



2025-26

**SOFTBALL**

**OPENING ROUND HOST MANUAL**



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**For National Championship Selection/Coaches Association/Event Administration, please contact –**

**Bruce Tate – [btate@naia.org](mailto:btate@naia.org)  
816-595-8196**

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## INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the NAIA, thank you for being an important part of the 2026 NAIA Softball National Championship by serving as an Opening Round host. Your commitment to hosting this event will prove to be an important aspect of the National Championship and providing a positive student-athlete experience.

The purpose of this manual is to provide direction and guidance to the member institutions serving as hosts for Opening Round competition. It is designed to be used in conjunction with, but not in replace of, the 2025-26 NAIA Softball Championship Manual, which provides more general policies for the administration of the championship. The host institution shall appoint a staff member to assume the position of Tournament Director, and indicate this on their Opening Round host bid form. The function of the Tournament Director is to ensure that the policies of the NAIA Softball Executive Committee are applied. Specific responsibilities may include direction and supervision of facility arrangements, development of participant information, lodging, financial administration, media coordination and adherence to the policies outlined in the Softball Opening Round Manual. Further, the NAIA, in conjunction with the Opening Round host, will appoint a NAIA Site Supervisor to assist the host Tournament Director with the review and administration of Opening Round competition.

In the event differences arise between the information contained in this manual and the Softball Championship Manual, the Softball Championship Manual should be followed.

Should questions or problems arise, please do not hesitate to contact the NAIA Softball Championship Manager or a member of the NAIA Softball Selection Committee for assistance.

Thank you for your commitment to NAIA Softball and the student-athlete experience.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### 2025-26 SOFTBALL SPORT CALENDAR

|                   |                                                                                           |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>JANUARY 15</b> | <b>DEADLINE</b> – Submitting Opening Round Facility Certification Information             |
| <b>APRIL 15</b>   | <b>DEADLINE</b> – Submitting Opening Round Bids to NAIA Office                            |
| <b>MAY 1</b>      | <b>RELEASE</b> – 10 NAIA National Championship Opening Round Hosts/Sites                  |
| <b>MAY 4</b>      | <b>QUALIFICATION DEADLINE</b> – Completion of Conference/CAC Group Qualifying Tournaments |
| <b>MAY 6</b>      | <b>RELEASE</b> – Qualifiers and Bracket for Softball National Championship Opening Round  |
| <b>MAY 11-14</b>  | <b>NAIA SOFTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP OPENING ROUNDS</b>                                 |
| <b>MAY 21-27</b>  | <b>45<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NAIA SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES – COLUMBUS GA</b>                    |

# GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

## COMPETITION DATES & SITES

Dates and deadlines for Opening Round play can be found in the Important Dates section of this manual. The deadline for prospective NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round hosts to submit an official bid is **April 15**. Announcement of the NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round hosts on **May 1**.

## FACILITY CERTIFICATION

In order to be eligible to serve as an Opening Round host, all potential hosts, including NAIA institutions or Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) partnering with a NAIA conference, must complete a Facility Certification process to become qualified to serve as a potential Opening Round host. The Facility Certification process ensures that all Opening Round host facilities meet certain minimum standards.

The deadline to submit a Facility Certification application is **January 15, 2026**. Once a facility becomes certified, it will be eligible to host a Softball Opening Round site for five years. However, potential Opening Round hosts must submit an official bid to host in each year that they wish to host. The deadline for prospective NAIA Softball Opening Round hosts to submit an official bid is **April 15, 2026**.

## OPENING ROUND HOST SITE POLICY

New [policy standards](#) put in place to ensure the successful hosting of the NAIA Softball Opening Rounds. The policy includes primary & secondary offenses:

- One offense from a primary category equals a strike
  - Two offenses from a secondary category equals a strike.
- One strike received results in an institution not being able to host that sport in the following year. Two strikes to an institution in the same year will result in an institution not being able to host any postseason event in the following year.

## AUTOMATIC BERTH FOR HOSTING TEAMS/CONFERENCES WITH ACCEPTED BIDS

Any team/conference/local CVB associated with an approved/accepted bid can designate a host team (regardless of seed) provided that team qualifies for the Softball National Championship Opening Round. Seeding takes place after the national qualifying tournament qualification deadline (May 4, 2026).

