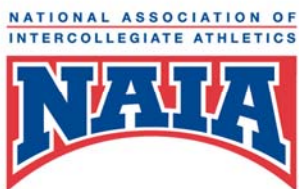




## **NAIA-Football Coaches Association Annual Business Meeting Agenda**

**Monday, January 12, 2026 – 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  
Charlotte Convention Center – Room 208**

- I. Call to Order *Matt McCarty*
- II. Welcome and Introductions *Matt McCarty*
- III. Sponsor Introductions *Abby Schultz*
  - a. GoRout
  - b. Netting Pros
  - c. NCSA
  - d. eTeamSponsor
  - e. Big Game
- IV. Approval of 2025 NAIA-FCA Meeting Minutes *Matt McCarty*
- V. Committee Reports
  - a. Voters Committee
  - b. Selection Committee *Jesse Godding*
  - c. All-America Committee *Steve Ryan*
  - d. AFCA Update *Steve Ryan*
  - e. National Championship Report *Jesse Godding/Chris Stutzriem*
- VI. Old Business *Matt McCarty*
  - a. Review of Approved/Denied 2025 NAIA-AFCA Motions
- VII. New Business
  - a. NAIA National Office Report *Abby Schultz/Austin Bennett*
  - b. Sport Motions *Matt McCarty*
- VIII. Open Discussion *Matt McCarty*
- IX. Executive Committee Nominations *Matt McCarty*
- X. Adjourn *Matt McCarty*



## **Coach's Guide: Legislation, Policies & Sport Rules**

A coaches association takes action through sport motions, but different processes apply for motions that implicate sport rules, policy changes and legislative amendments.

**Sport Rule:** Sport rules are those specific rules that dictate on-field conduct and playing rules of the game. The NAIA has adopted the NCAA rulebook in nearly all sports (exceptions: tennis, golf, competitive cheer and dance, and bowling), though specific NAIA rule modifications can be made by the coaches association and National Administrative Council (NAC). The NAIA may have some general policies that apply to game management or conduct in competition (e.g. suspensions resulting from ejections, etc.), but these NAIA policies only apply if the sport rule is silent or more lenient. Sport rule books can be found on each "Coaches Corner" page ([www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org))

### **How to make a change:**

- Sport motion by coaches association
- Must be approved by NAC
- Will be considered an NAIA rule modification

**Policy:** Regulations found in the official policy sections of the handbook. Each governing council of the NAIA has a policy section that covers specific topics within that council's purview. The NAC oversees all coaches association and any issues arising from coaches associations. Policy can be changed at the will of the council. NAC, COP, CFAR and CSA policy can be found in the NAIA Handbook ([www.naia.org/legislative](http://www.naia.org/legislative))

### **How to make a change:**

- Sport motion by coaches association
- Changes to NAC Policy: Must be approved by full NAC (occurs at convention or NACDA). Will be added to the NAC policy.
- Changes to COP, CFAR or CSA policy: Coaches associations do not have a direct line to propose changes in these policies. Should a sport motion apply to one of these policy sections, the sport's officers and national office liaison can share the motion with the applicable council as a recommendation. It will be that council's discretion to determine if any action is warranted.

**Legislation:** Anything found in the NAIA Constitution or Bylaws. Any change or amendment to the constitution or bylaws can only be done through a vote of the full membership at the annual NAIA national convention. The constitution and bylaws can be found in the NAIA Handbook ([www.naia.org/legislative](http://www.naia.org/legislative))

**How to make a change:**

- Any association, council, standing committee or conference can sponsor a legislative amendment, and in some cases a co-sponsor is required. (Coaches associations must receive co-sponsorship from any of those groups except another coaches association.)
- Proposals must be submitted to the office by mid-January.
- All submitted proposals that have requisite co-sponsorship will be voted on by the full membership at the annual convention.





