



2015 DIVISION I
FOOTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP

PRE-CHAMPIONSHIP
2015-16 MANUAL

NCAA GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

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Section 1 • Introduction

During the 2015-16 academic year, the Association will sponsor 90 national championships – 42 for men, 45 for women, and three for both men and women. Among the men's championships, three are National Collegiate Championships, 13 are Division I championships, 12 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. Among the women's championships, six are National Collegiate Championships, 12 are Division I championships, 13 are Division II championships and 14 are Division III championships. The combined men's and women's championships are National Collegiate Championships.

The Pre-Championship Manual will serve as a resource for institutions to prepare for the championship. This manual is divided into three sections: General Administrative Guidelines, Sport-Specific Information, and Appendixes.

The first section applies to policies applicable to all 90 championships, while the other two sections are sport-specific.

Section 1•1 Definitions

Pre-Championship Manual. Resource for institutions to prepare for the championship.

Administrative Meeting. Pre-championship meeting for coaches and administrators.

Appendixes. Any supplemental documents to be provided and distributed through the various resources. Championship Administrator. The NCAA staff member responsible for the operational oversight of the championship. NCAA National Committee. The sport committee with direct oversight responsibilities for the championship.

Playing Rules. The rules under which the competition will be conducted.

Predetermined Sites. Those sites that are selected to host before the participant/team selections announcement.

Preliminary Rounds. The rounds of the championship before the final or championship round.

Regional Alignment. The geographic location of institutions or regional advisory committees.

Schedule of Events. Official event schedule – includes all required activities (e.g., practices, banquets, etc.).

Selection Criteria. Policies and procedures in place to guide the selection process.

Site Selection. Policies and procedures in place to guide the site selection process.

Squad Size. Number of student-athletes per team allowed to dress in uniform and participate at the championship.

Tournament Physician. The physician designated by the host institution/conference to serve as the chief medical advisor for the championship.

Section 2 • Championship Core Statement

The championships and alliances staff strives to administer competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner so that the experience of the student-athlete is paramount.

This is attained by:

Ensuring student-athletes' optimal experience.

Executing championship events reflecting appropriate quality and values to/for stakeholders — student-athletes, coaches, administrators, member institutions, sport committees, fans, broadcast partners and corporate champions/partners.

Coordinating all aspects of the championship in an efficient, effective manner through common operating policies and practices, using internal and external resources.

Integrating championships with broadcast and corporate relationships in a manner that maintains the integrity of the championship.

Assuring effective management of the business aspects of the operation.

Enhancing the assets of the NCAA and their value by collaborating with internal and external expertise to achieve heightened exposure (e.g., community programs, fan events, banquets, anniversaries, etc.).

Section 3 • Concussion Management

[Reference: Concussion Management in Constitution 3.2.4.18 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Constitution 3.3.4.16 in the NCAA Division II Manual, and Constitution 3.2.4.16 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

The NCAA has adopted legislation that requires all active member institutions to have a concussion management plan for their student-athletes. Traveling institutions shall follow their concussion management plan while participating in NCAA championships. If a participating team lacks appropriate medical staff to activate its concussion management plan, the host championship concussion management plan will be activated.

The legislation notes, in part, that a student-athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be removed from athletics activities (e.g., competition, practice, conditioning sessions) and evaluated by a medical staff member (e.g., sports medicine staff, team physician) with experience in the evaluation and management of concussions; a student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion is precluded from returning to athletics activity for at least the remainder of that calendar day; and medical clearance for return to athletics activity shall be determined by the team physician or the physician's designee from the student-athlete's institution. In the absence of a team physician or their designee, the NCAA tournament physician will examine the student-athlete and will determine medical clearance. Within the rules of the sport and policies established for the championship, medical staff should have access to the injured student-athlete without interference (e.g., coach).

A concussion is a brain injury that may be caused by a blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an "impulsive" force transmitted to the head. Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness or other obvious signs. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the previous one (hours, days or weeks) can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having more severe and/or long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage and even death.

For further details, please refer to the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook for additional guidance on concussions online at: <http://www.ncaapublications.com/p-4374-2014-15-ncaa-sports-medicine-handbook.aspx>.

Section 4 • Conduct

Section 4•1 Certification of Eligibility/Availability

[Reference: Certification of Eligibility/Availability in Constitution 3.2.4 and Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 31.2.1.7.1, 31.2.1.7.1.2 and 31.2.2 in the NCAA Division I and Division III Manuals and Constitution 3.3.4 in the NCAA Division II Manual.]

Only student-athletes eligible under Bylaws 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 may compete in NCAA championships. In accordance with Constitution 3.2.4, member institutions are required to certify the eligibility of their student-athletes before the beginning of each academic year and to withhold ineligible student-athletes from all intercollegiate competition.

Member institutions are reminded to notify the NCAA national office before the selection date for each championship of any student-athlete who may have participated in regular-season competition but subsequently is determined to be ineligible or unavailable for NCAA championship competition.

DISCOVERY OF INELIGIBILITY OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE AFTER SELECTION

If an institution fails to report an ineligible student-athlete and the omission is not discovered until after the institution is selected to participate in the championship, necessitating the institution's withdrawal from the championship, that withdrawal shall be considered as one of the years of ineligibility, provided another institution participates in the championship in place of the disqualified institution. If the discovery of the ineligible student-athlete occurs so near the beginning of the championship that the governing sports committee does not have a reasonable period of time to replace the disqualified institution in the bracket, that fact shall be taken into consideration in determining the number of years the disqualified institution shall be ineligible to participate.

Section 4•2 Drug Testing

[Reference: Bylaws 18.4.1.5 and 31.2.3 in the NCAA Divisions I, II, and III Manuals.]

Student-athletes who compete in NCAA championships may be subjected to drug tests in accordance with Bylaws 18.4.1.5 and 31.2.3, and may be determined to be ineligible as a result thereof. Only student-athletes who have consented in writing to such testing are initially eligible for these championships; and thereafter, student-athletes who are tested shall remain eligible only if they test negative.