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round must be conducted under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA and the NAIA's designated Site Supervisor. The host site will work with the NAIA National Office Championship Sport Manager and Site Supervisor in organizing and conducting the National Championship Opening Round. The NAIA Site Supervisor is responsible for the management of Opening Round games and the general welfare of participating teams and coaches. NAIA Site Supervisors conduct a tournament coaches' meeting, work with the supervisor of officials and coordinate pre-and post-tournament ceremonies

## QUALIFICATION OF TEAMS

The 48 teams that will compete in the 2026 NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round will be determined by the 2025-26 qualification plan, approved by the National Administrative Council (NAC). The 2026 NAIA Softball Qualification plan can be found on [NAIA Connect](#).

Each Affiliated Conference/CAC with six teams competing shall automatically qualify one representative to the National Championship. Conferences with 10 or more teams shall automatically qualify two representatives to the National Championship.

In addition to the automatic berths granted to each Conference, there are no limits to the number of at-large berths an affiliated conference or the Continental Athletic Conference (CAC) may receive.

## SELECTION & SEEDING

The 48 teams in the National Championship will be a combination of Conference automatic qualifiers and at-large qualifiers. The at-large qualifiers will be selected by the Softball National Selection Committee. The 48-team Opening Round field will be seeded by the Softball National Selection Committee and placed into 10 Opening Round sites. There will be eight sites of five teams, and two sites of four teams. The #1 and #2 overall seeds will be placed in an Opening Round site with four teams.



The [criteria](#) which will be used by the National Selection Committee for both at-large selection and seeding can be found on the [NAIA Softball Coaches Corner](#).

## FORMAT

The NAIA Softball National Championship consists of a field of 48 teams. The 48 teams will play in 10 National Championship Opening Round sites. Winners of the National Championship Opening Rounds advance to the NAIA Softball World Series in Columbus, Georgia. All competition in each round will be double-elimination format.

Teams will be seeded #1 – #48 by the NAIA Softball Selection Committee and assigned to an Opening Round site.

# CHAMPIONSHIP PERSONNEL

## NAIA SPORT MANAGER

The NAIA Sport Manager is a member of the NAIA Department of Championships responsible for the overall operation and supervision of National Championship competition and related activities.

## HOST TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

The Host Tournament Director is the representative from the host venue working directly with NAIA National Office and the NAIA Site Supervisor for on-site championship event administration, including but not limited to – Student-athlete gathering, championship umpires, administrative services, publicity and promotion, championship personnel, insurance, souvenir program, facility, equipment rental and medical services. The Host Tournament Director is the liaison between the NAIA, the Site Supervisor, the participating teams and all local entities (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 NAIA, in conjunction with the Opening Round host, will designate a representative to serve as the Site Supervisor for each site. NAIA National Championships are under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA with assistance from each coach's association and the assigned NAIA Site Supervisor. Site Supervisors are selected to work the Opening Rounds by the NAIA Sport Manager and coaches' association leadership.

The NAIA-SCA has requested that Site Supervisors have previous experience as either a Games Committee member at the NAIA World Series or previously served as an NAIA Opening Round Site Supervisor, whenever possible. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to – Working with the Host Tournament Director, acting as a liaison to the coaches and umpires and troubleshooting issues such as security, practices, weather issues, field conditions, etc. The NAIA Site Supervisor must observe all events and facilities and uphold all rules and regulations of the National Championship.

The Opening Round host provides housing, mileage reimbursement, meals and/or meal expenses up to \$50 per diem for the assigned NAIA Site Supervisor.

## SUPERVISION OF PARTICIPATING TEAMS

- A. Conduct pre-tournament administrative meeting with specified personnel from local host committee and all participating coaches on Sunday, May 10, 2026.
- B. Double check itineraries for traveling teams from time of arrival to time of departure from tournament.
- C. Confirm arrangements for housing for traveling teams.
- D. Confirm practice schedules and sites for traveling teams with coaches and local contact.
- E. Confirm local transportation (if needed) for traveling teams.
- F. Confer with the host institution/conference/CVB coordinator and host media coordinator and prepare schedules for participating head coaches and their players, if necessary, with the news media.
- G. Attend practice sessions of all participating teams at tournament venue to go over all details.
- H. The NAIA site supervisor will be stationed in a designated area throughout the tournament.
- I. 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 the games/tournament.
- J. In conjunction with the NAIA National Office the NAIA site supervisor will have the authority to move games to a turf field due to inclement weather if the host field is deemed unplayable.