## NAIA-Football Coaches Association Annual Business Meeting Agenda - Minutes

**Monday, January 14, 2025 – 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM**  
**Charlotte Convention Center – Room 208**

- I. Call to Order *Josh Schumacher*  
**Attendees:** Josh Schumacher, Concordia (Mich.); Chris Stutzriem, Rocky Mountain (Mont.); Joel Osborn, Benedictine (Kan.); Dewey Lusk, Bluefield (Va.); Dominique Lewis, Campbellsville (Ky.); Dave Brown, Central Methodist (Mo.); Patrick Daberkow, Concordia (Neb.); Tom Salley, Culver-Stockton (Mo.); Tim Mathis, Cumberland (Tenn.); Pete Stanton, Dickinson State (N.D.); Joel Penner, Dordt (Iowa); Tim Camp, Eastern Oregon; Check Hepola, Evangel (Mo.); John Perin, Georgetown (Ky.); Andrew Rode, Indiana Wesleyan; Jesse Booton, Judson (Ill.); Peter Davilo, Keiser (Fla.); Chad Vanderhoof, Kentucky Christian; Phil Kleckler, Lindsey Wilson (Ky.); Brett Guminsky, Madonna (Mich.); Ted Karras, Marian (Ind.); Paul Hansen, MidAmerica Nazarene (Kan.); Jeff Jamrog, Midland (Neb.); Jason Burianek, Missouri Baptist; Steve Ryan, Morningside (Iowa); John Michaletti, Mount Marty (S.D.); Jared Hudgins, Nelson (Texas); Cory Miller, Oklahoma Panhandle State; Nick Davis, Ottawa (Kan.); Mike Nesbitt, OUAZ; Mike Feminis, Saint Xavier (Ill.); Matt Kohn, Siena Heights (Mich.); Shawn Daniel, Simpson (Calif.); Adam Waugh, Southeastern (Fla.); Vince Fillipp, St. Ambrose (Iowa); Bill Rychel, St. Thomas (Fla.); Mike Gardner, Tabor (Kan.); Aaron Mingo, Taylor (Ind.); Jarrail Jackson, Texas College; Bradley Sherrod, Texas Wesleyan; Corey Fipps, Pikeville (Ky.); Kevin Donley, Saint Francis (Ind.); Lance Hinson, Saint Mary (Kan.); Joe Curry, St. Francis (Ill.); Marc Benavidez, William Penn (Iowa); Sam Camp, William Woods (Mo.); Jesse Godding, Nelson (Texas); Abby Schultz, NAIA
- II. Welcome and Introductions *Josh Schumacher*
- III. Sponsor Introductions *Abby Schultz*
- a. Big Game
  - b. eTeam Sponsor
  - c. Go Rout
  - d. NCSA
  - e. Netting Professionals
  - f. SignedUp Sports
- IV. Approval of 2024 NAIA-FCA Meeting Minutes *Josh Schumacher*  
**FIRST/SECOND:** Joe Curry/Nick Davis  
**VOTE:** 42-0-0
- V. Committee Reports
- a. Ratings Committee *Mike Feminis*
    - i. Moving to a Top 25 Poll instead of a Rating this Fall. ARC is a big factor for the selection committee. That's where coaches votes are heard. A desire from the coaches to release the grid to all coaches for oversight.



- b. Selection Committee *Jesse Godding*
  - i. 4<sup>th</sup> year of selection committee, not everyone is satisfied on Selection Sunday. There is a lot that goes into the process and there will always be someone left out. A few changes were made this year with the ARCs At-Large Representatives overseeing a different ARC and At-Larges are non-voting members within those ARCS. Primarily there for oversight & keep the ARC centered on criteria. In this playoff format, having the ability to see the 20 teams is a positive. Gave better games throughout the first few rounds into the playoffs. Process didn't change much, this coming year there will be a change to primary criteria.
- c. All-America Committee *Steve Ryan*
  - i. No discussion.
- d. AFCA Update *Steve Ryan*
  - i. All AFCA meetings are now at the end of the convention. No news coming out ahead of time. Reality is a lot of change has happened and will continue to happen in college football.
- e. National Championship Report *Jesse Godding*
  - i. Game was good, arrived on Wednesday Student-Athlete Experience, tour of the Durham Bulls Stadium. Could have arrived on Thursday with more time at home to prepare for the Championship. Game went well, Durham has been a good host for the past 4 years. No longer be at Durham, new site announced in the coming months. Game administration went well. Tough time of the year playing on December 23 to get a huge crowd. Fans/families were well represented.