Section 4•3 Honesty and Sportsmanship

Individuals employed by (or associated with) a member institution to administer, conduct or coach intercollegiate athletics and all participating student-athletes shall act with honesty and sportsmanship at all times so that intercollegiate athletics as a whole, their institutions and they, as individuals, shall represent the honor and dignity of fair play and the generally recognized high standards associated with wholesome competitive sports.

Section 4•4 Misconduct/Failure to Adhere to Policies

MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in an NCAA championship is any act of dishonesty, unsportsmanlike conduct, unprofessional behavior or breach of law, occurring from the time the championship field is announced through the end of the championship, that discredits the event or intercollegiate athletics. Each games committee shall hold an administrative meeting with the coaches of participating institutions to review and explain the policies related to misconduct.

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A governing sport committee may assess a financial penalty against an institution for failure of any of its representatives to adhere to the policies and procedures governing the administration of the competition. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to comply with the procedures and deadlines for submitting scores, score sheets, schedules, rosters and entry/march-in forms for qualification and other materials necessary for the efficient administration of the competition. [Click here](#) to see the full misconduct/failure to adhere policy and procedure and fines

Section 4•5 Sports Wagering Policy

Sports wagering includes placing, accepting or soliciting a wager (on a staff member's or student-athlete's own behalf or on the behalf of others) of any type with any individual or organization on any intercollegiate, amateur or professional team or contest. Examples of sports wagering include, but are not limited to, the use of a bookmaker or parlay card; Internet sports wagering; auctions in which bids are placed on teams, individuals or contests; and pools or fantasy leagues in which an entry fee is required and there is an opportunity to win a prize.

The prohibition against sports wagering applies to any institutional practice or any competition (intercollegiate, amateur or professional) in a sport in which the Association conducts championship competition, in bowl subdivision football and in emerging sports for women.

A wager is any agreement in which an individual or entity agrees to give up an item of value (e.g., cash, shirt, dinner, etc.) in exchange for the possibility of gaining another item of value.

STUDENT-ATHLETES

A student-athlete involved in sports wagering on the student-athlete's institution permanently loses all remaining regular-season and postseason eligibility in all sports. A student-athlete who is involved in any sports wagering activity that involves college sports or professional athletics, through Internet gambling, a bookmaker, a parlay card or any other method employed by organized gambling, will be ineligible for all regular-season and postseason competition for at least one year.

POSTSEASON

In championships in which a bracket format is used, student-athletes, coaches and administrators may not participate in bracket competitions where there is both a required entry fee and an opportunity to win a prize. Student-athletes and administrators may participate under current NCAA rules in bracket contests where there is no entry fee but a possibility of winning a prize. Some NCAA member schools, however, have chosen to ban student-athletes from participating in these types of bracket contests.

HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES

No predetermined or non-predetermined session of an NCAA championship may be conducted in a state with legal wagering that is based on single-game betting on the outcome of any event (i.e., high school, college or professional) in a sport in which the NCAA conducts a championship.

Section 4•6 Student-Athlete Experience Survey

After each championship, student-athletes will be asked to participate in a post-event survey intended to capture feedback on their recent championship experience. Institutional administrators will be copied on the email and asked to ensure participation from all student-athletes and coaches.

Section 5 • Elite 90 Award

The Elite 90 award was created to recognize the true essence of the student-athlete by honoring the individual who has reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in his or her sport, while also achieving the highest academic standard among his or her peers. The award is presented in every sport, every division, and goes to the student-athlete who has the highest cumulative grade-point average of all student-athletes on all teams competing at the finals site. Each institution which has at least one student-athlete qualify for the final round/site is eligible to nominate a student-athlete for the award. One student-athlete per championship will receive the award, and the announcement of the winner will be made at the finals site.

Institutions that wish to nominate a student-athlete must do so through an online nomination process. To receive more information or access the online form and submit a nomination, go to NCAA.org.

Section 6 • Fan Travel

NCAA Travel provides an easy and affordable way for family and fans to follow their favorite student-athletes and team as they participate in NCAA championships competition. Travel arrangements completed through NCAA Travel help support NCAA student-athletes. Please direct your fans to NCAA.com/travel to search and book online hotel, car and air travel, all in one easy transaction.

Section 7 • Logo Policy

[Reference: Bylaws 12.5.4, 31.1.7 and 31.1.8 in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw 12.5.4 in the NCAA Division II Manual and Bylaw 12.5.3 in the NCAA Division III Manual.]

A student-athlete may use athletics equipment or wear athletics apparel that bears the trademark or logo of an athletics equipment or apparel manufacturer or distributor in athletics competition and pre- and postgame activities (e.g., celebrations on the court, pre- or postgame press conferences), provided the following criteria are met:

1. Athletics equipment (e.g., shoes, helmets, baseball bats and gloves, batting or golf gloves, hockey and lacrosse sticks, goggles and skis) shall bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark, as it is used on all such items for sale to the general public; and

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2. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform (including numbered racing bibs and warm-ups) and all other items of apparel (e.g., socks, head bands, T-shirts, wrist bands, visors or hats, swim caps and towels) shall bear only a single manufacturer's or distributor's normal label or trademark (regardless of the visibility of the label or trademark), not to exceed 2 1/4 square inches in area (rectangle, square, parallelogram) including any additional material (e.g., patch) surrounding the normal trademark or logo. The student-athlete's institution's official uniform and all other items of apparel shall not bear a design element similar to the manufacturer's trademark/logo that is in addition to another trademark/logo that is contrary to the size restriction.

Section 8 • Research

It is essential that all research efforts be coordinated by a single entity within the national office structure in order to ensure maximum efficiency and quality, avoid unnecessary duplication of effort on the part of staff and membership, allow the NCAA to prioritize research efforts given the limited time and resources of our members and adhere to federal guidelines on the responsibilities of researchers to properly protect research participants from harm.