### **SUPERVISION OF UMPIRES**

- A. Meet and brief umpires upon their arrival at the venue (see C for more details). Cover all venue ground rules and go over the assignment/evaluation process for the entire tournament.
- B. Confirm dressing and/or shower facilities for umpiring crew at the venue. Notify umpires if these facilities are not available or inadequate so other arrangements can be made.
- C. Secure roster of umpires from the host institution/conference/CVB coordinator. Confirm that the umpiring crew has been cleared/approved by the area conference assignor. Conduct pre-tournament meeting with umpires to review expense reimbursement, game fees, standards and expectations as applicable. The host institution/conference/CVB coordinator will issue checks to umpire crew prior to the tournament whenever possible.

### **SUPERVISION OF THE VENUE AND FIELD PREPARATION**

Complete facility walkthrough to ensure setup is complete and compliant with all championship specifications, including, but not limited to:

- A. Check scoreboard for proper operation the day before the tournament.
- B. Check the public address system for proper operation. Confirm PA announcers are prepared with copies of team scripts/rosters, sponsorship announcements and Champions of Character PA scripts.
- C. Confirm National anthem(s), US/Canadian flags displayed and properly scripted in opening ceremonies.
- D. Conduct facility walkthrough with the umpire crew and cover all ground rules.
- E. Check playing area to eliminate any safety hazards that might exist.
- F. Check any locker room facilities at venue for use before and after games. This should include adequate lockers, showers, towels and taping facilities. If any of the facilities are inadequate, notify the coaches of all teams the day before the start of the tournament; work with host to secure alternate facilities to meet needs of teams and umpires.
- G. Confirm appropriate signage is displayed in accordance with NAIA marketing and sponsorship agreements (checklist to be provided by NAIA national office)
- H. Confirm with host institution/conference/CVB coordinator that trained scorekeepers, ball crew, grounds crew and press box staff will be assigned for the entire tournament.
- I. Check condition of lighting system and confirm on-site field tarp

## **OPENING ROUND ADMINISTRATION**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE CALL**

An administrative conference call will be conducted by the NAIA National Office for all participating teams, Opening Round hosts and designated Site Supervisors before the Opening Round to review the standards and expectations for all National Championship Opening Round participants and discuss event 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.

### **ADVERTISING**

Local and national advertising shall be the financial responsibility of the Opening Round host. NAIA policy governing acceptable advertisers and advertising copy for programs, broadcasts and telecasts of NAIA National Championship events, states –

Alcoholic beverages or any form of tobacco products shall not be endorsed by NAIA. The advertisement of such products in connection with NAIA postseason events, as well as sponsorship, is permissible under the following conditions:

- All such advertisements must receive approval from the NAIA Chief Executive Officer
- Alcoholic beverages in any form shall not be allowed to be sold, dispersed or brought into the public area of any event

### **AWARDS**

The NAIA maintains a standardized awards program for all National Championship events, which includes the following for Baseball Opening Rounds:

Opening Round Champion Team Trophy – The winner of each Opening Round pod will receive an Opening Round Champion Team Trophy prior to their departure for the World Series.

## CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER

The Champions of Character initiative is based on five core values – Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Sportsmanship and Servant Leadership. The purpose of the NAIA is to promote the education and development of students through intercollegiate athletics participation. Member institutions, although varied and diverse, share a common commitment to the principle that participation in athletics serves as an integral part of the educational process. The Champions of Character initiative emphasizes character development among NAIA student-athletes and youth sports. Through its tradition of using sport informally as a vehicle for character development, the NAIA supports awareness, education and community involvement to promote character and integrity in sport at every level.

The main objective of the Champions of Character initiative is to assist those involved in sports to know the right thing, do the right thing, and value the right thing inside and outside of the sports setting. The intent of this program is to have NAIA student-athletes exhibit exemplary character and sportsmanship in NAIA athletic competitions and in day-to-day “real life” activities. Student-athletes, coaches, administrators and spectators are challenged to take responsibility for their behavior both on and off the field.

