



2025-26

MEN'S SOCCER FIRST & SECOND ROUND

CHAMPIONSHIP PARTICIPANT MANUAL



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NAIA MEN'S SOCCER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP FIRST & SECOND ROUNDS – NOVEMBER 20-22, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The following information will assist you in planning for the 2025 NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship, which begins with the First & Second Rounds (November 20-22) at 16 different sites and concludes with the NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship Final Site (December 1 – December 8) in Orange Beach, Alabama.

All championship resources are available on the NAIA website – in the Men's Soccer [Coaches' Corner](#) section – and will also be sent to all qualifying Men's Soccer Head Coaches.

[Reanne Kietlinski](#), NAIA Manager of Athletics Communications will also be sending an email to your Sports Information Director requesting information/materials for your team as potential qualifiers for the NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship. Please make sure to submit your Official Postseason Roster prior to the start of your first conference tournament game.

Should questions or problems arise, please do not hesitate to contact the National Office for assistance.

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IMPORTANT DATES

2025 MENS SOCCER SPORT CALENDAR

OCTOBER 1	DEADLINE – First & Second Round Facility Certification Application
NOVEMBER 3	DEADLINE – Submitting Bid Packet to host First & Second Rounds
NOVEMBER 12	DEADLINE – Completion of Men's Conference/CAC/Group Qualifying Tournaments
NOVEMBER 14	RELEASE – Men's Soccer National Championship Qualifiers and Bracket
NOVEMBER 17	NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship Qualifier Call <i>11:00am CT - Mandatory for all qualified Head Coaches and Athletic Directors</i>
NOVEMBER 20-22	NAIA MEN'S SOCCER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP – FIRST & SECOND ROUND <i>16 host sites nationwide</i>
DECEMBER 1-8	67th ANNUAL NAIA MEN'S SOCCER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP – FINAL SITE <i>Orange Beach Sportsplex – Orange Beach, Alabama</i>

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE QUALIFIER CALL

An Administrative Zoom call will be conducted by the NAIA National Office on **Monday, November 17, 2025 at 11:00am CT** for all qualified teams, First & Second Round Hosts and designated Site Supervisors before the First & Second Round to review the standards and expectations for all National Championship participants and discuss logistics.

It is mandatory that each institution's head coach and athletic director or designated administrator other than a member of the coaching staff participate in the administrative conference call. As programs achieve qualification, they will receive the direct link to bookmark this call.

FORMAT

The NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship is a 40-team single-elimination tournament consisting of 16 First & Second Round sites. 16 First & Second Round host sites will be selected based on seeding and the quality/ability to host. The top 8 seeds will host three teams at their host site. The lowest seeded teams in the tournament will have a First Round play-in game at each of the three team sites. The second round will include all of the remaining teams competing for a spot in the 16-team final site.

The NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship is a 16-team, single-elimination tournament consisting of the 16 First & Second Round winners.

QUALIFICATION

The 40 teams that will compete in the 2025 NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship will be determined using the 2025-2026 Qualification Plan approved by NAC found on [NAIA Connect](#).

A total of 24 conference berths will be awarded through a conference qualification process for the NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship. An additional 16 at-large teams will be selected to complete the 40-team field.

Conference postseason qualifying events must be completed by **Wednesday, November 12, 2025** as conference automatic berths will be finalized at this time. At-large berths will be awarded based on selection by the Men's Soccer National Selection Committee. The Men's Soccer National Selection Committee will meet on Thursday, November 13, 2025 to finalize the field of 40 teams.

Teams that qualify for the 2025 NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship will be seeded #1-#40 by the NAIA Men's Soccer Selection Committee and assigned to a First & Second Round site as follows:

- Selection Committee shall place qualifying teams at First & Second Round sites based on the following prioritized criteria:
 - Geographical location of teams
 - Efforts will be made to limit ground travel to 750 miles or less for the traveling teams to First & Second Round sites.
 - Financial considerations
 - Efforts will be made to reduce air travel for traveling teams to First & Second Round sites.
 - Competitive Balance
 - Efforts will be made to keep integrity of committee seeding
 - Flights are not prohibited, but no flights or mileage above 750 can be added in order to keep seeding balanced.
- Teams from the same conference shall never be matched in the first game of the national championship.
- Teams in the same conference should not be placed at the same First & Second Round site unless this placements saves the team from incurring geographic placement at a First & Second Round site more than 750 miles from their campus.