VI. Old Business *Josh Schumacher*

- a. Review of Approved/Denied 2024 NAIA-AFCA Motions
  - i. Direct coaches to the NAIA Football Coaches Corner if you are looking for any information. Fall of 2025, Football is moving to a coaches poll and will not be apart of selection criteria. NAIA FCS playoffs set a maximum of six tablets on the sideline. If playoff hosts have instant replay capabilities, they are allowed to use them. [NAC Updates - Football](#)

VII. New Business

- a. NAIA National Office Report *Abby Schultz*
  - i. NAIA Legislative Process
    1. Explained the difference between sport policy and NAIA bylaws as well as the avenues for making amendments to each. Handout in agenda binder.
    2. Explained the voting process (straw poll on site, electronic ballot sent out for full vote, must have 50% of coaches in attendance or in electronic vote to move an issue forward to the NAC).
  - ii. NAIA's role in Coaches Associations
    1. Sport Manager is there to help coaches associations navigate through issues and provide guidance on topics and processes. We don't make decisions, we are facilitators to further issues that you, the coaches want to see implemented in your sport. Abby Schultz is the NAIA Football Sport Manager. If you have any questions, please reach out.
  - iii. National Administrative Council
    1. The National Administrative Council (NAC) initiates operational policies for conference/CAC, national championships, national statistical services, national awards and event management.
    2. NAC meets four times a year to review motions, January, April, June and



- August. Football Sport Motions are heard at the NAC meeting at NAIA Convention every year.
3. Each sport has an NAC liaison, NAIA Football Sport liaison is Jesse Godding, Athletic Director at Nelson University.
- iv. Sponsorship Update
    1. Big Game is the Official Football of the NAIA. Multiple sponsors continuing to jump on board to sponsor NAIA Football.
  - v. Site Selection
    1. We are currently exploring two different options for the future of the Football Championship both in the Midwest. We hope to have a finalist in the next month or two, information will be shared at that time.
  - vi. NAIA Connect
    1. NAIA Connect launched in spring 2024, replacing NAIA Help. NAIA Connect is supported by Salesforce and be a more comprehensive and functional technology platform. There are several training resources will be made available in NAIA Connect via the NAIA Learning Hub.
    2. ECP, Rules Education Training and Postseason rosters are now handled through NAIA Connect.
    3. Your username is your institutional email with ".naia" added at the end. If your email is [jsmith@abcu.edu](mailto:jsmith@abcu.edu), your username for NAIA Connect is [jsmith@abcu.edu.naia](mailto:jsmith@abcu.edu.naia)
    4. If you need assistance regarding NAIA Connect please contact [naiaconnectsupport@naia.org](mailto:naiaconnectsupport@naia.org)
  - vii. NAIA Membership Recruitment and Retention
    1. The NAIA has been actively enhancing membership recruitment and retention, focusing on engaging NCAA Division II and III schools. In the first half of this year, the organization collaborated closely with six institutions in these divisions. As part of our outreach, we refreshed the "Why NAIA" website, aiming to better showcase the value and advantages of NAIA membership. This initiative has proven effective; last year, we received 12 membership applications—the highest in the past decade.
    2. Collaboration is crucial to our success in recruitment, with NAIA members involved in 80% of our current recruitment efforts. We encourage our members to support this initiative by connecting us with potential schools. If you know of any institutions interested in joining or have contacts who might be a good fit, please reach out to Nick Davidson at [ndavidson@naia.org](mailto:ndavidson@naia.org).
  - viii. NAIA Championship Streaming
    1. The NAIA has entered into an agreement with Urban Edge Network to offer free streaming of NAIA national championships. Starting in fall 2024, all NAIA national championship final sites (excluding men's and women's wrestling) will be streamed for free through Urban Edge Network and the NAIA Network. In addition to live streaming, the NAIA Network will provide on-demand viewing, and NAIA members will have access to download clips of championship highlights.
    2. This past year the livestream for NAIA Football had over 412,000 views on the Championship game!
  - ix. NAIA Brand Advocacy
    1. The NAIA has introduced brand advocacy as a core pillar in its 2024-2027 strategic plan for the first time. To lead this initiative, the NAIA has partnered with a Kansas City-based marketing firm known for its rapid growth and expertise. The initiative, set to unfold over three years, aims