## CONCESSIONS

The food and drink concessions are within the exclusive discretion and right of the host. All income from concessions will be event income.

**Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages** – Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages shall not be sold or otherwise made available for public consumption at an NAIA National Championship, nor shall any such products or beverages be brought to the site during the championship.

## CROWD CONTROL/SECURITY

Security measures are the responsibility of the host site. Institutions/communities hosting a National Championship Opening Round must provide security for fans, participants and officials.

The Director of Athletics and/or coaches of the competing institutions are expected to communicate with their student-athletes and fans to encourage enthusiastic support within the confines of good sportsmanship.

**Competition Site** – Selection of host sites will be based partly upon the quality of the playing facility. The facility must meet requirements including field dimensions, lights, tarp, adequate spectator seating, electronic scoreboard, press box area, concession/souvenir areas, adequate rest rooms, athletic training facility, public address/sound system, signage and all normal preparation and facility maintenance, etc. The field where the games will be played must be made available for all teams for a batting practice session the day before the start of the Opening Round.

**Media Area** – The host shall provide a media room/area to be used by the host Sports Information Director to properly coordinate media activities during the event. Adequate space must be available to all teams for broadcasting and/or possible web-streaming. Refer to the Athletics Communications/Media Management section below for details about broadcast/web streaming fees.

**Scoreboard** – An electronic scoreboard must be provided on the field.

**Public Address System/Music System** – Either a permanent or portable public address/music system must be available. Rental of a system can be considered an Opening Round expense. The equipment will be used for team introductions, substitutions, special recognition, general sponsorship announcements and any other announcements deemed appropriate by the host or NAIA Site Supervisor. Music can be used as a source of entertainment during team warm-ups and between innings/games.

**Hospitality Room** – A hospitality room is recommended, primarily for the benefit of the participating coaches, NAIA Site Supervisor, Games Committee, umpire crew and event staff. A system for monitoring access should be in place. Alcohol may not be available for consumption in the on-site hospitality room.

**Facility Personnel** – Ticket sellers and takers, ushers, adequate security/police, concession vendors, program sellers and field/grounds crew personnel are required for each game.

**Equal Accommodations and Facilities** – The host institution/community is responsible for providing equal and/or comparable accommodations and facilities for all teams relative to locker rooms, refreshments, bench and shower towels, etc.



## GUARANTEE

The host is required to pay the minimum guarantee **(\$10,000)** to the NAIA to ensure it is granted the right to host the Opening Round. Confirmation of this guarantee must be provided in writing and received by the National Office by **April 15, 2026**, however, guarantee fees are not due to the NAIA until after the Opening Rounds are complete. Deadline for payment of the guarantee and completion of an Opening Round financial summary is **June 13, 2026**.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

All opening round tournaments must be double-elimination to determine which team will advance to the final site. Every effort must be made to complete the opening round tournament on the field. The tournament site supervisor is the final authority on implementation and administration of the inclement weather policy. The inclement weather policy can be found on the NAIA Softball Resource page.

## INSURANCE

Hosts of NAIA National Championship events accept the responsibility to safeguard the physical well-being of all students and spectators. The competition facility shall be inspected prior to competition to ensure that the safety of each competitor and spectator is not placed at risk.

Participating institutions shall be responsible for medical, hospitalization, travel and accident insurance for all members of their official parties.

The NAIA provides liability insurance to cover the NAIA only. The host shall provide the NAIA Department of Championships with a copy of the insurance certificate verifying they are insured for the facility in which any games of the championship are played. The insurance certificate should provide spectator liability at a minimum of \$1,000,000 and related insurance for the facility naming the NAIA as an "additionally-insured" party.

## MEDICAL PERSONNEL & PROCEDURES

The on-site medical coordinator at the Opening Round venue shall be responsible for providing all teams medical assistance at all practices and during the games. The host athletic trainers/medical staff shall –

Contact each participating teams' head athletic trainer prior to their arrival to plan access to the training room and to assist with any special needs the visiting teams may have. Topics to cover should include, but not be limited to:

1. Special needs of the visiting teams (towels, water, modalities)
2. Medical assistance needed for practice
3. Athletic training room (location, hours, equipment, phone numbers)
4. Phone numbers for after-hour emergencies
5. Directions to medical facilities in community
6. Outline of coverage and staff being provided by host institution/conference or community
7. Emergency procedures and protocol

**Emergency Equipment** – All necessary emergency equipment should be on-site or quickly accessible. Equipment should be in good operating condition and personnel must be trained in advance to use it properly. This equipment includes, but is not limited to, AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators), backboards, crutches, splints/braces and biohazard containers.

