



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 13-14, 2017, MEETING**

KEY ITEMS.

- **Selection of chair.** The committee voted Rhonda Lundin Bennett, senior associate director of athletics and senior woman administrator at the University of Nevada, Reno, as chair for the 2018-19 season.

ACTION ITEMS.

- None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- Executive session.** The committee conducted an executive session before the meeting.
- Update from the August 21 women's basketball committee meeting and review of mock selection.** Meredith Cleaver reviewed the committee's discussion items from its August 21 meeting since not all committee members were in attendance. Rick Nixon led a review of this year's mock selection meeting. Feedback was positive regarding both the run-of-show and room setup. The group set a goal of having a representative from each of the 32 Division I conferences at one mock session so that each conference is represented for discussion. The committee also suggested adding a nonconference scheduling meeting in conjunction with the mock session, so that coaches understand the statistical significance of their nonconference schedule.
- Update from Women's Basketball Oversight Committee meeting.** Rhonda Bennet reviewed the discussions from the oversight committee's meeting in October. Discussions from that meeting were high level and strategic for the sport.
- Advancement Committee update.** Tracie Hitz updated the committee on a research project to create a uniform brand message for women's basketball, including USA Basketball and the WNBA. She also reviewed a two-year pilot program to help schools build and implement their women's basketball marketing plans. The committee emphasized the importance of ensuring the administrator, marketing contact and head coach all know about the program, as there is often a disconnect among departments. The committee also discussed other avenues for sharing women's basketball stories, including a new channel through ESPN3 in which institutions can share those stories directly.

- e. **Competition Committee update.** Tina Krah reviewed conversations from the competition committee meeting, including technology, advertising on the court and widening of the lane. The competition committee believes technology is inevitable, but is trying to determine the impact on traveling teams and how much to allow on live television. Ms. Krah noted that the progress has been slow, but the group is also reviewing actions from the men's competition committee. The competition committee also discussed three-on-three as its own competitive sport.

4. Matters related to media/television.

- a. **National Media Day recap.** Mr. Nixon reviewed the women's basketball media day on November 2 that featured participation from high-profile coaches and student-athletes. The NCAA and ESPN collaborate to select media day participants, though some conferences have reached out about wanting representation at the event. Mr. Nixon noted that the content from that day would be featured over the next several months via social media and television.
- b. **Streaming/video access.** Mr. Nixon noted the list of websites and access credentials is now posted on the committee collaboration zone.
- c. **Television schedule resources.** Mr. Nixon reviewed the decision to not compile the master television schedule this year due to issues with keeping it updated. Committee will be kept abreast of televised games via the committee collaboration zone.
- d. **Games watched form.** Mr. Nixon asked committee members to compile a running list of games watched with notes to turn in monthly. Staff will keep a master document on the collaboration zone for the committee to review. Natalie Steger will continue to send the weekly press release of top games to watch and will post on the collaboration zone.
- e. **Top 16 reveals timeline.** Ms. Cleaver reminded the committee that the first reveal will occur January 18 on ESPN. Everyone will have a chance to vote together for the first time in December. Ms. Cleaver reviewed the scheduled top 16 announcements throughout the season.

5. Matters related to officiating.

Ms. Krah noted that June Courteau's contract as national coordinator was extended in August for one year. Additionally, the NCAA programming team is currently creating officiating bracket software that will mimic the team bracketing software.

- a. **2017-18 and 2018-19 rules changes.** Ms. Krah reviewed rules changes for the coming season and noted that patience is needed, particularly early in the season, as officials adjust to interpreting and enforcing the new rules.

- b. Regional officiating clinic update.** Ms. Krah reviewed four successful regional officiating clinics. More than 1,200 officials attended, and programming included interaction with Division I head coaches.
- c. Division III national coordinator.** Ms. Krah noted that Division III women's basketball has hired a national coordinator, Mary Toberman.

6. Championship planning.

- a. Review of 2018 game dates, times and programming schedule.** Ms. Steger reviewed game dates and times for the 2018 championship.
- b. Review of 2018 Division I Women's Basketball Championship/ESPN talent assignments.** Ms. Steger reviewed new ESPN talent for the championship. Adam Amin is a new play-by-play broadcaster for women's basketball, though he has been part of the NCAA Women's College World Series team for several years. Rebecca Lobo will split her time between game color commentary and the studio show.
- c. 2018 Selection Show.** The committee discussed several ways to enhance the ESPN Selection Show. Ideas included announcing the last eight teams under consideration for the championship; strategically giving ESPN a top five "hot topics"/discussions/decisions from the selection room; previewing the eight teams in consideration for the top seed line; and offering the committee chair for an in-studio interview the Tuesday after selections. The committee emphasized the importance of making the outcomes of these teasers a positive reveal and not about who did not make it into the field. These options will be presented to ESPN for consideration.
- d. Public relations and marketing progress/plans.** Ms. Hitz reviewed plans to increase marketing for the top 16 teams and efforts to create a cohesive marketing plan from first/second rounds to regionals and through the Women's Final Four. This includes integrating the rewards program and local ambassador programs at the regional level. She also noted a revamped email marketing campaign for the Women's Final Four, explaining what a great destination Columbus is, and that upper bowl ticket sales are already ahead of goals. WBCA ticket sales have stalled, so Ms. Hitz and the Columbus Local Organizing Committee are working to send WBCA content to push out regarding Columbus and its destination value.