to enhance the NAIA's visibility and reputation within higher education and intercollegiate athletics. The campaign, which began in July, is scheduled to launch in early 2025.

2. Key objectives include:
  - a. Marketing effectively to potential members and retaining current ones
  - b. Strengthening affinity for the NAIA among members and student-athletes
  - c. Equipping members to advocate for the NAIA
  - d. Engaging industry influencers to boost the NAIA's brand presence
- x. Switch to Coaches Polls
  1. Football will move to Coaches Polls in Fall 2025. Ratings will be removed from selection criteria in 2025-26 season. National oversight process will be eliminated.
- xi. Open Discussion
  1. Currently have 97 schools sponsoring Football. We have seen an increase over the past several years, still a desire to continue to add Football teams.
  2. A lot of different things are going on in the NCAA regarding five years of eligibility, NAIA is aware of these conversations. There are a lot of rumors out there. NAIA is not looking to just pull the trigger, rather the Legislative team alongside some committees are in discussions about what the NAIA is going to do about it. There are no decisions currently. Hopefully to have more direction following NAIA Convention the first week of April.
- b. Sport Motions *Josh Schumacher*
  - i. **Sport Motion #1:** Move the NAIA Football Championship Game to Saturday following the Semifinals.  
**Discussion:** No discussion.  
**First/Second:** Joel Osborn/Corey Fipps  
**Vote:** 45-0-0
  - ii. **AFCA All-American Team**  
**Discussion:** This conversation came forward from AFCA regarding All-America, currently once one of your players is voted 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-American, all of the team's other players are off the board. Idea behind that then 25 teams are represented on 1<sup>st</sup> team All-American. Considering moving forward to an unlimited amount of guys going forward. Up to the conference to figure it out. This is how we voted in our conference, send them how they are voted. With this being an AFCA All-America, we just needed a straw poll vote in the room if NAIA would want to move forward with that method or not for Steve Ryan (NAIA-AFCA rep) to take back to AFCA committee meetings.  
Vote to change to the new way (open format): 18-29-0  
  
**Sport Motion #2:** In secondary criteria, change Conference Record to Conference Standing.  
**Discussion:** 3-way tie for second place in some conferences. This past year it would have impacted some conferences. Conference record makes sense until there is a tie. Conference standing because if you have a tiebreaker you have a measurable item there. Conferences would have to have tiebreaking procedures in place in order for that to happen. With the switch to polls, Conference tiebreaks have to take out anything with a rating. Some issues came out of





tiebreakers over the past few seasons, encouraged conferences to always have a coin flip in there as a last resort. Move the words from record to standing which would force conferences to make sure that their tiebreakers would create standings throughout the conference order.

**FIRST/SECOND:** Mike Feminis/Patrick Daberkow

**Vote:** 43-0-0

**Analytics Discussion:**

Next season, with the switch from ratings to polls, there is no oversight. Mechanics are the same with the process to vote. Raters become Voters. Coaches voices are heard through the ARC process & rating. When the selection committee started for Football, Pugh & Wolfe analytics were put into place as part of primary criteria. Looking to add in other analytics with better data points for the committee to look at. This is one piece of the puzzle for selection criteria, this is not the entire puzzle. Items discussed for analytics/things to look into: how many teams are in the conference, Massey, D2 Performance Index. How did these teams rank in the Massey, D2 Performance Index last season, does it make sense to use those? There is no perfect system. Massey is very easy to use and see what is going on. Request to link Wolfe & Pugh Ratings on the NAIA Coaches Corner. Reminder to educate yourself & others on the selection committee criteria. The selection committee criteria is located on the [NAIA Football Coaches Corner](#).

