



NAIA Softball Coaches Association Annual Business Meeting Agenda NFCA Convention | Las Vegas, Nevada | Caesars Forum with Harrah's

Thursday, December 11, 2025 | 8:30-11:30 a.m. | Forum 124-126 | NAIA Caucus Business Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER - MICHALA CIMINO, SCA PRESIDENT

- a. Welcome & Introductions: Meeting called to order by Bruce Tate. Introduction of Executive committee and everyone in attendance. First count of Head coaches in attendance was 44. Additional head coaches joined the meeting after count was completed.
Jamie Hazel from the NFCA welcomed everyone to the convention and spoke mainly about the new "Head Coaches Committee" for the NAIA. Also, it seems membership numbers are up from previous years.
- b. Executive Committee
 - a. Michala Cimino, Bellevue, President; Todd Humphry, Freed-Hardeman, 1st VP; Jadyn Wallis, Science & Hearts, 2nd VP; Laura Klutsarits, Siena Heights, Secretary/Past President; Bill Popp, Appalachian, NAC Liaison-Not present.
- c. Coaches in Attendance: Mike Mayben, Arizona Christian University (Ariz.); Trinity Medina, Ave Maria University (Fla.); Tiara Towe, Ave Maria University (Fla.); Charlie Kennedy, Avila University (Mo.); Aiyana Campos, Avila University (Mo.); Rachel Quintero, Benedictine University Mesa (Ariz.); David Lopez, Calumet College of St. Joseph (Ind.); Shannon Wathen, Campbellsville University (Ky.); Pat Reardon, Central Methodist University (Mo.); Gene Reardon, Central Methodist University (Mo.); Madison Zaccardo, Central Methodist University (Mo.); Lindie Adair, Central Methodist University (Mo.); Carolyn Bray, College of Saint Mary (Neb.); Wendy Spratt, Columbia College (Mo.); Rebekah Klinginsmith, Cottey College (Mo.); Jordan Osborne, Defiance College (Ohio); Hal Wynn, Faulkner University (Ala.); Suzanne Unruh, Friends University (Kan.); Kat Ihlenburg, Georgia Gwinnett College (Ga.); Ashley Razey, Georgia Gwinnett College (Ga.); Amanda Jones, Grace College (Ind.); Cassie Hayes, Grace College (Ind.); Maggie Chinnadurai, Grace College (Ind.); Larry Young, Harris-Stowe State University (Mo.); Gabby Sandoval, Hope International University (Calif.); Stephanie Zimny, Indiana Tech (Ind.); Kelsey Kooistra, Indiana Wesleyan University; Laura Starkey, Judson University (Ill.); Trent Partridge, Louisiana State University Alexandria (La.); Steve Toth, Madonna University (Mich.); Ron Pezzoni, Madonna University (Mich.); Beth Singleton, Midland University (Neb.); Bobbi Singleton, Midland University (Neb.); Emily Prai, Midland University (Neb.); Bailey Curry, Midway University (Ky.); Molly Callihan, Missouri Baptist University (Mo.); Kelly James, Missouri Valley College (Mo.); Abby Kinzler, Missouri Valley College (Mo.); Clarissa Jarrell, Missouri Valley College (Mo.); Todd Chandler, Montreat College (N.C.); Kyndall Chandler, Montreat College (N.C.); McKenzie Gray, Mount Marty University; Lilinoe Nini, Mount Marty University; Cassandra Brown, Mount Mary University (Wis.); Kaleigh Roop, Mount Mary University (Wis.); Larry Yoder, Mount Mercy University (Iowa); Hollie Cunningham, New College of Florida (Fla.); Corbin Weeks, New College of Florida (Fla.); Cheyenne Nunez, New College of Florida (Fla.); Maile Deutsch, Ottawa University (Kan.); Phillip Stockton, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (Ind.); Christina Haymaker, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (Ind.); Gina Furrey Buhse, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (Ind.); Kayla Watkins, Southeastern University (Fla.); Cheyenne Bricker, Southern Oregon University (Ore.); Deb Thompson, Spring Arbor University (Mich.); John Kelly, St. Ambrose University (Iowa); Kylie Casanova, St. Thomas University (Fla.); Erica Winter, St. Thomas University (Fla.); JC Gutierrez, St. Thomas University (Fla.); Nicole Dame, Texas A & M University San Antonio (Texas); Lindsey Ortiz, Texas A&M University-Victoria; Al Mendiola, The College of Idaho (Idaho); Murphy Davis, The University of Tennessee Southern (Tenn.); Keith Essary, The University of Tennessee Southern (Tenn.); Ellie Manderfeld, Trinity Christian College (Ill.); Dylan Reichenberg, Truett McConnell University (Ga.); Kiley Goff, Union Commonwealth University (Ky.); Anna Ankney, University of Northwestern Ohio (Ohio); William Glessner, University of Northwestern Ohio (Ohio); Jay Monhollon, University of Saint Mary (Kan.); Dakota Clouse, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (Okla.); Bruce Lenington, University of the Cumberlands (Ky.); Wendy Hogue,