For the purpose of this policy, "research" is defined as any systematic collection of data for the purpose of drawing generalized conclusions.

Any proposal to conduct research must be submitted to the NCAA research staff for review at least six weeks before the project begins. Research to be conducted during NCAA championships or related events, and which involves competing student-athletes or attendees, is also subject to review. This includes all research, including that conducted by or under the direction of any employee, contractor or paid consultant of the NCAA. It also includes any research conducted by other persons, but funded totally or in part by the NCAA. Any research that detracts from the student-athlete experience or requires physical activity may not be permitted at the championships (preliminary and finals sites). The NCAA retains sole discretion as to whether to allow such research.

Examples of activities considered research include: Conducting surveys of athletics administrators, college presidents, faculty, coaches and student-athletes; leading an organized focus group; funding an outside study under the auspices of the NCAA; conducting market research at championship events; secondary analysis of data originally collected by the NCAA from people for other purposes; any systematic collection of data from the membership or other entities, etc.

Division I Football

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Section 1 • General Administration

Section 1•1 NCAA Staff Contact Information

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J.D. Hamilton (Media Coordination)

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Section 1•2 National Committee

Current members of the committee are:

CENTRAL REGION

Troy Dannen

Director of Athletics
University of Northern Iowa

CENTRAL REGION

Brian Hutchinson

Director of Athletics
Morehead State University

CENTRAL REGION

Mark Wilson, chair

Director of Athletics
Tennessee Technological University

EAST REGION

Nathan Pine

Director of Athletics
College of the Holy Cross

EAST REGION

Marty Scarano

Director of Athletics
University of New Hampshire

EAST REGION

Paul Schlickmann

Director of Athletics
Central Connecticut State University

SOUTH REGION

Chuck Burch

Director of Athletics
Gardner-Webb University

SOUTH REGION

Richard Johnson

Director of Athletics
Wofford College

WEST REGION

Brad Teague

Director of Athletics
University of Central Arkansas

WEST REGION

Jeff Tingey

Director of Athletics
Idaho State University

For additional information about the NCAA Division I Football Championship, contact:

Randy L. Buhr, Championships and Alliances
317-917-6716 / rbuhr@ncaa.org

Mark Wilson, chair
Director of Athletics / Tennessee Technological University
931-372-3961 / mwilson@tntech.edu

Section 1•3 Regional Advisory Committees

NAME	INSTITUTION	CONFERENCE
CENTRAL REGION		
Troy Dannen, chair	Northern Iowa	Missouri Valley Football Conference
Brian Hutchinson	Morehead State	Pioneer Football League
Kyle Moats	Missouri State	Missouri Valley Football Conference
Tim Murray	Marist	Pioneer Football League
Allen Ward	Murray State	Ohio Valley Conference
Mark Wilson	Tennessee Tech	Ohio Valley Conference
EAST REGION		
Vicky Chun	Colgate	Patriot League
Nathan Pine	Holy Cross	Patriot League
Marty Scarano	New Hampshire	Colonial Athletic Association
Paul Schlickmann, chair	Central Connecticut State	Northeast Conference
Bill Smith	Bryant	Northeast Conference
Tom Yeager	N/A	Colonial Athletic Association
SOUTH REGION		
Chuck Burch	Gardner-Webb	Big South Conference
Monte Coleman	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	Southwestern Athletic Conference
Dave Diles	Virginia Military Institute	Southern Conference
James Hopson	Alcorn State	Southwestern Athletic Conference
Richard Johnson, chair	Wofford	Southern Conference
Floyd Kerr	Morgan State	Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference
Oliver "Buddy" Poughy	South Carolina State	Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference
Brian Reese	Presbyterian	Big South Conference
WEST REGION		
Kent Haslam	Montana	Big Sky Conference
Jason Henderson	Lamar	Southland Conference
Brad Teague	Central Arkansas	Southland Conference
Jeff Tingey, chair	Idaho State	Big Sky Conference

Section 1•4 Important Dates

Monday, Oct. 12, 2015	Championship information and forms available on ncaa.org for prospective preliminary-round host institutions.
Monday, Nov. 16, 2015	Prospective preliminary-round host institutions bid submission deadline.
Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015	Final selections and announcement of bracket during a selection show at 11 a.m. Eastern time on ESPNU - tentative.

CHAMPIONSHIP DATES (2015-16)

The dates and sites of the NCAA Division I Football Championship are determined by the Football Championship Committee, subject to the approval of the Division I Football Oversight Committee and/or the Division I Competition Oversight Committee.

First Round	Saturday, Nov. 28, at on-campus sites (8)
Second Round	Saturday, Dec. 5, at on-campus sites (8)
Quarterfinal Round	Friday, Dec. 11, and Saturday, Dec. 12, at on-campus sites (4)
Semifinal Round	Friday, Dec. 18, and Saturday, Dec. 19, at on-campus sites (2)
Championship Game	Saturday, Jan. 9, 2016, at Toyota Stadium - Frisco, Texas

DATE FORMULA

First Round	Last Saturday in November
Second Round	First Saturday in December
Quarterfinals	Second Friday/Saturday in December
Semifinals	Third Friday/Saturday in December
Championship Game	Between Dec. 29 and the day before the College Football Playoff Championship Game

FUTURE DATES

2016-17 Championship (*tentative*)

Championship Selections	Sunday, Nov. 20
First Round	Saturday, Nov. 26, at on-campus sites (8)
Second Round	Saturday, Dec. 3, at on-campus sites (8)
Quarterfinals	Friday, Dec. 9, and Saturday, Dec. 10, at on-campus sites (4)
Semifinals	Friday, Dec. 16, and Saturday, Dec. 17, at on-campus sites (2)
Championship Game	Saturday, Jan. 7, 2017

Section 1•5 Equipment

GAME BALLS

The Wilson F1001, F1003, F1004 and F1005 footballs are the official balls for the championship and will be used in all rounds of competition. Institutions will be allowed to choose the model of Wilson football they wish to use while on offense throughout the championship.