**Motion:** To empower the Executive Committee to look into analytics and put something forward.

**First/Second:** Joel Penner/Tom Sallay

**Vote:** 45-0-0

VIII. Open Discussion

*Josh Schumacher*

- a. No discussion.

IX. Executive Committee Nominations

*Josh Schumacher*

- a. Ballot will be sent out following Convention. We have one current opening, potential of two.
  - i. Avante Mitchell, Olivet Nazarene (Ill.)
  - ii. Joel Osborne, Benedictine (Kan.)
  - iii. Mike Nesbit, OUAZ
  - iv. Myles Russ, Keiser (Fla.)
  - v. Tim Mathis, Cumberland (Tenn.)

X. Adjourn

- a. Motion to adjourn
  - FIRST/SECOND:** Steve Ryan/Patrick Daberkow
  - Vote:** 45-0-0





## Football Motion #1

### **MOTION:**

Permit the use of one-way wearable technology, including digital wristbands, for coach-to-player communication during NAIA football games. Coach-to-player communication may occur only via one-way wearable technology worn on the wrist. Approved wearable technology may include digital wristbands or similar non-audio wearable devices worn by student-athletes on their wrist. Communication is limited to in-game play calls or related tactical information. No two-way digital communication from the student-athlete to the coach is permitted. There shall be no limit on the number of student-athletes who may wear approved one-way wearable technology during competition (similar to baseball and softball rule). There shall be no restriction on the flow of one-way data from coach to player. All wearable technology must be non-disruptive to game administration and not interfere with officials' equipment or responsibilities.

### **RATIONALE:**

Permitting one-way coach-to-player communication via digital wristbands aligns NAIA football with modern competitive standards while improving fairness, efficiency, and the overall student-athlete experience.

This technology allows coaches to deliver play information quickly and clearly, reducing delays, missed signals, and on-field confusion. By eliminating reliance on traditional sideline signaling, teams can minimize communication errors, allow players to play faster, and reduce in-game mistakes caused by lost or misinterpreted signals.

Additionally, one-way digital wristband communication significantly reduces opportunities for sign stealing, promoting competitive equity across contests. Similar one-way wearable communication systems are already permitted and successfully utilized within the NAIA in other sports, demonstrating that this model can be implemented effectively without disrupting game administration or competitive balance.

This proposal also aligns NAIA football with the evolving national direction of the sport. College football at multiple levels is moving toward secure, one-way communication systems as a standard practice. Aligning NAIA policy with these trends ensures competitive relevance, supports consistency for student-athletes transitioning between levels, and positions the association proactively rather than reactively.

Overall, permitting one-way digital wristband communication enhances competitive integrity, improves pace of play, supports efficient coaching communication, and reflects the continued modernization of NAIA football.



### **HISTORY BEHIND MOTION:**

In 2024, the AFCA Rules Committee expressed support for expanded coach-to-player communication, including both coach-to-helmet systems and wearable communication technology. Following that guidance, the NCAA Football Rules Committee elected to implement coach-to-helmet communication at the FBS level, while other divisions continued to evaluate additional communication methods.

The NCAA FCS adopted in-game communication technology in 2025, with Divisions II and III scheduled to implement approved communication systems beginning in 2026. At the high school level, Texas high school football and several Division III conferences successfully utilized wearable communication technology during the 2025 season.

While coach-to-helmet communication represents one approach to in-game communication, it carries significant cost and infrastructure requirements and does not fully address sideline signaling for teams that operate at higher tempo or without a traditional huddle. Wearable, one-way digital wristband communication has emerged as a complementary alternative that provides secure, efficient communication without requiring helmet-based hardware.