7. Women's Final Four update.

- a. Women's Final Four look.** Ms. Krah gave the committee a preview of the look and décor package for Columbus.

- b. New events, hospitality and association meetings.** Ms. Hitz recapped feedback from last year's Women's Final Four and how hospitality and programming is being adjusted in response. Items of note include a new Thursday kickoff event to showcase Columbus' cultural areas, the return of pregame hospitality for membership, and opening the competition venue Saturday evening to those who may not have game tickets for programming and autograph sessions. Ms. Hitz also informed the committee that Columbus has been working for several years to get the National Association of Sports Commissions to have a meeting in conjunction with Women's Final Four. The request was successful, and NASC will host its annual meeting during Women's Final Four week in Columbus. The group will be included on Women's Final Four hospitality events as an added value and to engage attendees.
- c. Fundraising.** Ms. Hitz updated the committee that Columbus has achieved half of its funding goal and expects to reach it fully by February 1. A smaller percentage, from the state of Ohio, will be collected after the event.

8. Preliminary rounds.

- a. Hotels.** Ms. Cleaver reviewed the constant issue of hotel availability for nonpredetermined first- and second-round sites. In working with Anthony Travel, a hotel agreement has been drafted for the first- and second-round bid process that is a binding agreement and commits tournament teams to stay at the selected hotel properties, which mimics the process for managing regional hotel contracts. The committee supported the new agreement and will continue to gather feedback for further evaluation.
- b. Regionals.** The committee had a lengthy discussion regarding tournament regional hosting. The committee discussed positives and negatives of the current format, as well as those if regional hosting were moved to an on-campus model with the highest remaining seeds hosting. The group favors keeping the current format, but to continue marketing efforts for these sites. The group noted the need to move away from the term "regional," as it does not resonate with basketball fans.

9. Selections resources.

- a. Regional advisory committee training.** Mr. Nixon reviewed the process for regional advisory committee rankings and calls, which will begin in early January.
- b. Team sheets.** The committee reviewed ideas for adjusting the visual representation on team sheets based on the information the committee discusses during rankings and tournament selection. The group submitted ideas to staff for implementation before the first RPI is generated in early December.

- c. **Bracketing analysis.** The committee and staff will continue to track any changes from original seeding when placing teams into the bracket, including a request to integrate it into the bracketing software.
- d. **Travel ban memo.** The committee reviewed a memo notifying membership that NCAA policies and procedures will be upheld so that state travel bans do not impact seeding and brackets. Any changes to these policies and procedures will be made by the NCAA Board of Governors.

10. Site selection processes.

- a. **2021-2024 Women's Final Four.** Ten intent-to-bid forms have been received from cities across the country. Critical items are due November 17, which include hotels inventory and rates, venue specifications and a bid questionnaire. The site selection subcommittee and NCAA staff are meeting with each city in December to discuss the submitted items. Bid finalists will be announced following the January committee meeting. Final bids are due at the end of April.
- b. **First and second rounds.** Intent-to-bid requests were sent to the membership over the summer. The bid process opens December 1 and ends January 19.
- c. **Future meetings and teleconferences.** Ms. Cleaver reviewed the teleconference and meeting schedule for the committee through the end of the year.

Committee Chair: Rhonda Bennett, University of Nevada, Reno; Mountain West Conference
Staff Liaison(s): Meredith Cleaver, Championship and Alliances

| NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee November 13-14, 2017, Meeting | |
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| Attendees: | |
| Ceal Barry, University of Colorado, Boulder; Pac-12 Conference. | |
| 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. | |
| Jeff Konya, Oakland University; Horizon League. | |
| Teresa Phillips, Tennessee State University; Ohio Valley Conference. | |
| Debbie Richardson, Atlantic 10 Conference. | |
| Tamica Smith Jones, University of California, Riverside; Big West Conference. | |

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| Diane Turnham, Middle Tennessee State University; Conference USA. |
| Absentees: |
| None. |
| Guests in Attendance: |
| None. |
| NCAA Staff Support in Attendance: |
| Meredith Cleaver. |
| Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance: |
| Andrea Gaither, Tracie Hitz, Rachel Kay, Tina Krah, Rick Nixon, Gabrielle Nottage and Natalie Steger. |