SATISFACTION SURVEY

The NAIA is committed to providing the best experience possible for its members and student-athletes. The Championship Survey is used to evaluate the experiences of these groups. Participating coaches and student-athletes can access the First & Second Round Satisfaction Survey [here](#).

COMPETITION OPERATIONS

LOCKER ROOMS

Participating teams will be assigned a locker room for each game of the First & Second Round, however, all teams are required to dress and shower at their hotel during the First & Second Round before and after each game.

LENGTH OF MATCH

The duration of the game shall be two periods of 45 minutes.

For live telecasts, a timeout that may not exceed two minutes in length may be taken after the 23rd minute of each half before a throw-in near the halfway line of the field or before a goal kick.

The following procedures shall be used when a game is tied after the regulation 90 minutes:

1. Play shall be extended beyond the expiration of any period, in regulation time or overtime, to permit a penalty kick to be taken.
2. Two overtime periods of 10 minutes each shall be played with sudden-victory (golden goal) overtime taking place.
3. A coin toss called by the visiting team will determine choice of ends of the field or the kickoff before the start of the first overtime period.
4. Teams shall change ends of the field to start the second overtime period.
5. For postseason matches (which include qualifying tournaments, First & Second Round, and Final Site matches), if the score still is tied at the end of the second overtime period the tiebreaker procedure of taking kicks from the penalty-kick line or spot, shall be used to determine advancement.

OFFICIAL BALL

The Select Sport America Brilliant Super is the Official Men's Soccer Ball of the NAIA and is the only ball to be used in all NAIA National Championship First & Second Round and Final Site competition. These balls will be provided in advance to First & Second Round sites by the NAIA and Select Sport America.

FILM EXCHANGE

Each team is required to share two games to the tournament film exchange within 48 hours of the post-season selection show. Teams are required to share their most recent postseason game and their last home game of the regular season.

Within 48 hours of the conclusion of the First & Second Rounds, the host site is responsible for sharing film to the exchange in preparation for the Final Site. A First & Second Round host site hosting multiple rounds is required to upload First Round games after the conclusion of the match.

The film exchange is mandatory. Any violation of the film exchange policy will result in a \$500 fine.

FIRST & SECOND ROUND MATCH SCHEDULE

In consultation with the host institution, the NAIA Championships Department establishes match times for National Championship and First & Second Round competition.

All First & Second Round matches shall be played on Thursday, November 20th and Saturday, November 22nd. The Second Round must be scheduled to conclude by 8:00 PM (CST) on Saturday, November 20, 2025.

All games on Thursday, November 20 may start at any time between 1 PM (CST) and 6 PM (CST).

PLAYER INTRODUCTIONS

Following team warm-up, the following protocol will be used for the National Anthem and player introductions at First & Second Round:

- Teams return to their benches for team huddles, announcements.
- The international style introductions/walkout will be used. The starting lineup of the designated visiting team will be announced first. Players proceed from the team bench as their names are called.
- Home team starting lineup introductions will follow visiting team introductions.
- Officials are introduced after the home team.
- The National Anthem will be played.

PLAYING RULES

Rules governing NAIA regular season and postseason play are the [NCAA Soccer Rules](#), unless otherwise noted in the NAIA Men's Soccer Coaches Manual.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

The practice field at each First & Second Round site will be the same as the field used for competition. Practice times will be scheduled based on the arrival times of participating teams.

The NAIA Site Supervisor, in consultation with the Host Tournament Director of the First & Second Round and the traveling team's head coaches, shall establish a practice schedule for all teams participating in the First & Second Round. Practice sessions at each First & Second Round site can begin as early as Wednesday, November 19. Additionally, the facility must be exclusively available for all team practices during the following times:

- Day before first game – 11 AM to 5 PM (maximum 1.5 hours of practice per team)
- Day of competition – One hour of practice for all teams
- Practices must end at least 1 ½ hours before the start of the first match

Teams must bring their own soccer balls to use during practices at the First & Second Round.