Following selections, each participating team will receive 12 Wilson footballs which are to be used throughout the duration of the preliminary rounds. Should extra footballs be needed, please contact Chad Tolliver at the NCAA national office. The two teams advancing to the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Championship Game will receive a separate shipment of 12 footballs to be used for the 2016 NCAA Division I Football Championship Game.

INSTANT REPLAY

Instant replay will be used at each game of all rounds of the championship. Instant replay equipment will be provided to each site using instant replay by DVSPORT. A comprehensive guide regarding instant replay will be sent to all teams participating in the championship.

Each stadium will be responsible for providing all audio/video cabling and ring-down phone connections from the broadcast truck positions to the replay booth.

Personnel

- 1. Replay Official.** The NCAA, in consultation with the national coordinator of football officials (Rogers Redding), will secure an individual to serve as the replay official for the game. The selected replay official should not have any conflict of interest (perceived or actual) to any team or conference participating in the game they are assigned to work. The NCAA

will coordinate air travel, if necessary, and help secure the use of a rental car for the replay official. Rental car expenses will be direct billed to the NCAA (when using Enterprise or National).

The NCAA will be responsible for reimbursing the replay official for the game fee (\$630), transportation between home and the game site in his or her personal automobile (57 cents per mile, if the official did not fly) and per diem (\$45 per day).

NCAA staff will reimburse the instant replay official via ArbiterPay. Replay officials will receive information on setting up an account in ArbiterPay once they are selected to work a game.

The host institution will be responsible for securing and will need to be direct billed for lodging for this individual for up to two nights. The host institution should reflect these instant replay lodging expenses in the proposed budget as a budgeted expense.

2. **DVSPORT Staff.** Two representatives from DVSPORT will be on-site to manage the technical aspects of the instant replay equipment and work with the replay official in the replay booth during the game as the communicator and technician. These individuals will be responsible for all of their personal expenses (lodging, meals, transportation, etc.). However, the host institution will be responsible for assisting the DVSPORT personnel in securing hotel lodging during their stay (two to three nights).
3. **Sideline Assistant.** The host institution will secure two local individuals to serve as sideline assistants. The sideline assistants assist the replay official in communicating with the on-field officials for the review and discussion of plays, when necessary. The sideline assistants should each be paid a \$100 fee for his or her service, which should be paid by the host institution. The host institution should reflect these expenses on its proposed budget and financial report as a budgeted expense.

Space and Power Requirements

Dedicated “private” space in the press box or suite level to accommodate no fewer than four people is required. This “private” space should contain the following:

1. An unobstructed view of the playing field.
2. Adequate counter space (at least 10 feet long and two feet deep) in the front of the box.
3. At least two dedicated power sources with a minimum of four power outlets.
4. Enough power to accommodate a power consumption of 520 Watts/110 Volts = 4.73 amps.
5. Separated from any other activity (media, fans, etc.).
6. A representative from DVSPORT will be present at the mandatory administrative meeting to answer any questions.

Section 1•6 Rules

Per NCAA Bylaws 17.30 and 31.1.6, member institutions shall conduct all intercollegiate competition in accordance with the playing rules of the Association in all sports for which the NCAA develops playing rules. For those sports in which the Association follows rules that are developed by other governing bodies and modified by the governing sports committee, the adopted playing rules shall be used. The governing sports committee will not consider any results for selection purposes that are not played in accordance with NCAA rules, or those rules adopted by an outside organization.

NCAA Football Rules and Interpretations will be followed. Questions regarding the interpretation of rules should be addressed to Rogers Redding, secretary-rules editor, 205-565-7091 or footballrules@ncaa.org.

OFFICIALS

A sports committee or games committee may not require membership in any specific officials’ association as a prerequisite for selection to officiate in an NCAA meet or tournament. Officials shall be selected and assigned by the sports committee or games committee (with the assistance of Rogers Redding), which shall ensure that officials adhere to the Association’s policies relating to gambling activities and drug and alcohol use. Furthermore, officials must conduct themselves in a manner befitting intercollegiate athletics. Failure to do so may result in termination of the officiating assignment.

The seven game officials for all games will be selected by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee/College Football Officiating, LLC (CFO) from Division I Football Championship Subdivision conferences. The committee will use the

following criteria when assigning officials: (1) Officials must be neutral and games between two institutions from the same conference must be officiated by an officiating crew from another conference; (2) proximity of officials to the playoff site; and (3) frequency of assignments.

Section 1•7 Uniforms

The host institution will be the home team and will wear dark jerseys in the first-round, second-round, quarterfinal and semifinal contests. The visiting team will wear white jerseys. At the championship game, the home team will be determined by the NCAA. In all cases, the visiting team will be introduced first and will take the field first.

The logo restriction on student-athletes' apparel set forth in Bylaw 12.5.4 shall apply during NCAA championships to all personnel (e.g., coaches, athletic trainers, managers) who are in the team area for practices and games, or who participate in news conferences. Please note that those contracts between institutions and apparel manufacturers or distributors that include logo specifications may be honored, provided such contracts were in effect before Aug. 11, 1998. Also, the logo restriction on student-athletes' apparel set forth in Bylaw 12.5.4 shall apply to commercial logos on uniforms worn by band members, cheerleaders, dance team members and the institution's mascot during NCAA championship events.

LOGOS

Refer to General Administrative Guidelines, Section 7.

Section 2 • Determination of Championship Participation

Section 2•1 Championship Format

The NCAA Division I Football Championship provides for a maximum field of 24 teams. Ten (10) member conferences have been granted automatic qualification for the 2015 championship. The remaining 14 teams will be selected at-large by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee.

The top eight teams in the 24-team bracket for the championship will be seeded. Team pairings will be determined according to geographical proximity. Teams from the same conference will not be paired for first-round games or for second-round games when both teams are playing their first games of the championship (except for teams from the same conference that did not play against each other during the regular season; such teams may play each other in the first and second round).