This historical progression demonstrates a clear, ongoing shift toward modernized in-game communication across multiple levels of football, providing established precedent for the NAIA to adopt a similar, appropriately scaled solution.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The proposed rule change carries no required financial impact for NAIA football programs. Adoption of one-way digital wristband communication would be optional, and programs choosing not to utilize the technology would incur no cost.

For programs that elect to use one-way digital wristband communication, costs are significantly lower than helmet-based communication systems. Wearable digital wristband systems are commercially available at a range of price points, generally beginning around \$1,000 annually, with total cost varying based on the number of devices selected by each program.

By contrast, adoption of coach-to-helmet communication under a framework similar to NCAA Rule 1-4-11-b would require additional infrastructure, including a 15-second cutoff or clock management system, which typically costs approximately \$3,000–\$3,500 per venue. In addition, helmet-based systems require per-helmet communication hardware, commonly costing approximately \$700 per helmet, creating a substantially higher total cost for participating programs and host sites.

Allowing one-way digital wristband communication without a required cutoff system avoids these additional expenses while maintaining competitive integrity through non-audio, one-directional data delivery. This approach provides programs with a cost-effective, scalable option for in-game communication without creating financial barriers to participation.



|                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IN SPORT MANUAL OR BYLAWS:</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Technology – Coach-to-Player Communications Proposed Change – Rule 1-4-11-b Exception |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                    |
|--------------------|
| <b>START DATE:</b> |
|--------------------|

|           |
|-----------|
| Fall 2026 |
|-----------|



## Football Motion #2

**MOTION:** Proposal to Expand the NAIA Football Championship Series (FCS) from 20 Teams to 24 Teams\*\*

**RATIONALE:**

Allowing more institutions to have an opportunity to compete in the playoffs / increased revenue for teams that could host playoff games / growing the NAIA brand / increased representation of teams / conferences. This also aligns the NAIA with a format that is easier to understand and promotes postseason excitement. This change is both timely and beneficial for the long-term health of NAIA football growth.

**HISTORY BEHIND MOTION:**

- \* Over the past decade, the number of NAIA football programs has exceeded \*\*90+ institutions\*\* (exact current number varies each year).
- \* More competitive teams are being left out of postseason consideration despite strong seasons.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

- \* NAIA currently subsidizes postseason travel.
- \* Adding four more first-round games increases travel demands modestly. But:
  - \* First-round games are hosted by higher seeds, reducing travel for top teams.
  - \* Additional revenue from more games offsets a portion of costs.

**REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IN SPORT MANUAL OR BYLAWS:**

Selection criteria remains based on selection committee policy. NAIA FCS Manual would need to be updated.

**START DATE:**

Fall 2026



## Football Motion #3

**MOTION:**

Allow NAIA Football programs to do 2 two scrimmages or joint practices against any opponent

**RATIONALE:**

Division III permits teams to participate in two exhibitions, scrimmages, or joint practices against any opponent. Division II allows: Two preseason scrimmages, defined as practices with more than 50% devoted to 11-on-11 full-contact work. Each scrimmage counts as one of the eight permissible full-pad practices. One spring scrimmage against another four-year collegiate institution. Aligning NAIA football with D3 and D2 models gives programs increased flexibility for player development, evaluation, and installation without adding regular-season games.

**HISTORY BEHIND MOTION:**

D2 and D3 has changed to these in recent years.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

You could not scrimmage and spend or gain any financial implications. Home scrimmages generate revenue, while road scrimmages typically do not. Several NAIA programs—including ours—have already been approached with guaranteed financial offers to participate in spring scrimmages against Division II opponents. Allowing each program to hold up to two exhibitions or scrimmages would open the door to additional revenue opportunities, strengthen recruiting value, and provide meaningful competitive reps without adding regular-season games.

**REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IN SPORT MANUAL OR BYLAWS:**

ARTICLE I – SECTION H Football 1

**START DATE:**

Fall 2026