If a team requires a flight to their First & Second Round and cannot travel with their own balls, the head coach of the traveling team(s) should reach out to the Host Tournament Director and NAIA Site Supervisor to work out a plan in which the host site would supply practice balls.

PRE-GAME SCHEDULE – FIRST GAME OF DAY

The following time schedule should be followed for all First & Second Round games:

1. The field will be set up and available 70 minutes prior to the start of the First & Second Round match.
2. Game administrators must ensure that any non-playable area(s) used for warm-up are equally available to both teams.
3. Officials shall be required to report to the playing area at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. Their jurisdiction begins upon arrival on the field.
4. A countdown (clock set at 60:00) shall be started on the visible clock 70 minutes prior to game time.
5. The PA announcer should begin opening remarks 20 minutes prior to game time. The NAIA shall provide scripts for national sponsor and Champions of Character announcements during warm up and breaks.
6. When the clock expires, teams will return to benches and line up for team/player introductions (World Cup style) and National Anthem. The referees will request that starters come to their respective sideline and prepare to march to the midfield area for player introductions.
7. The visiting team starters are announced first; followed by the home team starters and then the officials/referees. Starters and officials remain lined up at midfield for the playing of the National Anthem (include Canadian anthem – played first – if a Canadian team is playing).
8. At the conclusion of the National Anthem, the Champions of Character pre-game message is read. Teams are NOT allowed to return to their benches after the National Anthem.

If there are multiple matches in a single day, there must be a minimum of 30 minutes provided between matches.

OFFICIAL PARTY

The official party for each team participating in postseason play is 26 players allowed in uniform and up to 6 support staff. Only members of the Official Party will be permitted in the team area, which includes the bench.

Medical Personnel - Each team is allowed up to two athletic training/medical personnel on the team sideline. One of which must be an ATC, MD, or DO. A licensed health care provider's license information/number must be submitted in the application in order to receive any medical/athletic training credentials for your team. Applications will close 72 hours before the event starts. Medical personnel credentials can be picked up during team check-in/registration only with a photo ID.

Official Postseason Roster forms are filled out via the [NAIA Connect admin website](#) and sent to the NAIA National Office. If you do not have a login account, please go to the link and sign up. Once you login, please follow these instructions

1. Under "Forms and Rosters" click on the link "Official Postseason Rosters"
2. Fill out the roster form

If you have trouble with the online roster form, please contact [Reanne Kietlinski](#) of the NAIA Athletics Communications Department. For any other general questions related to the official postseason rosters, please contact the NAIA Championship Sport Manager.

Postseason Rosters (and ejection disclosures) will be processed electronically and the administrator completing the roster will sign electronically. Postseason Rosters no longer need to be sent to the NAIA National Office.

The list of 26 eligible players must be submitted by Monday, November 17, 2025.

Only players on the official postseason roster may be in uniform. If a team is discovered using a player not on the official postseason roster at any time during the postseason tournament, that team will be immediately disqualified from further postseason play that year. From the point of first infraction by a team using a player not on the official postseason roster, all subsequent matches shall be forfeited by the offending team.

A copy of this roster form must be hand-carried to the site of the Conference/CAC (formerly A.I.I)/Group postseason tournament site and National Championship (both First & Second Rounds and Final Site), and be presented to the NAIA Site Supervisor (for First & Second Rounds), and the NAIA Tournament Committee (for the National Championship Final Site) prior to that institution's participation in the tournament.

The deadline for certifying the official roster of 26 players is 15 minutes prior to the first game of any qualifying tournament, or at the coaches meeting of the National Championship First & Second Round or Final Site.

A player may be replaced on the official roster between the Conference Tournament and the NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship First & Second Round by any eligible player whose name is included on the NAIA Official Eligibility Form for the current season.

Once the National Championship (First & Second Round or Final Site) begins, no player may play who is not included on the initial submission of the Official Party Roster before the National Championship First & Second Round.

TEAM BENCHES

Each team's bench will include enough space for the following personnel:

- Up to 26 players in uniform
- Up to 6 additional personnel
- Up to 2 certified athletic trainers/medical personnel

The head coach is responsible for designating bench personnel. No additional personnel are allowed on the bench for any matches. Players shall remain seated while game is in progress.