**Water/Towels** – Water and towels must be supplied. Water is to be on team benches and in locker rooms. Cups must also be made available. Towels are needed for athletic trainers' use.

**Doctors/Ambulance** – Ambulance on-call. Ensure appropriate AT service for number of fields used (i.e. appropriate medical supervision and appropriate response time is possible for each field).

Each team's athletic trainer shall be responsible for providing the NAIA National Office a report of all injuries for all Opening Round games. Copies of the NAIA-ATA Injury Report Form can be found in the NAIA-Athletic Trainers Association Manual. Following each game, the reports shall be forwarded to –

**Sara Eckinger, Director of Student-Athlete Experience & Development – [seckinger@naia.org](mailto:seckinger@naia.org)**



## NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem will be played prior to the first game each day of the Opening Round and may also be played prior to the final game of day. The Canadian Anthem (O Canada) is to be presented first in reverence to our Canadian member institutions (only when a Canadian school is participating), followed by the Star-Spangled Banner. Securing of anthem music and/or anthem singers is the responsibility of the host.

## OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

The Rawlings (.47 core) NAIA-branded softball is the official NAIA softball and is the only ball to be used in all NAIA post season competition. Opening round host sites will receive 24 softballs at least one week prior to the start of the opening round tournament. The NAIA Site Supervisor is responsible for the championship game balls during the opening round

## ON-SITE EXPENSES

The NAIA National Office is responsible for the following Opening Round expenses/supplies –

1. Rawlings-NAIA Championship Softballs (including shipment)
2. NAIA National Championship and Sponsor Signage

The host institution/conference/CVB is responsible for all additional Opening Round expenses, including but not limited to –

1. Umpires (four per game) – Includes fees, transportation, meals and lodging, as authorized by the NAIA
2. NAIA Personnel – NAIA Site Supervisor – Expenses include transportation, meals (\$50 per diem/per day) and housing
3. Other Game Administration Expenses – Includes postage, other shipping, etc.
4. Apparel to be purchased through the approved NAIA vendor – Souvenir apparel sales may be included as an option to each Opening Round host, but will not be mandatory for all sites
5. All Opening Round competition related costs

*Note – Transportation, meals (\$50 per diem/per day) and housing for the NAIA Site Supervisor will be paid through the NAIA and will be covered by the bid guarantee.*

## PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

The host shall provide the official photographer and photography services to include reproduction and distribution covering the opening event, Opening Round games and related ceremonies. The photographer will be required to submit a minimum of 15 photographs to the NAIA free of charge at the conclusion of the event.

Participating teams and their fans are permitted to videotape the Opening Round games.

## PLAYING RULES

The official NCAA Softball Rules are followed with exceptions as specified in the NAIA Softball Coaches Manual.

## DUGOUTS

Any time a team is playing back to back, with a new opponent coming in for the second game, the team coming to play the second game will utilize the vacated dugout regardless of home/away designation. If the "If Necessary" game is required, the teams will remain in the dugout they start the day in regardless of home/away designation.

## PRACTICE SCHEDULE

The NAIA site supervisor, in consultation with the host coordinator, shall arrange for practice times/sites for each of the teams during the tournament. All four teams shall have the opportunity to practice at the championship field on the day prior to the start of the tournament.

## PRE-GAME SCHEDULES

A minimum interval of 50 minutes is necessary between games. No games should start sooner than their published start time and it is recommended that Game 9 does not start before noon local time (unless inclement weather dictates changes by the NAIA Site Supervisor).