Eight first-round games will be conducted on the campus of one of the competing institutions, and the winners will advance to the second round. The second round features eight games (including the eight teams that received a first-round bye) on the campus of one of the competing teams. Second-round winners meet in the quarterfinals on the campus of one of the competing institutions. Quarterfinal winners will advance to the semifinals on the campus of one of the participating institutions. The winners of the semifinal games will play in the 2016 NCAA Division I Football Championship Game in Frisco, Texas, on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2016.

START TIMES

Starting times shall be determined by ESPN in consultation with the NCAA and the host institution.

During the first three rounds of the championship, the NCAA will solicit the preferred starting times of host institutions. However, games may start no earlier than 2 p.m. local time and shall be determined by ESPN.

Tentative ESPN Broadcast Schedule:

ROUND	DATE	TIME	BROADCAST
First-Round Games (8)	Nov. 28	TBD	ESPN3
Second-Round Games (8)	Dec. 5	TBD	ESPN3
Quarterfinal-Round Game	Dec. 11	8 p.m. Eastern time	ESPN2
Quarterfinal-Round Game	Dec. 12	Noon Eastern time	ESPN
Quarterfinal-Round Games (2)	Dec. 12	TBD	ESPN3
Semifinal-Round Game	Dec. 18	8 p.m. Eastern time	ESPN2
Semifinal-Round Game	Dec. 19	2 p.m. Eastern time	ESPNU
Championship Game	Jan. 9	Noon Eastern time	ESPN2

The quarterfinal and semifinal games during the 2015 NCAA Division I Football Championship will be conducted on two different days. One quarterfinal game will occur on Friday, Dec. 11, and three quarterfinal games will occur on Saturday, Dec. 12. One semifinal game will occur Friday evening, Dec. 18, while the other will occur Saturday, Dec. 19.

The quarterfinal and semifinal schedules will be determined by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee on the Saturday night of the preceding round. Prospective hosts should note these date possibilities in their facility evaluation forms and when developing their proposed budgets.

TICKETS

An allotment of tickets will be reserved for the competing institutions. Each competing institution will have access to 500 tickets. New for the 2015-16 championship, the host institution may use its discretion in the location for the visiting team tickets. Host institutions may place the visiting team fans in the same location(s) as they do for all regular-season games.

The host institution or sponsoring agency will retain 250 of the 500 tickets, and the competing institutions will be advised that they are available, if needed. Additional tickets may be purchased, but the seat locations will not be guaranteed.

DIVISION I FOOTBALL

The visiting institution is required to purchase a minimum of 200 tickets from the host institution at the standard price point for tiering in that location for any preliminary-round playoff game.

Each institution shall return all money and unsold tickets and inform the host institution or sponsoring agency of the number it will require from the 250 tickets being retained, not later than 6 p.m. three days before the game (i.e., on Tuesday for a Friday game and on Wednesday for a Saturday game). If the tickets are not returned to the host institution or sponsoring agency by this time, the institution shall be responsible for all unreturned tickets at face value. Once the competing institutions release the tickets being retained, the host institution or sponsoring agency will use them for public sale.

There are no minimum ticket prices for first-round games. However, for the second round, quarterfinals and semifinals, the host institutions shall not set ticket prices lower than the regular-season ticket prices. As a reminder, host institutions may not offer complimentary tickets for the championship.

Should the visiting team bring its band to a preliminary-round game, band members should be provided admission at no charge. The seating for the visiting band should be in addition to the visiting team ticket block.

TRAVEL PARTY

The size of the travel party is 130 persons for the first-round, second-round, quarterfinal and semifinal contests, including a maximum of 60 student-athletes in uniform.

For the championship game, the travel party will be 145 persons, including a maximum of 70 student-athletes in uniform.

Section 2•2 Selection Information

ALLOCATION OF BERTHS

The championship provides for a field of 24 teams. Ten (10) conference champions qualify automatically; the balance of the field is selected at large by the Football Championship Committee.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

Conference champions must be determined not later than Saturday, Nov. 21. Conferences must submit their notification of AQ online at <https://www.planningpoint.net/Events/CHAMPSAQ>.

The following 10 conferences have been granted automatic-qualification privileges for the 2015 championship:

Big Sky Conference	Ohio Valley Conference
Big South Conference	Patriot League
Colonial Athletic Association	Pioneer Football League
Missouri Valley Football Conference	Southern Conference
Northeast Conference	Southland Conference

The NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee will annually make the determination of which eligible conferences will receive automatic qualification. The following criteria are used when determining which conferences shall receive annual automatic qualification for the NCAA Division I Football Championship:

1. Non-conference records;
2. Strength of non-conference opponents;
3. Recent postseason history; and
4. Competition against Football Bowl Subdivision opponents.

The NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee policy stipulates that for the Division I Football Championship at least 50 percent of the bracket shall be reserved for at-large selections, and no more than 50 percent of the bracket shall be available for automatic qualification of eligible conferences.

AT-LARGE SELECTION

For the 2015 NCAA Division I Football Championship, there will be 14 at-large spots available in the 24-team championship field.

PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES (COUNTABLE COMPETITION)

For NCAA team-championship selection purposes, competition is countable only when the teams played are varsity intercollegiate teams of four-year, degree-granting institutions that conduct a majority of their competition in that team sport against varsity intercollegiate teams (see Constitution 3.2.4.5) of United States four-year, degree-granting institutions. Competition against service teams, professional teams, semi-professional teams, amateur teams, two-year colleges and club teams shall be excluded.

NCAA SIMPLE RATING SYSTEM (NCAA SRS)

The NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee will use the NCAA Simple Rating System (NCAA SRS) as a tool for evaluating teams for selection into the 24-team championship.

The NCAA SRS is a ranking system used to gauge team quality. Within the NCAA SRS, the rating of a team will be calculated largely by two components: a strength-of-schedule measure (SOS) and a win-loss differential (WL).

A team's SOS measure is simply the average NCAA SRS rating of that team's opponents for the season.

