic 10 Conference coaches who participated recommended that anyone who did not participate become involved in these circles. Leslie Claybrook also suggested having an administrator contact for those mentor circles so they can provide input and feedback for growth. Ms. Donehew noted that Jennifer Rizzotti is the incoming president, and the vice president-elect is Christy Thomaskutty from Division III Emory University.

The WBCA is also building its digital content and library as a continuous resource for coaches. Jerrell Price suggested targeting practice players, video coordinators and student managers who aspire to be directors of basketball operations on their path to coaching. He suggested formalizing that pipeline and encouraging it as a career path. Ms. Donehew explained the work of the diversity and inclusion committee within the WBCA, which reports to and advises the board. This newly formed committee reviews concerns relative to many segments of the coaching community – ethnic minorities, women, LGBT, hearing impaired, parents, etc. Ms. Browne commended the work of the diversity and inclusion committee, but also recommended

that this committee set some goals and measurements to assess progress and where improvement can be made annually. Teresa Philips also noted that there may be a disconnect between the WBCA's work on inclusion and campus administrators, who are the decision-makers and hiring officers. Other initiatives from the WBCA include communicating with the "Generation iY" athletes and their parents, as well as dealing with mental health issues on campus.

Ms. Donehew noted that many coaches who went through the Mock Selection exercise in previous years are not up to speed on the latest changes in bracketing. The group also discussed how to better explain to coaches the education and accountability structure that game officials go through. Messaging needs to extend beyond the national level relative to the championship to include the conference-level handling of issues during the regular season. The group brought to Ms. Donehew's attention that neutral regional sites continue to struggle and regional attendance was at its lowest in 20 years. Ms. Donehew noted that the executive committee has discussed neutral regional sites at length, in addition to ordering a study to support the format of neutral regional sites and marketing aggressively to encourage teams and coaches to attend regional sites and support the model, but that has not been fruitful. The WBCA will continue to discuss the issue at its July meeting. Ms. Browne noted that despite WBCA and NCAA efforts, fans are not showing up at regional sites, and she emphasized that the WBCA must be open to these discussions.

6. Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee Update. Ms. Browne reported that the Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee will begin a strategic planning process, led by Chris Dawson from the Pac-12 Conference. Strategic planning for women's basketball and the championship is the main priority of the WBOC and therefore will engage all members of the WBOC, rather than only a subset. Ms. Browne also reviewed the changes coming to the WBOC in the next cycle due to job changes and committee rotation.

- a. Advancement Committee. Tracie Hitz reported that during the year of planning, the advancement committee worked in three subgroups – marketing, branding and professional development. The committee is working on a potential branding campaign for women's basketball that would be channeled across the collegiate game, the WNBA and USA Basketball. The committee also is piloting an audit program for women's basketball institutional marketing plans to provide guidance to, as well as measure the success of, on-campus marketers.
- b. Competition Committee. Tina Krah reported that this group is reviewing limitations/guidelines around advertising on the playing courts. Advertising on the floor does not adversely affect the playing surface, and limiting it may affect limited-resource institutions. Other topics the committee is discussing include data tracking and wearable technology. Data and statistics are within the purview of the competition committee, but wearable technology has been deferred to the NCAA's Sport Science Institute.

7. Review of 2017 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship (all rounds).

- a. Attendance report. Rick Nixon reported that overall attendance increased 4 percent for the championship, though the regionals attracted the lowest attendance since 1997.
- b. Host financial data, ticket sales and historical financial data. Ms. Hitz reviewed the early financial analysis for the championship. Final numbers are still being compiled, but there are several sites that consistently lose money when they host women's basketball. The committee discussed ways to hold institutions accountable for selling tickets and increasing attendance in order to host tournament games. Staff will gather more data about how other championships manage budgets with host sites and further analyze the possible implications and perceptions about implementing such policies.
- c. Travel analysis. Ms. Krah reviewed the breakdown of travel for the 2017 championship. Charter costs were lower by 17 percent this year over last year. The NCAA travel department has been proactively working in advance of the forecasted charter shortage and does not feel it will directly affect the championship. The NCAA relationship with Southwest Airlines is strong, and the airline continues to allow teams to use their fleet after 9 p.m. For future discussions, Debbie Richardson proposed the committee review and discuss setting a threshold for moves within the bracket to accommodate travel.
- d. Misconduct. The committee reviewed the response letters and agreed that private reprimands for each institution were acceptable.
- e. Review of championship operations for preliminary rounds.
 - (1) First- and second-round site selection specifications. Meredith Cleaver reviewed the criteria for hosting outside of an institution's home facility. The committee decided to keep the policy as written, as it provides flexibility to make exceptions if needed.
 - (2) Lodging. Jerrell Price reviewed two site-specific issues during the championship relative to hotels. Generally, hotel issues were minimized compared to previous years due to Mr. Price following up with each of the top 16 institutions after a published ranking.
 - (3) Facility operations, game operations and scheduling. Rachel Kay reviewed feedback from teams, and the committee decided to assign practice and shoot-around times consistently each day by seed. Time slots will be assigned in high seed game number one, low seed game number one, high seed game number two, low seed game number two order for all days, not reversing on game days. Diane Turnham also suggested giving teams a deadline to notify the committee or site representative if they will use their shoot-around time, such as 6 p.m. the day before.