TOWELS/HYDRATION

Teams are responsible for providing their own towels and water bottles for the duration of First & Second Round. Water coolers for refilling of water bottles will be provided.

UNIFORMS

Teams must have both light and dark colored uniforms available. The higher seed is considered home and wears light-colored uniforms. The lower seed is considered the visitor and wears dark-colored uniforms. It is mandatory that numbers be easily distinguishable from the predominant background color(s) and pattern. Numbers must be displayed on front and back of each player's jersey. In the first round, the team on the higher line of the tournament bracket will be considered the home team and wear light-colored uniforms.

Stockings must match the dominant color of jerseys. Goalkeepers shall wear jerseys that distinguish them from all field players and stockings that distinguish them from their opponent's field players.

All teams must bring both home and away uniforms to the First & Second Round site for each game.

TEAM TRAVEL

ARRIVAL

All participating teams will need to plan on arrival to their First & Second Round sites no later than 24 hours prior to their game. Sites with three teams should plan to arrive Wednesday, November 19 and sites with two teams must arrive Friday, November 21. Please make sure to coordinate your travel plans with your First & Second Round Tournament Director and Site Supervisor.

HOUSING

All participating teams will be assigned to a hotel by the First & Second Round host and must stay at that property for the duration of the National Championship First & Second Round. A team representative should contact the assigned hotel property no later than end of business day on Monday, November 17, and provide a rooming list, date/time of arrival and a method of payment for all hotel charges.

A room block of 17 double/double hotel rooms will be reserved on behalf of each participating team, however, each participating team is financially responsible for the cost of the rooms (as well as all other travel expenses & meals). If traveling teams need hotel rooms in addition to the room block provided by the host, traveling teams will be responsible for requesting and securing those needs. Hotel booking information will be communicated by the site Tournament Director during the Qualifier Administrator Zoom Call on Monday, November 17.

All traveling teams must stay at the designated hotel for the duration of their stay at the NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship First & Second Round to be eligible for possible reimbursement.

REIMBURSEMENT

Travel and lodging reimbursement to member institutions participating in postseason events is not guaranteed by the NAIA for any event. All transportation and housing expenses incurred to attend an NAIA First & Second Round shall be the financial responsibility of the institution. At the conclusion of the First & Second Round, teams that travel to their assigned site will submit a [Traveling Team Expense Report](#). Expenses in the categories of transportation and lodging will be eligible for potential reimbursement.

The NAC and COP have approved a flat fee reimbursement rate for traveling teams in First & Second Round competition. For those institutions that require air travel to a First & Second Round, they may book their own travel or secure a quote through Short's Travel. To book your travel arrangements through Short's Travel, contact Short's at (816-323-6405).

Traveling teams will be responsible for a minimum amount (to be determined by the NAC and COP) of their transportation and housing expenses prior to being eligible for expense reimbursement. The traveling team will receive and pay the transportation bill (air and/or ground) and housing bills incurred to and from, and while at

the First & Second Round site. Exceptions will not be made to these policies unless approved in advance in writing by the NAIA CEO.

SHORTS TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Qualifying institutions are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the First & Second Rounds. The Official Travel partner of the NAIA is Short's Travel Management. Please contact **Short's Travel (816-323-6405)** to book your travel arrangements.

Traveling teams are no longer required to receive a quote from Short's Travel to be eligible for postseason reimbursement.

EXPENSE REPORT

After participating in a First & Second Round, traveling teams shall submit the [Traveling Team Expense Report](#) sent to Head Coaches by the Championship Sport Manager), with receipts, to the NAIA National Office. Expenses categorized as transportation costs (air, ground) and lodging may be eligible for reimbursement. This report is due by December 12, EOD. The institution's CEO and Athletics Director will be notified when expense reports are not submitted by the December 12 deadline. Submitting incomplete or late expense reports may jeopardize the institution's eligibility for reimbursement.