A team's WL measure factors whether a game was won or lost; the location of the game (home/away/neutral site); and the NCAA (sub)division of the opponent.

1. In a game between two FCS teams played at a neutral site, the winning team gets one point and the losing team loses one point.
2. In a game between two FCS teams played at a non-neutral site, a home win counts 0.75 for the home team and -0.75 for the losing team. A road team win counts 1.25 for the visiting team and -1.25 for the home team. In other words, there is a bonus/penalty of +/- 0.25 for the home/away teams depending on the outcome.
3. An additional bonus/penalty of +/- 0.1 is added/deducted for games that FCS teams play against FBS/non-Division I opponents. For instance, a home FCS win against a Division II opponent counts only as +0.65 points (0.75 for a home win - 0.1 penalty for playing a Division II opponent). In addition, a road FCS win against an FBS opponent counts +1.35 points for the FCS team (1.25 points for a road win + 0.1 bonus for beating an FBS opponent).
4. The WL measure is then doubled to equalize the contributions of the WL factor and SOS factor toward a team's NCAA SRS rating.
5. Finally, new for the 2015 season, margin of victory will be factored into a team's NCAA SRS rating. This component is capped at 21 points.

The teams' ratings are independent in that one team's rating depends on its opponents' ratings, which depend on their opponents' ratings, etc., based on the "network" of college football games played each week during the football season. The NCAA SRS will also standardize the data in order to equalize the variance in total number of games played (i.e., 11 or 12 regular-season games).

Games against Division III or non-NCAA opponents are not factored into any team's NCAA SRS rating.

The time of the season in which a game is played (early-season versus late-season games) is also not factored into a team's NCAA SRS rating.

The NCAA SRS will not "force select" any teams into the championship; rather, it is one of several resources that the Football Championship Committee will have at its disposal when debating the merits of teams under consideration for championship selection.

The NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee will begin reviewing NCAA SRS data during the later portion of the football season as it prepares for championship selections. At that time, NCAA SRS rankings may also be posted on the NCAA website (www.ncaa.com/fcs).

TRAVEL INFORMATION

During the championship, institutions that are playing within 400 miles (one way) of their campus will be required to travel

to that site via bus. Institutions traveling more than 400 miles (one way) to their game will be approved for air travel to that site. All air travel arrangements will be made via Short's Travel Management.

1. **Arrival Times at Playoff Sites.** Participating institutions in first-round, second-round, quarterfinal-round and semifinal-round games shall arrive not later than the established practice time the day before competition.
2. **Lodging.** The host institution or sponsoring agency shall make local reservations for the competing teams and advise them of the arrangements. Each competing institution is obligated to confirm or cancel the accommodations. A participating institution may be released from all or a portion of its room obligation only if it obtains a written release from the hotel general manager before 5 p.m. local time on the Tuesday before the game. The hotel is under no obligation to provide this release. The institution must file a copy of the written release with the NCAA site representative. If an institution is granted a written release to not stay at the designated property, it is responsible for then securing its own accommodations. Unless approved by the NCAA in advance, an institution is precluded from relocating to a hotel where the game or instant replay officials may have been assigned.
3. **Transportation.** Please refer to NCAA travel policies for all information regarding transportation and per diem expenses. Travel policies can be found online at <http://www.ncaa.org/championships/travel/championships-travel-information>.
4. **Expense Reimbursement.** Transportation expenses and a \$130 per diem will be provided for each member of the travel party. The size of the travel party is 130 persons for preliminary-round contests, including a maximum of 60 student-athletes. For the FCS Championship Game the travel party will be 145, including a maximum of 70 student-athletes.

Section 2•3 Selection Criteria

At-large teams shall be selected by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee, assisted by four regional advisory committees that serve in an advisory capacity only.

The following principles shall apply when selecting at-large teams:

1. The committee shall select the best teams available on a national at-large basis to complete the bracket. Per NCAA Bylaw 31, the basic criteria used in the selection of at-large participants are (1) won-lost record, (2) strength of schedule, and (3) eligibility and availability of student-athletes for the NCAA championship;
2. There is no limit to the number of teams the committee may select from one conference;
3. The won-lost record of a team will be scrutinized to determine a team's strength of schedule; however, fewer than six Division I wins may place a team in jeopardy of not being selected;
4. The committee may give more consideration to those teams that have played all Division I opponents;
5. If a committee member's institution is under consideration, that committee member will not be allowed in the room during discussions involving his/her team and may not vote for his/her team during the voting process. Similarly, a committee member from a conference office may not be present during discussions, nor vote for any team from his/her conference.

BRACKET PAIRINGS

All pairings will be made by the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee. The following principles are applied when pairing teams:

1. The teams awarded the top eight seeds shall receive a bye in the first round and are placed in the appropriate positions in the bracket (Nos. 1, 8, 4 and 5 in the upper half; and Nos. 2, 7, 3 and 6 in the lower half);
2. The remaining 16 teams will play first-round games and will be paired according to geographic proximity and then placed in the bracket according to geographic proximity of the top eight seeds previously placed in the bracket;
3. The NCAA mileage threshold for mandatory team travel via ground is 400 miles;
4. Teams from the same conference will not be paired for first-round games or for second-round games when both teams are playing their first games of the championship (except for teams from the same conference that did not play against each other during the regular season; such teams may play each other in the first or second round);
5. Once the first-round pairings have been determined, there will be no adjustments to the bracket (e.g., a seeded team may play a conference opponent that advanced out of the first round).