William Carey University (Miss.); Kate Crogan, William Penn University (Iowa); Caitlyn Foster, William Penn University (Iowa); Lena McCoy, York University (Neb.); Aaron Alvarez, York University (Neb.); Bruce Tate, NAIA; Marc Burchard, NAIA; Jamie Hazel, NFCA.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - MICHALA CIMINO, SCA PRESIDENT

Motion to approve: Wendy Spratt, 2nd Dave Lopez

Vote: 44-0

III. APPROVAL OF 2024 BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES - MICHALA CIMINO, SCA PRESIDENT

Motion to approve: Kat Ihlenburg, 2nd Jady Wallis

Vote: 44-0

IV. PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

- a. GoRout – KC Proctor – Present
- b. NCSA – Kadero Watson – Present
- c. Netting Professionals – Tom Riginos – Present
- d. Rip It – Chris Morton and Jillian Morrison – Present

V. REPORTS

- a. NFCA National Office Report:
 - i. Rules coordinator **Vicki Van Kleeck** spoke about Double base, offence communication, obstruction, protest, and 10sec moved to 12sec were a few rules discussed.
 - ii. **Carol Bruggeman** spoke and welcomed coaches to the convention.
 - iii. **Pat Reardon**, NFCA/NAIA Rep from CMU spoke on behalf of NAIA coaches. 138 out of 194 coaches are currently NFCA members. Pat spoke about calendar start date moved, Juco additional 2years not true.
- b. 2025 National Championship Review
 - i. **Laura Klutsarits** reviewed the World Series outcomes and success.
- c. National Selection Committee Report – Bruce Tate/Executive Committee
 - i. **Bruce Tate** announced National tournament selection will be in person this year in KC for the first time and introduced NSC members who were present.
- d. All-America Selection Committee Report - Executive Committee
 - i. **Laura Klutsarits** reviewed the process and who serves on committee.
- e. NAIA National Office Report – Bruce Tate
 - i. Coaches associations can take action through sports motions in 3 areas: Sport Rules, Policy, Legislation. Sport Rules and Policy Change have similar paths – Sport Motion by coaches, voting process. Legislation process is a different path – Can start as a sport motion to gain support from the coaches, MUST gain a co-sponsor (conference or standing committee), but must be submitted to Legislative Services by mid-January and will be voted on at Convention in April. Voting process, includes: on-site straw polls, electronic ballots distributed for full votes, requires that 50% of coaches—either in attendance or participating electronically—must vote to move an issue forward to the NAC
 - ii. Highlighted NAIA's sport manager and NAC liaison role. NAC rep Bill Popp, AAC Commissioner.
 - iii. Official ball of the NAIA is the Rawlings NAIAFB. Strongly encouraged to be used during regular season play and must be used during post season play.
 - iv. World Series Final Site – Returning to Columbus, GA this 2026 spring. The current bid process is open and NAIA is transitioning to a 3 year bid cycle.
 - v. Two new members were approved beginning Fall 2026. Wesleyan College (GA) and Andrew College (GA) who both will compete in the Southern States Athletic Conference and participate in softball.

- vi. NAIA Championships is entering year two of it's agreement with Urban Edge Network. NAIA has extended coverage to include early rounds. Coverage of softball opening rounds are still be discussed and evaluated.
- vii. Softball post season roster limits have increased to 22 for the 25-26 season and beyond.
- viii. Opening Round host site policy, new evaluation process has been approved, national office and host site is implementing a daily reporting system, strike system in place for those sites not meeting the standards and will be in jeopardy of not being able to host.
- ix. Post season national selection committee has been improved to ensure consistency across all sports. Areas Rating Committees (ARCs) have been realigned and key operational practices have been standardized-meeting four times per season, ARC rating releases on a unified cycle, and final ARC ratings published on the same day the NSC meets.
- x. Marc Burchard discussed the topic of Five Season of Competition. The Path Forward Task Force has been evaluating the current landscape of college athletics in a various areas. The task force has recommended the association to consider five seasons of competition, but final determination has not be decided on, but could be on the table to vote on before or during convention in April.