The following pre-game procedures should be followed for all opening-round tournaments:

1. Both head coaches will meet with the site supervisor one hour prior to their scheduled game time start. Lineups will be exchanged and game balls will be distributed at this time. The meeting spot will be designated by the site supervisor and communicated to all head coaches.
2. Lineup cards must be printed, complete with first and last name, uniform number and position number. All substitutes must be listed. A copy must be provided to the opposing team, the home plate umpire, the official scorekeeper and the public address announcer.
3. Team introductions will be made prior to every game. The starting lineup, by batting order, will be introduced, then substitutions, then coaches. The home team will line up from home plate to third base and visitors will line up from home plate to first base all facing the infield.
4. Umpires shall check all bats and helmets prior to the start of each game. Any illegal equipment shall be confiscated. The confiscated equipment shall be returned to the team at the conclusion of that team's participation in the tournament.
5. Pre-game timeline follows the following schedule:

|                               |                                         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 25 minutes prior to game time | Visiting team takes infield (8 minutes) |
| 17 minutes prior to game time | Home team takes infield (8 minutes)     |
| 9 minutes prior to game time  | Umpire and coaches meet at home plate   |
| 5 minutes prior to game time  | Lineups and national anthem             |

6. General policies for all games:
  - (a) No game will begin early.
  - (b) Teams are not allowed on the dirt (infield area) until all members of the grounds crew have completed the field preparations and left the infield.
  - (c) The visiting team will take infield first, followed by the home team. If neither team utilizes the full time allotted, the other team will not be given extra time to warm-up.

## PROGRAMS

The NAIA Department of Athletics Communications will assist with providing host SIDs information on all participating teams. The NAIA will aggregate team information and share that with the hosts prior to the event. Each participating team is responsible for submitting its official postseason rosters via [NAIA Connect](#).

Programs may be available for purchase at each host site during the event and that price point is at the discretion of the hosts. Revenue gained by program sales is kept by the hosts. Program covers will be available for host sites to create programs.

## SIGNAGE/BRANDING

Opening Round Signage – As directed by the National Administrative Council (NAC), the NAIA National Office will send a package to each Opening Round site.

The following banners will be sent to each site.

- One – 3x10 Battle for the Red Banner Begins Now
- Two – 3x10 NAIA Opening Round
- Two – 3x20 NAIA Opening Round

Hosts will be invoiced \$500 to help cover the cost of the signage and will not be required to return signage to the NAIA National Office. If a host has a local partnership where they can get signage for free, the NAIA will provide templates for signage that they will be required to use. Those templates will be available on the Opening Round resource page for a given sport. Signage from previously hosted NAIA Volleyball Opening Rounds is approved for use. The NAIA Championship Sport Manager must approve locally printed signage.

The NAIA will send Opening Round host signage that should be displayed from the start of practice through the conclusion of the last game. Hosts are expected to send photographs of staged signage to the NAIA Championship Sport Manager.



## SOUVENIR SALES

The name (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), initials (NAIA), logo and other NAIA symbols and insignia are the registered and exclusive property of the Association.

As a host site for the NAIA National Championship Opening Round, the host is awarded all rights and privileges in using the NAIA name, initials and marks to promote and market the event. Such use is restricted in the following areas, which require written approval by the NAIA –

- Commercial Sales – Any product featuring the NAIA name or marks and being sold prior to or after the Opening Round
- Promotional Items – Any product featuring the NAIA name or marks which is given to fans, coaches or athletes before, during or after the Opening Round.

National Championship merchandise featuring the NAIA name or marks for commercial sale must be purchased through the official NAIA merchandise vendor via the NAIA Store website. The host will not be mandated to order/sell NAIA National Championship apparel. The NAIA will send informational flyers to each Opening Round site that chooses not to sell merchandise on-site that will direct teams/fans where to go to order souvenir apparel online.

Merchandise will be available for the host to sell if they choose. Hosts wishing to sell merchandise will be contacted by a Fine Designs representative.

## SPONSORSHIPS

Corporations with business interests beyond the local area of the Opening Round contest should not be solicited for financial support without the prior approval of the NAIA.

Hosts are encouraged to secure local corporate sponsorship for National Championship Opening Round contests to ensure a profitable experience.

## SPORTS INFORMATION/ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS

The host provides necessary press box necessary, including but not limited to scorekeeper, statisticians, PA announcer and timekeeper. The host site Sports Information Director is responsible for the supervision of the media room. Additional responsibilities include statistics and press releases.