Section 2•4 Site Selection

With regard to first-round, second-round, quarterfinal and semifinal sites, in addition to the criteria listed in Bylaw 31.1.3.2.1, the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee shall consider the following additional criteria when selecting playoff sites:

1. The committee will consider previous crowd-control measures and crowd behavior of the prospective host institution (regardless of seeding).
2. Prospective host institutions must submit the following minimum financial guarantees, which shall be 75 percent of the estimated net receipts as submitted on the proposed budget:
 - First round – \$30,000
 - Second round – \$40,000
 - Quarterfinals – \$50,000
 - Semifinals – \$60,000
3. If the minimum financial guarantees are met, the committee will award the playoff sites to the higher seeded teams.
4. When determining host institutions for playoff games when both teams are unseeded, criteria shall apply as follows: (1) quality of facility, (2) revenue potential plus estimated net receipts, (3) attendance history and potential, (4) team's performance (i.e., conference place finish, head-to-head results and number of Division I opponents), and (5) student-athlete well-being (e.g., travel and missed class time).
5. If a second-round, quarterfinal or semifinal playoff site is not available due to the fact the institutions involved did not submit a proposed budget, the committee will contact the institutions and offer the opportunity to submit a bid at the current round's minimum financial guarantee level. If seeded teams are not involved, the committee will determine the host institution by applying the championship site-selection criteria in Bylaw 31.1.3.2.1.

Section 2•5 Preliminary-Round Hosting – Proposed Budget

Any institution interested in hosting preliminary-round competition of the 2015 NCAA Division I Football Championship must submit a proposed budget, respond to sport-specific questions, ensure that the institution's key contacts and facility information is up to date, and upload the video board questionnaire (if applicable), instant replay questionnaire and photos of the designated instant replay space via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal (championships.ncaa.org). To submit a bid, first search for the desired championship under "championships available for bid" and select "add bid."

Please note that all member institutions are allowed to regularly and easily access their profiles by visiting championships.ncaa.org. For profile issues, user access or to reset a password, please email championshipbid@ncaa.org or contact Chad Tolliver at the NCAA National Office.

CHAMPIONSHIPS BID AND HOST PROFILE PORTAL

The Championships Bid and Host Profile portal can be accessed at championships.ncaa.org. The deadline to submit all bid materials for this championship is Monday, Nov. 16, 2015.

As a reminder, prospective hosts' budgets should include committee/site representative's lodging expense, game officials' lodging expenses, state and city taxes/fees, if applicable, and any ticket fees. Committee/site representative's per diem, mileage and luggage fees will now be paid by the NCAA instead of the host institution. Game officials will also be reimbursed by the NCAA using the ArbiterPay system for their game fees, per diem, mileage and luggage fees.

FACILITY PROFILE

Institutions interested in hosting preliminary-round competition of the 2015 NCAA Division I Football Championship must add (or ensure the accuracy of) facility information for the applicable competition venue. This information is located at championships.ncaa.org. Any supporting information (e.g., facility diagram, pictures) may be uploaded and attached to that facility's profile. This information will be made available to the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee to aid in their deliberations of prospective host sites.

KEY CONTACTS

Each institution should list and then maintain its key contacts associated with each sport and the institution. Individuals can be added via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal at championships.ncaa.org.

SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN

Based on a review of current and future championships competition venues, discussions with safety and security experts, and their own expertise and knowledge, the NCAA has established a Safety and Security Advisory Group (SSAG) to develop a compilation of Best Practices for NCAA Championships. We urge each competition venue to take these Best Practices into account when developing its safety and security program. As part of your bid, please submit a safety and security plan for your venue, which would be inclusive of the NCAA Championships Safety and Security Team contact information form, located in Appendix A of the [Best Practices document](#).

The best practices for venue safety and security along with the safety and security contact form is located at <https://championships.ncaa.org>.

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

A final financial report from each championship site must be submitted via the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal under the “budget” tab not later than 60 days after the event.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding the bid process, please contact Chad Tolliver at 317-917-6706 or ctolliver@ncaa.org. If you are experiencing technical difficulties with the Championships Bid and Host Profile portal, please contact championshipbid@ncaa.org.