NFCA's **Samantha Ekstrand** informed the coaches as a member of NFCA they have access to legal council if anything happens to arise with their careers.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Sport Motion #1: Snake Seeding

Discussion: To revise Opening Round seeding model that balances competitive strength more equitably across all sites by adjusting the placement of teams based on Power Rating, thereby reducing the current advantage for the #1 and #2 overall seeds and addressing the competitive imbalance faced by the #3 and #4 overall seeds. This will only be a one year adjustment due to World Series Change but felt it was important to get it right due to the imbalance.

Motion to Approve: Charlie Kennedy, 2nd Wendy Spratt

Straw Poll Vote: 39-0-3

- b. Eight Team World Series and Opening Round Change

Discussion:

The NAC has decided that, starting in spring 2027, the softball and baseball World Series will move to an 8-team final site. The Executive Committee and select members of the National Selection Committee proposed format options for the coaches to review. With the shift to an 8-team format confirmed, coaches may give input on the format.

The Opening Round Bracket will change to a 6-team double-elimination tournament at eight host sites.

For the 8-team World Series, two formats were considered:

- An 8-team double-elimination tournament
- An 8-team championship series (best 2 of 3)

Coaches preferred the championship series bracket.

Wendy Spratt shared that the AMC has used the championship series format, but expressed concerns about teams remaining on the same side of the bracket after losing games 6 and 8.

It was proposed that, to address this, teams losing games 6 and 8 should crossover from the loser bracket to face different opponents in games 9 and 10.

Coaches preferred the crossover in the bracket.

Motion to Approve: Jon Kelly, 2nd Charlie Kennedy

Straw Poll Vote: 54-0-0

Motion on the floor: Teams will be placed into the 2027 World Series Bracket according to the opening round site from which they qualified, not their original seed.

Motion to Approve: Kat Ihlenburg, 2nd by John Kelly

Straw Poll Vote: 35-5-11

- c. Executive Committee Nominations

Nominations:

Beth Singleton, Midland University (Neb.)

Kayla Watkins, Southeastern University (Fla.)

VIII. OPEN DISCUSSION

Discussion:

Reminder about double base and outfield padding changes in 2027 season.

NFCA Hall of Fame Induction nominations. Currently have one NAIA coach in the NFCA Hall of Fame. Begin to focus on nominations from the NAIA coaching body based on NFCA guidelines. [Selection criteria and the nomination form.](#)

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Charlie Kennedy/David Lopez

Vote: 51-0-0



Softball Sport Motion #1

Coaches Vote: 0-0-0

MOTION:

To reset the snake seeding for the opening round of the National Tournament.

RATIONALE:

The current model of the snake seeding gives a significant advantage to the #1 and #2 overall seeds while at the same time giving a significant disadvantage to the #3 and #4 overall seeds of the 48 teams. The new model gives every site a true #1, true #2, and true #3 overall seed.

HISTORY BEHIND MOTION:

We have used the current model for two years and talked about adjusting the model after year one, but never got it set up on paper for everyone to see and understand. While this will be only a one year thing with the likely change to eight sites of six teams for the 2027 season, collectively we shouldn't be penalizing two of the top four overall seeds in the brackets like we have done for the past two seasons.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None - this only changes the ideal seeding - it doesn't mandate the seeds be specific - it simply gives the selection committee and national office a better guideline. We will ultimately still be working within the same constraints of the financial picture in determining what teams go to what sites.

START DATE:

2025-26 Academic Year

Proposed Seeding

	#1 Seed		#2 Seed		#3 Seed		#4 Seed		#5 Seed	
	Site #1	Site #2	Site #3	Site #4	Site #5	Site #6	Site #7	Site #8	Site #9	Site #10
OR Seed #1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OR Seed #2	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
OR Seed #3	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
OR Seed #4	48	47	35	38	37	33	32	36	31	34
OR Seed #5			46	42	41	45	44	40	43	39
POWER RATING	90	90	125	125	124	125	124	125	124	124