Subject to the limitation of space, the press box will be accessible to the working media at the discretion of the Sports Information Director in consultation with the NAIA Site Supervisor. For all Opening Round sites, the host institution's Sports Information Director will handle press box operations, providing services to the media, game statistics and other needs as prescribed by the NAIA Department of Athletics Communications.

All requests for hook-ups of radio broadcasts, TV or web-streaming, etc., should be directed to the host Sports Information Director. See below for applicable broadcast fees.

**Post-Game Interview Procedures** – Upon completion of each Opening Round game, coaches and players will be made available to all members of the news media. Post-game interviews will be conducted in either an open dressing room or interview area, whichever is deemed appropriate by the Sports Information Director after consultation with the NAIA Site Supervisor.

**Live Statistics** – The official statistician is required to record live statistics via Presto, the official statistical software of the NAIA. It is recommended to have stat monitors stationed in the press box for radio and media to view. Livestat links will be directed to NAIA Softball Statbroadcast page.

For information relative to these policies, please contact –

**Brandt McCall, NAIA Manager of Athletics Communications – [bmccall@naia.org](mailto:bmccall@naia.org)**

## VIDEO-STREAMING

It is required that hosts produce a live, high-definition video-streaming production of all games (Pay-per view or free). The hosts are responsible for staffing, equipment and costs associated with the production. The NAIA Championships Department reserves the right to require a specific video-streaming company in the future, which is communicated a minimum 60 days prior to the event.

## SUMMARY REPORT

Within 30 days after hosting an Opening Round, the host institution shall submit an Event Summary Report to the NAIA National Office. This report should include a check made payable to NAIA for the amount of the guarantee.

The host institution's chief executive officer will be notified when reports and financial obligations are not submitted within 15 days following an Opening Round. Institutions that do not meet these responsibilities within the 15 day period may become ineligible to host future National Championship Opening Round competition or other NAIA events.

## TICKETS

Ticket prices for each NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round shall be determined by each host and must be approved by the NAIA Championship Sport Manager. Tickets should be made available to the following constituent groups in a varying price structure – Adults, Students, Youth/Children. Discounted tickets for special groups, such as Students of participating institutions, Military and Senior Citizens, can be granted at the discretion of each Opening Round host.

- The Chief Executive Officers and Athletic Directors of the participating institutions are each provided two complimentary tickets to the games.
- NAIA members shall receive one complimentary ticket upon presentation of the NAIA membership card and appropriate identification. All cards are non-transferable. No other complimentary tickets should be issued to either participating institution.
- Game officials shall receive one complimentary ticket each day.
- The traveling teams/fans should receive space in the competition facility comparable to that provided for the host institution.
- Costs should not exceed \$20 for adults and \$10 for students/youth.

## UMPIRES

The required number of umpires for National Championship Opening Round games is four per game. Umpires are expected to be professional in appearance and appropriately dressed according to NAIA standards.

Officials must 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.

Each Opening Round game will be umpired with a 3-person crew. A minimum of four umpires will be hired but more may be used as needed. Umpires are expected to be professional in appearance and appropriately dressed according to NAIA standards.

### Umpire Assignments

- Umpires will be registered on the NAIA Arbiter.
- Assignors will be selected by the National Office -In most cases this will be the conference assignor – the assignor selects the umpires with assistance from the NAIA National Office and the NAIA National Coordinator of Umpires.
- It is strongly recommended that all umpires for Opening Round Tournaments are approved by the NAIA National Coordinator of Umpires.
- For help in securing umpires, please contact Bill Gomoluch at [mrhoops@cass.net](mailto:mrhoops@cass.net) or the Director of Officiating Initiatives, Justin Gragg at 816-595-8328 or [jgragg@naia.org](mailto:jgragg@naia.org)

The umpiring team arrives on the day of or the day before the opening round tournament (depending upon game #1 start time) and will be housed at a hotel NOT housing any participating teams if possible.

- The host institution is responsible for game fees, transportation, meals and lodging (single occupancy) for each official, as approved by the NAIA Department of Championships.
- Officials are to receive checks prior to the start of the match or be paid electronically within one week of the contest.
- Game fees, per diem, and mileage will be paid to each official using the Softball Zone Pay Chart below.
- Officials shall receive one complimentary ticket to opening round matches if NAIA Game Officials card is presented.

