ACTION ITEMS.

1. Nonlegislative items.

- Update to cross country championships selection criteria.

  (1) Recommendation. That the Division I Competition Oversight Committee approve updates to the following cross country selection criteria language.

  a. Change from the word “may” to “will” in selection criteria item 3c, which currently states, “In situations where the head-to-head wins and losses are equal between teams under consideration (e.g., two teams with 1-1 or 2-2, etc., records against each other), the committee may give greater consideration to the competition conducted closest to the regional championship date.”

  b. Remove item 3d from the criteria. Item 3d states, “The committee will break regular-season ties between teams under consideration for the sole purpose of awarding wins (points) for the at-large selection process. The committee will apply the tie-breaking procedures outline below.”

  c. In item 4b of the selection criteria, add “win percentage” in parentheses following “cumulative record.” The updated language would read, “The committee evaluates the cumulative record (win percentage) against common opponents, including multiple wins and/or losses against an opponent(s).”

  d. Change item 4c from “In situations where the record against common opponents’ data is equal between teams under consideration, the committee may give greater consideration to the competition conducted closest to the regional championship date” to “In situations where the win percentage against common opponents is equal between teams under consideration, the team that finished higher at its regional competition will be selected. If a tie still remains, the point differential between tied teams and the last automatic team qualifier (2nd place) at their regional will be compared. The team with the smallest differential will advance.”

  (2) Effective date. September 1, 2016

  (3) Rationale. The following are specific rationale for each item noted above.
a. The word “may” suggests the committee may not choose to give greater consideration, when the intent is for the committee to always give greater consideration in this situation. The word “will” clarifies the action the committee is to take.

b. This language can be removed as language was added to the rules book in the last cycle that requires all ties to be broken in results.

c. The committee noted that sometimes it is hard to compare a cumulative record without taking into consideration win percentage. If one team is 3-2 and another is 5-4 versus a common opponent, it is hard to decide the success of those two teams against that opponent without calculating win percentage.

d. As noted above, the current language uses the term “record,” which is not explicitly defined. In the past, “record” has sometimes been interpreted to mean “most wins” against common opponents. In some instances, “most wins” is clearly the better record. However, there are cases in which “most wins” might not be the better “record,” such as 4-7 versus 3-0, for example. The term “win percentage” is a more objective, definitive term than “record.”

The current rule gives more weight to performances against common opponents later in the season, be it by one day, one week or one month, which the committee does not believe is the best measure to determine the more deserving team to advance to the national championships. If two teams involved in a tie have equal “records” or “win percentages” against a common opponent but one recorded a narrow victory over the common opponent two days subsequent to the other’s lopsided victory over the same opponent, it would not seem fair to choose the team with the narrow victory over the team with the lopsided victory. Further, two institutions involved in a tie for an at-large position might have inequitable opportunities versus common opponents late in the season based solely on conference affiliation. The conference championships are the last competitive opportunity before the NCAA regional championships. One team that is involved in a tie for an at-large qualifying spot might race against a common opponent at the conference championship while another team involved in the tie might not. One team might face a common opponent that both have defeated in the past, while another might face a common opponent to which both have lost. There are also likely scenarios in which one team involved in the tie faces multiple common opponents at the conference championship while the other might face only one.

In order to add credibility to performance at the end of the season and to make the NCAA regional championships as relevant as possible when selecting
teams for the NCAA championships, the committee believes it is better to award the at-large position to the team with the better performance at the NCAA regional championship based on place finish. It is possible that the teams under consideration might have the same place finish at their respective regional championship. To break such a tie, the committee would consider how close each team would have been to an AQ selection by evaluating point differential. The team with the smallest point differential, when compared to the last AQ, will advance to the championships.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. 2016 indoor track and field national championships. The NCAA Division I Men’s and Women’s Track and Field and Cross Country Committee reviewed and verified start lists and determined opening bar heights and progressions for the vertical jumps. The committee also prepared a checklist of various notes and details to be included in the coaches’ packets.

2. Cross country.

a. The committee discussed the current regional cross country structure and agreed to continue reviewing, researching and discussing the regional system (including the current format and the qualifying standards) that is best for the student-athlete experience and sustainability of the championships.

b. The committee reviewed student-athletes who do not finish races (DNF) and the impact DNFs could have on A vs. B teams when it comes to selecting at-large teams for the championships. Currently, the selection criterion states that “during the at-large selection process, institutions can only accumulate wins against any opponent’s ‘A’ team. An ‘A’ team is considered to have competed if four or more of those who compete at the regional qualifying meet finished the regular-season race.” Some in the cross country community believe the manner in which “A teams” are defined should be changed.