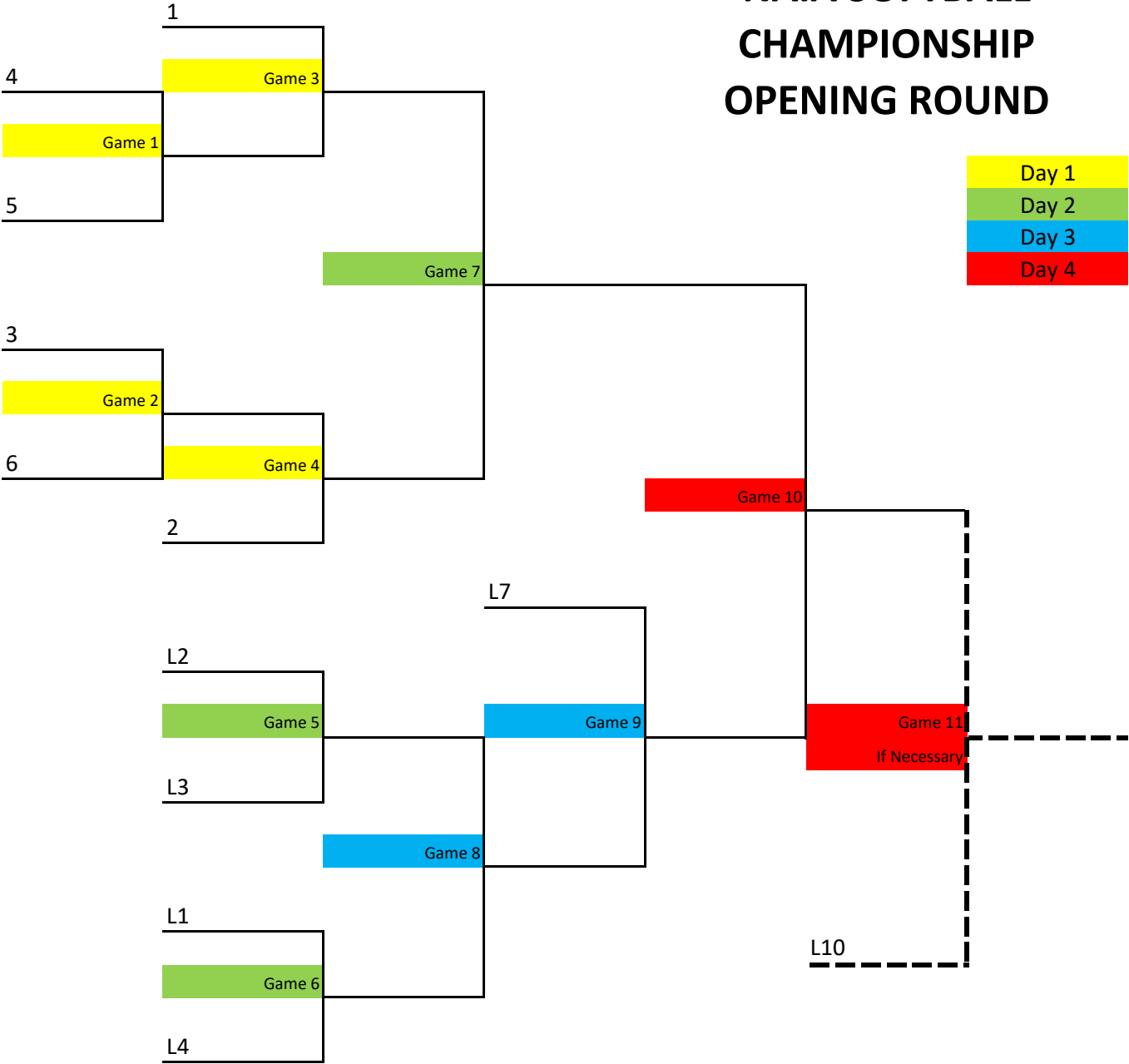
Current Seeding

	#1 Seed		#2 Seed		#3 Seed		#4 Seed		#5 Seed	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OR Seed #1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OR Seed #2	25	26	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
OR Seed #3	24	23	19	20	21	22	27	28	29	30
OR Seed #4	48	47	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
OR Seed #5			46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39
POWER RATING	98	98	124	123	122	121	124	123	122	121