f. Review of 2017 Women's Final Four – Dallas.

- (1) Strategic plan. Ms. Hitz reviewed the staff strategic plan for 2017, noting the many successes of the Women's Final Four in Dallas.
- (2) Schedule of events. Ms. Kay reviewed some key takeaways from the new Women's Final Four events schedule. The schedule will continue to evolve, and Columbus has already proposed some new ideas for 2018.
- (3) Transportation – Anthony Travel. Ms. Krah reported that the first year using Anthony Travel for the Women's Final Four bus system was successful. In the future, the NCAA is considering using Uber for transporting staff and committee members to non-official events. The LOC is constantly challenged with securing good drivers and meeting insurance requirements.
- (4) Student-athlete experiences and mementos. Mr. Price reported that the feedback on Salute, team lounge, team gifting suite and mementos throughout the championship was very positive.
- (5) Financial update and review. Ms. Hitz reported that the final budget numbers for Dallas are still being finalized, but that the LOC was tracking submissions to Texas' Major Events Trust Fund and does not anticipate any issues in closing the books.

8. Matters related to national officiating program.

- a. Review of 2017 NCAA Division I women's basketball championship season. June Courteau noted the strong partnership among the conference coordinators, which helps hold each other accountable and work together to resolve issues relative to the game. The use of the digital Hub has proved valuable to push out clips very close to real time, so that plays and issues within the game are relevant. Postgame meetings with officials have helped, and those conversations are shared with conference coordinators.
- b. Review of 2017 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship officials' selection, assignment and advancement process/Officiating Selection Index. Ms. Courteau discussed the success of a refined watch list process. Updates to the watch list are allowing Ms. Courteau and the regional evaluators to see every possible official who may be nominated and considered for the championship. She and the regional evaluators watched or attended close to 500 games during the regular season. For 2018, she recommends not predetermining the second-round officials before the first round is played so that all officials know they have the chance to advance based on performance. The current system sets the perception of second-round officials having something "taken away" if they do not

advance to the second round. The change would involve all first-round officials booking one-way fares to the site, then booking return flights after notification of advancement. The travel department estimates this practice would have a budget impact of \$10,000-15,000. The committee will consider how this falls into the priority list for budget justification and implementation in the future. Also, similar to the NCAA bracketing application, NCAA software engineers are working on new assigning software for basketball officials to make conflicts easier to track.

- c. Precision Time and DVSPORT technology. Precision Time worked as needed during the championship. Due to some malfunctions during the regular season, two protocols were implemented for the championship, but neither was activated. DVSPORT has upgraded the system to allow six review angles instead of the previous four. The committee commended DVSPORT for its performance and the conduct of technicians on site.
- d. NCAA Women's Basketball Rules Committee update. New rules books are in the production phase. The Playing Rules Oversight Panel meets June 13 to move the process forward. The committee discussed the impact of adding 10 feet to the coaching box on the sideline.

9. 2018 Women's Final Four update and Columbus Local Organizing Committee progress.
Ms. Browne noted that the city of Columbus is excited about hosting the event and about exposing the NCAA fan base to the city.

10. Matters related to media/television/social media.

- a. 2017 Division I Women's Basketball Championship ratings. Natalie Steger briefed the committee on championship ratings from ESPN. The entire championship was up 4 percent, while the three Women's Final Four games were up almost 20 percent and the national championship game was up 29 percent.
- b. Social media initiatives. Mr. Nixon reviewed social media analytics from the championship. Growth in impressions and engagements far exceeded the goal of 20 percent. The number of posts to each channel was strategically lower than 2016 to drive meaningful content. Twitter and Facebook impressions for the entire championship grew by 299 percent, Women's Final Four impressions grew by 373 percent and postseason engagements grew by 309 percent over 2016.
- c. 2017 Mock Selection Exercise – August 22. Mr. Nixon reported that planning for the next Mock Selection exercise is already underway, with more than 20 confirmed participants thus far. The committee discussed potential invitees for the exercise.