Appendixes

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Appendix A • Bracket



2015 NCAA Division I Football Championship

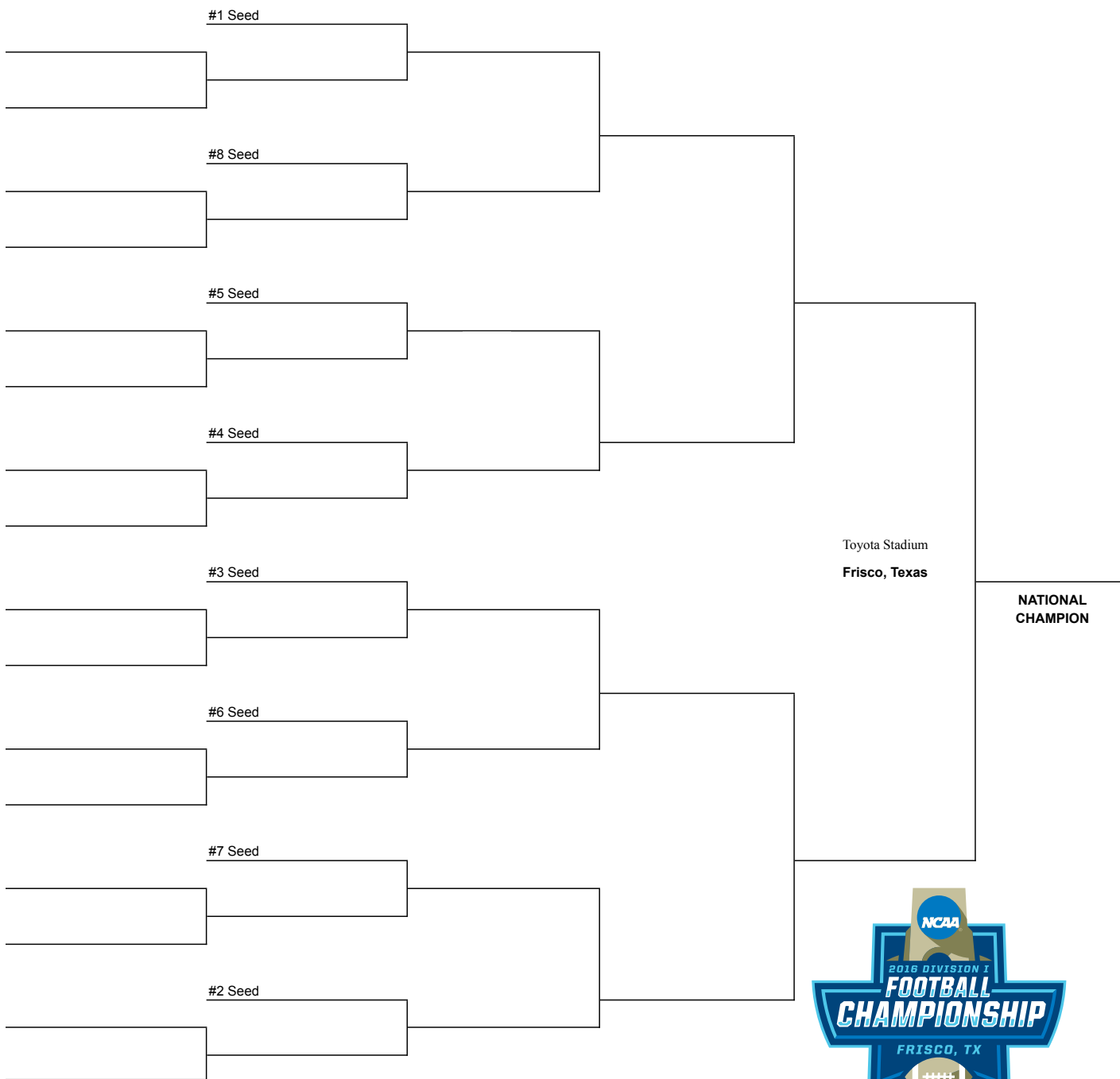
First Round
November 28

Second Round
December 5

Quarterfinals
December 11/12

Semifinals
December 18/19

Final
January 9



* Host Institution
All times are Eastern time. Information subject to change.
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The NCAA opposes all forms of sports wagering.



Appendix B • Sport Sponsorship

CENTRAL REGION

Missouri Valley Football Conference (10)

Illinois State University
 Indiana State University
 Missouri State University
 North Dakota State University
 University of Northern Iowa

University of South Dakota
 South Dakota State University
 Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
 Western Illinois University
 Youngstown State University

AQ Conference

Ohio Valley Conference (9)

Austin Peay State University
 Eastern Illinois University
 Eastern Kentucky University
 Jacksonville State University
 Murray State University

Southeast Missouri State University
 University of Tennessee at Martin
 Tennessee State University
 Tennessee Technological University

AQ Conference

Pioneer Football League (10/*11)

Butler University
 Campbell University
 Davidson College
 University of Dayton
 Drake University
 Jacksonville University (not eligible in 2015)

Marist College
 Morehead State University
 University of San Diego
 Stetson University
 Valparaiso University

AQ Conference

*Please note that first figure in parentheses lists the number of eligible teams in the conference for the 2015 championship.

EAST REGION

Colonial Athletic Association (12)

University at Albany
University of Delaware
Elon University
James Madison University
University of Maine, Orono
University of New Hampshire

University of Rhode Island
University of Richmond
Stony Brook University
Towson University
Villanova University
College of William and Mary

AQ Conference

The Ivy League (8)

Brown University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College

Harvard University
University of Pennsylvania
Princeton University
Yale University

AQ Conference

Northeast Conference (7)

Bryant University
Central Connecticut State University
Duquesne University
Robert Morris University

Sacred Heart University
Saint Francis University (Pennsylvania)
Wagner College

AQ Conference

Patriot League (7)

Bucknell University
Colgate University
Fordham University
Georgetown University

College of the Holy Cross
Lafayette College
Lehigh University

AQ Conference

SOUTH REGION

Big South Conference (6/*7)

Charleston Southern University
 Coastal Carolina University
 Gardner-Webb University (not eligible in 2015)
 Kennesaw State University

Liberty University
 Monmouth University
 Presbyterian College

AQ Conference

*Please note the first figure in parentheses lists the number of eligible teams in the conference for the 2015 championship.

Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (9/*11)

Bethune-Cookman University
 Delaware State University
 Florida A&M University (not eligible in 2015)
 Hampton University
 Howard University
 Morgan State University

Norfolk State University
 North Carolina A&T State University
 North Carolina Central University
 Savannah State University (not eligible in 2015)
 South Carolina State University

Non-AQ Conference

*Please note the first figure in parentheses lists the number of eligible teams in the conference for the 2015 championship.

Southern Conference (8)

The Citadel
 Furman University
 Mercer University
 Samford University

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
 Virginia Military Institute
 Western Carolina University
 Wofford College

AQ Conference

Southwestern Athletic Conference (9/*10)

Alabama A&M University
 Alabama State University (not eligible in 2015)
 Alcorn State University
 University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
 Grambling State University

Jackson State University
 Mississippi Valley State University
 Prairie View A&M University
 Southern University, Baton Rouge
 Texas Southern University

AQ Conference

*Please note the first figure in parentheses lists the number of eligible teams in the conference for the 2015 championship.

Independents (2)

East Tennessee State University
 The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
 (not eligible until 2016)

WEST REGION

Big Sky Conference (13)

California Polytechnic State University
University of California, Davis
California State University, Sacramento
Eastern Washington University
Idaho State University
University of Montana
Montana State University-Bozeman

University of North Dakota
Northern Arizona University
University of Northern Colorado
Portland State University
Southern Utah University
Weber State University

AQ Conference

Southland Conference (9/*11)

Abilene Christian University (not eligible until 2017)
University of Central Arkansas
Houston Baptist University
University of the Incarnate Word (not eligible until 2017)
Lamar University
McNeese State University

Nicholls State University
Northwestern State University
Sam Houston State University
Southeastern Louisiana University
Stephen F. Austin State University

AQ Conference

*Please note the first figure in parentheses lists the number of eligible teams in the conference for the 2015 championship.