The committee noted “A teams” need to be defined based either on who starts or who finishes a race. Both methods have inherent flaws and, in very rare circumstances, one method might lead to a slightly different “at large” field selection than the other. The committee’s decision to define an “A team” with respect to finishers rather than starters is based on the fact that it is virtually impossible to know with 100% certainty who did and who did not start a race, especially in larger fields that might include up to 400 entrants.
Committee members believe that the time, organizational and financial burden to host institutions attempting to verify actual starters far outweighs the risk of an “A team” changing to a “B team” due to DNFs in a way that affects at-large selections.

The only way to verify the competitors who actually start a race is to establish a timing pad that extends across the entire start line. Even this method presumes that every student-athlete will be wearing his or her chip and that no chips are defective. This is not realistic. To date, no timing company has the capacity to pad the entire start line for any of the larger races. Further, chip timing is not required for regular-season meets. Changing that requirement would place significant financial burden on host institutions. Other possible methods don’t actually verify who did and did not start. Using a declaration list, for example, is ineffective, as the list of entrants who are declared and intending to race, even the night before a competition, often changes by race time. Checking individual runners in at the start line requires extra officials, forces athletes to suspend warm-up and preparation for 20 minutes or more while waiting to be checked in, and still does not ensure that an athlete actually lines up and starts when the gun goes off. Finally, because it is difficult to determine with certainty who actually started a race, using starters to define “A teams” risks misidentifying “B teams” as “A teams.” Future bubble teams could then be awarded “at large points” for defeating “B teams.” For these reasons, the committee believes it is impractical to define an “A team” based on starters.

The main objection to defining an “A team” based on finishers rather than starters is that it potentially alters at-large selections to the national championships. However, in order for the method of defining “A teams” based on finishers to produce a different “at large” field than the method of defining “A teams” based on starters, all four of the following rare conditions must be met:

1. One team that begins a competition as an “A team” must have enough DNFs to change to a “B team” mid-race.
2. The defeated team from condition 1 must end up as one of the 18 automatic qualifiers or as one of the first 12 at-large qualifiers.
3. A future bubble team must defeat the team in condition 1.
4. The team from condition 1 is added to the field at or before an iteration in the selection process when the bubble team from condition 3 is one “at large point” short of selection.

It is possible that a runner or runners who start and do not finish could cause what started as an “A team” to finish as a “B team.” However, the likelihood of DNFs changing an “A team” to a “B team” is significantly diminished by the fact that an “A team” requires only four of an institution’s seven team members that compete at the NCAA Regional Championships. During most competitions, most teams start 7-10 runners and are thus
insulated from “A/B team” designation changes due to DNFs. Moreover, this is only relevant if the team changing from an “A team” to a “B team” is one of the approximate 10 percent of all teams that is selected to the national championships and it is beaten by a future bubble team, and the future bubble team ends up one point short of selection during an iteration of the selection process after the first team is selected.

The committee compared the risks to the integrity of the selection process and the time, costs and organizational demands for host institutions for the two methods of determining “A/B teams.” The committee feels that using finishers as opposed to starters is by far the superior method.

c. The committee decided to move the start times of the men’s and women’s races at the cross country national championships up one hour. In 2016, the women will race at 11 a.m. and the men will race at noon.

3. Outdoor track and field.

- The committee noted concerns from coaches regarding who has access to coaching boxes during the outdoor championship events. To help clarify access to these boxes at the championship and to ensure that only one coach (who has a competing student-athlete) has access to the box, the host institution will produce event-specific wristbands to identify who has access to the coaching box. Additionally, a committee member will be assigned to each event to help oversee the coaching boxes and make sure coaches and institutions are not abusing this policy. Those that do abuse the policy will be subject to possible misconduct.

4. Committee vacancy nominees.

- Committee members reviewed nominees from the Division I Nominating Committee to fill vacancies on the track and field and cross country committee beginning in the 2016-17 academic year and provided recommendations and feedback on the individuals they believe are best suited to serve.

Committee Chair: Angie Lansing, Indiana State University, Missouri Valley Conference
Staff Liaison: Jeff Mlynski, Championships and Alliances
Herman Frazier, Syracuse University; Atlantic Coast Conference.
Nicole Harvey, Western Athletic Conference.
Curt Kraft, East Carolina University; American Athletic Conference.
Angie Lansing, Indiana State University; Missouri Valley Conference.
Julie Levesque, University of Texas at El Paso; Conference USA.
Ben Paxton, Winthrop University; Big South Conference.
Shondell Reed, University of Washington; Pac-12 Conference.
Dave Smith, Oklahoma State University; Big 12 Conference.
Connie Teaberry, Northern Illinois University; Mid-American Conference.
Matt Utesch, Lehigh University; Patriot League.

**Absentees:**
None.

**Guests in Attendance:**
Sam Seemes, USTFCCCA.

**NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:**
Jeff Mlynski, Championships and Alliances.
Anjellica Rospond, Championships and Alliances.

**Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:**
None.