- d. National Media Day. Mr. Nixon briefed the committee that ESPN again supports a women's basketball national media day at the ESPN campus. He and Ms. Steger are working to finalize the date and attendees for the event.

11. Meet with ESPN representatives. ESPN presented a very positive recap of the 2017 championship and noted an increase in new fans after the compelling semifinals. The studio ratings during the championship, however, were down across the board, and the selection special, specifically, was down 8 percent. ESPN is looking to revamp the entire Selection Show, and integrating an interview with the committee chair would be welcome.

ESPN is looking forward to another National Media Day in November to create early buzz going into the season. The group discussed several ways to grow the event and link it back to women's basketball practices and activities on campus. ESPN feels that they have maximized their potential with Big Monday scheduling, so they have created five full-national windows on Thursdays for the month of January, up to February 1.

The group noted talent changes for next season and ways to improve the studio show, and ESPN previewed its new animation and graphics package that will be used in broadcasting all college basketball games. ESPN acknowledged a few issues that have been addressed for the future, including one with a coach on headset during live play. The committee supports the use of headsets to interview coaches, but only when a sideline reporter is not on site. The headset interviews need to be activated only during timeouts and follow the same guidelines as the sideline reporter interviews. ESPN representatives added that they are looking to stagger tip times for the championship to get to action quicker and minimize the studio time.

12. Committee work.

- a. Review of 2017 selection, seeding and bracketing process. The committee noted plans for the selection meeting to begin Thursday evening, pending West Coast arrivals, to allow more time to get through the agenda.
- b. 2017-18 Subcommittee assignments. The committee will review this at their next meeting.
- c. Women's Final Four site selection process. Ms. Cleaver reviewed the plan to begin the bid process for Women's Final Four cities in 2021 and beyond. The committee discussed future potential for a combined Men's and Women's Final Four with mixed reviews. Some felt it was worth exploring to elevate the women's game by aligning with the men's championship, but many felt there would be issues with feeling subordinate to the men's championship. The committee continues to support the further discussion of a joint championship with men's basketball if both championships and student-athletes can be celebrated together in an equivalent manner.

13. Conference-related matters.

- a. Review and discussion regarding conference realignment. Mr. Nixon reviewed the changes from 2016-17 to 2017-18, including conference moves for Wichita State to the American Athletic Conference and Valparaiso to the Missouri Valley Conference. Additionally, UMass Lowell, Abilene Christian, Incarnate Word and Grand Canyon are all reclassifying into Division I.
- b. Review proposed conference monitoring assignments. The committee reviewed proposed conference monitoring assignments for the coming season.

14. Future meeting schedule. Ms. Cleaver reviewed the list of future committee meetings and teleconferences.

Committee Chair: Terry Gawlik, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Big Ten Conference
Staff Liaison(s): Anucha Browne, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee June 6-8, 2017, Meeting
Attendees:
Rhonda Bennett, University of Nevada, Reno; Mountain West Conference.
Jill Bodensteiner, University of Notre Dame; Atlantic Coast Conference.
DeJuena Chizer, University of Houston; American Athletic Conference.
Leslie Claybrook, Southeastern Conference.
Terry Gawlik, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Big Ten Conference.
Mary Ellen Gillespie, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay; Horizon League.
Teresa Phillips, Tennessee State University; Ohio Valley Conference.
Diane Turnham, Middle Tennessee State University; Conference USA.
Debbie Richardson, Atlantic 10 Conference.
Tamica Smith Jones, University of California, Riverside; Big West Conference.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
June Courteau, National Coordinator of Officiating.
Danielle Donehew, Women's Basketball Coaches Association
Kate Jackson, ESPN.
Pat Lowry, ESPN
Lindsey Ross, ESPN.

Carol Stiff, ESPN.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Anucha Browne, Championships and Alliances
Meredith Cleaver, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Andrea Gaither, Championships and Alliances
Dan Gavitt, Championships and Alliances
Tracie Hitz, Championships and Alliances.
Rachel Kay, Championships and Alliances.
Julie Kimmons, Championships and Alliances (via teleconference)
Tina Krah, Championships and Alliances.
Rick Nixon, Championships and Alliances.
Jerrell Price, Championships and Alliances.
Natalie Steger, Championships and Alliances