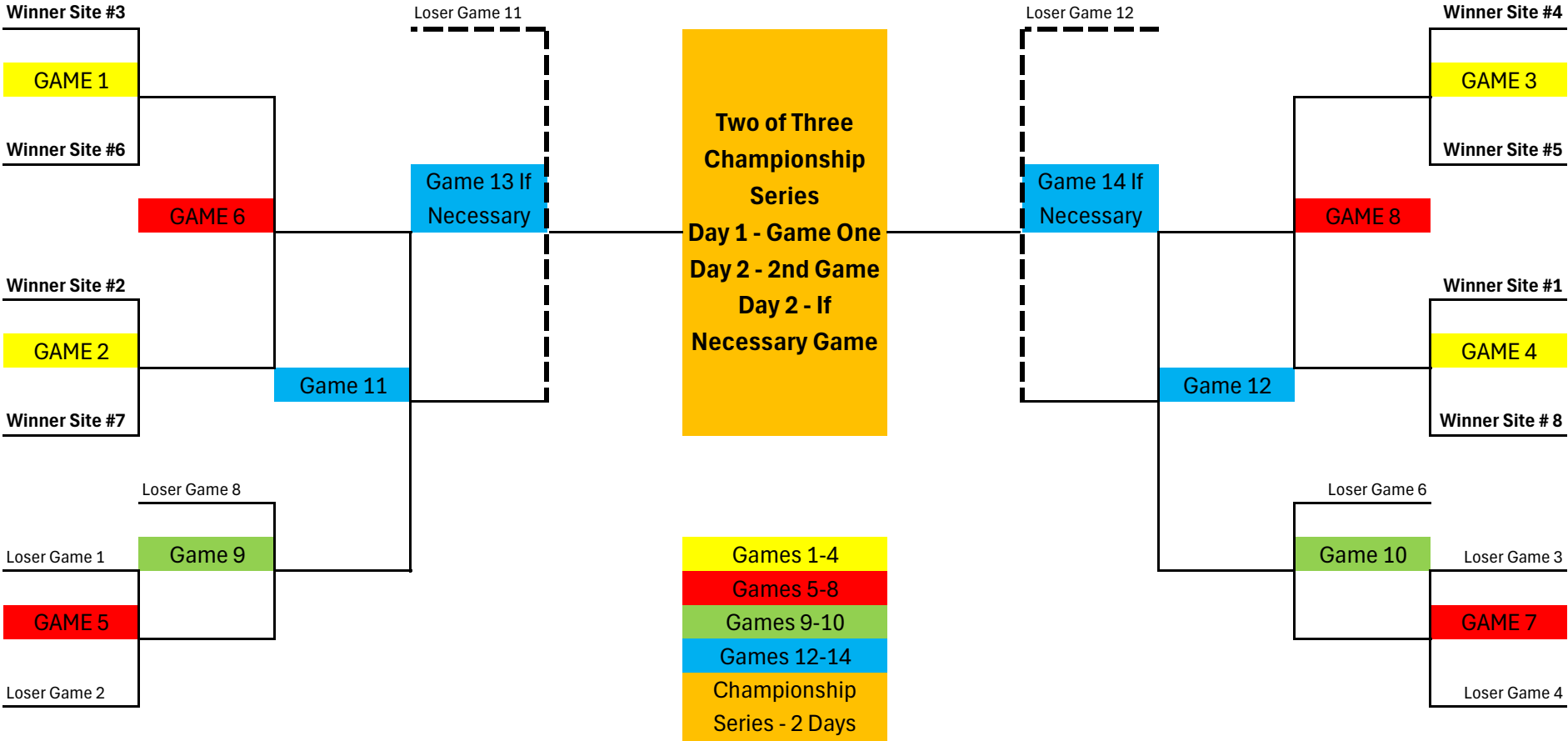
The current seeding (orange power rating) is a significant advantage for the #1 and #2 overall seeds with a significant disadvantage for the #3 and #4 overall seeds. In the current model, the #1 and #2 overall seeds do not have a true #2 seeded team in their bracket, they instead have two #3 overall seeds in their brackets. The #3 and #4 overall seeds in the current model have two #2 overall seeds in their brackets and no true #3 overall seed in their bracket. The new proposal has the equivalent of a #2, #3, and #5 overall seed at the #1 and #2 overall seeds and has the equivalent of a #2, #3 #4 and #5 overall seed at the #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, and #9 overall seeds. The #8 and #10 overall seeds would have a true #2, #3, and two #4 seeds at their site.

NAIA SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP OPENING ROUND

Day 1
Day 2
Day 3
Day 4



NAIA WORLD SERIES -
CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES FORMAT



Thursday Games
Friday Games - Two Teams Eliminated
Saturday Games - Two Teams Eliminated
Monday Games - Two Teams Eliminated
Championship Series - 2 Days Tuesday & Wednesday