FIRST & SECOND ROUND PERSONNEL

NAIA CHAMPIONSHIP SPORT MANAGER

The NAIA Championship Sport Manager is a member of the NAIA Department of Championships responsible for the overall operation and supervision of National Championship First & Second Round and Final Site competition and events. Please note that the Championship Sport Manager will not be on-site during First & Second Rounds.

Rick Daum – NAIA Men's Soccer Sport Manager
816.595.8141
rdaum@naia.org

HOST TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

The Host Tournament Director is the representative working directly with NAIA National Office and the NAIA Site Supervisor for on-site First & Second Round event administration including but not limited to: officials, administrative services, publicity and promotion, event personnel, certificates of insurance, programs, facility, equipment rental and medical services.

The Host Tournament Director is the liaison between the NAIA National Office, the Site Supervisor, participating teams and all local entities including competition and practice facilities' personnel, hotel personnel, local media, sponsors and merchants.

NAIA SITE SUPERVISOR

NAIA National Championships are under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA with assistance from each coach's association and the assigned Site Supervisor for each site. The NAIA, in conjunction with the First & Second Round host, will designate a representative to serve as the Site Supervisor for each site. Site Supervisors are selected to work the First & Second Round by the host institution and Host Tournament Director. Site Supervisors should have no direct affiliation to the First & Second Round Host institution. This includes school administrators, athletic directors, conference commissioner, other sport coach, etc.

Duties of the NAIA Site Supervisor include, but are not limited to:

Supervision of Participating Teams

- Conduct administrative call with personnel from all participating teams prior to the First & Second Round.

- Confirm itineraries for traveling teams from time of arrival to time of departure from host site. The itinerary is given to head coaches of each traveling team upon arrival to the host site, and adjustments in the schedule, if necessary, are made at that time.
- Confirm arrangements for housing and meals for traveling teams.
- Confirm practice schedule and site for traveling teams.
- Confirm local transportation (if needed) for traveling teams.
- Communicate with the Host Tournament Director and Host SID and prepare schedule for all participating coaches and their players (if necessary) with the news media.
- Attend practice session(s) of all teams.
- The NAIA Site Supervisor will be stationed in press box for all First & Second Round matches.
- The NAIA Site Supervisor will provide assistance (as necessary) to the participating coaches to ensure the best possible conditions for all teams before, during and after each match.

Supervision of Game Officials

- Meet and brief officials upon their arrival at the venue.
- Confirm dressing and shower facilities for officiating team at the venue. Notify officials if these facilities are not available or inadequate so other arrangements can be made.
- Secure roster of officials from the Host Tournament Director.
- Conduct pre-match meeting with officials to review expense reimbursement, game fees, standards and expectations as applicable. Officials will be paid through Arbiter.

Supervision of the Venue Preparation

- Complete a full facility walkthrough to ensure setup is complete and compliant with all championship specifications.
- Check scoreboard and official clock for proper operation the day before each match.
- Check the PA system for proper operation. Confirm PA announcer is prepared with copies of team scripts, sponsorship announcements and Champions of Character PA scripts.
- Confirm National anthem(s), US/Canadian flags displayed for pregame script.
- Confirm proper field markings.
- Check competition area to eliminate safety hazards that might exist.
- Check locker room facilities at venue for use before and after each match. Should include adequate lockers, showers, towels and taping facilities. If any of the facilities are inadequate, notify the coaches of both teams the day before the match, work with Host to secure alternate facility.
- Confirm appropriate signage is displayed in accordance with NAIA marketing and sponsorship agreements (checklist to be provided by NAIA National Office).
- Confirm with Host Tournament Director that trained statisticians, scorekeepers, ball-runners will staff the event.

HOST SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR (SID)/MEDIA COORDINATOR

The Host Sports Information Director/Media Coordinator is the representative from the host institution working directly with NAIA National Office and the NAIA Site Supervisor for on-site First & Second Round sports information and media needs, including but not limited to: press box/media room, video-streaming, media credentials, press conferences and live statistics.

HOST ATHLETIC TRAINER

The Host Athletic Trainer is the representative from the host venue that shall be responsible for providing the visiting team medical assistance at all practices and during all First & Second Round matches. Host Athletic Trainers should contact all visiting teams to see if teams will be traveling with Athletic Trainers and to prepare for any special needs a visiting team may have.