**Softball Umpire Zone Pay Chart (Game fee, mileage, per diem)**

|    | <b>Zone</b> | <b>Miles 1-way</b> | <b>Games</b> | <b>1 Day</b> | <b>2 Days</b> | <b>3 Days</b> | <b>4 Days</b> |
|----|-------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1  | 1           | 0-50               | 1            | \$250        |               |               |               |
| 2  | 2           | 51-100             | 1            | \$300        |               |               |               |
| 3  | 3           | 101-150            | 1            | \$350        |               |               |               |
| 4  | 4           | 151-200            | 1            | \$400        |               |               |               |
| 5  | 5           | 200-250            | 1            | \$450        |               |               |               |
| 6  | 6           | 251+               | 1            | \$500        |               |               |               |
| 7  |             |                    |              |              |               |               |               |
| 8  | 1           | 0-50               | 2            | \$410        | \$445         |               |               |
| 9  | 2           | 51-100             | 2            | \$460        | \$495         |               |               |
| 10 | 3           | 101-150            | 2            | \$510        | \$545         |               |               |
| 11 | 4           | 151-200            | 2            | \$560        | \$595         |               |               |
| 12 | 5           | 200-250            | 2            | \$610        | \$645         |               |               |
| 13 | 6           | 251+               | 2            | \$660        | \$695         |               |               |
| 14 |             |                    |              |              |               |               |               |
| 15 | 1           | 0-50               | 3            | \$570        | \$605         | \$640         |               |
| 16 | 2           | 51-100             | 3            | \$620        | \$655         | \$690         |               |
| 17 | 3           | 101-150            | 3            | \$670        | \$705         | \$740         |               |
| 18 | 4           | 151-200            | 3            | \$720        | \$755         | \$790         |               |
| 19 | 5           | 200-250            | 3            | \$770        | \$805         | \$840         |               |
| 20 | 6           | 251+               | 3            | \$820        | \$855         | \$890         |               |
| 21 |             |                    |              |              |               |               |               |
| 22 | 1           | 0-50               | 4            |              | \$765         | \$800         | \$835         |
| 23 | 2           | 51-100             | 4            |              | \$815         | \$850         | \$885         |
| 24 | 3           | 101-150            | 4            |              | \$865         | \$900         | \$935         |
| 25 | 4           | 151-200            | 4            |              | \$915         | \$950         | \$985         |
| 26 | 5           | 200-250            | 4            |              | \$965         | \$1,000       | \$1,035       |
| 27 | 6           | 251+               | 4            |              | \$1,015       | \$1,050       | \$1,085       |
| 28 |             |                    |              |              |               |               |               |
| 29 | 1           | 0-50               | 5            |              | \$925         | \$960         | \$995         |
| 30 | 2           | 51-100             | 5            |              | \$975         | \$1,010       | \$1,045       |
| 31 | 3           | 101-150            | 5            |              | \$1,025       | \$1,060       | \$1,095       |
| 32 | 4           | 151-200            | 5            |              | \$1,075       | \$1,110       | \$1,145       |
| 33 | 5           | 200-250            | 5            |              | \$1,125       | \$1,160       | \$1,195       |
| 34 | 6           | 251+               | 5            |              | \$1,175       | \$1,210       | \$1,245       |
| 35 |             |                    |              |              |               |               |               |
| 36 | 1           | 0-50               | 6            |              | \$1,085       | \$1,120       | \$1,155       |
| 37 | 2           | 51-100             | 6            |              | \$1,135       | \$1,170       | \$1,205       |
| 38 | 3           | 101-150            | 6            |              | \$1,185       | \$1,220       | \$1,255       |
| 39 | 4           | 151-200            | 6            |              | \$1,235       | \$1,270       | \$1,305       |
| 40 | 5           | 200-250            | 6            |              | \$1,285       | \$1,320       | \$1,355       |
| 41 | 6           | 251+               | 6            |              | \$1,335       | \$1,370       | \$1,405       |
| 42 |             |                    |              |              |               |               |               |



|    |   |         |   |  |         |         |
|----|---|---------|---|--|---------|---------|
| 43 | 1 | 0-50    | 7 |  | \$1,280 | \$1,315 |
| 44 | 2 | 51-100  | 7 |  | \$1,330 | \$1,365 |
| 45 | 3 | 101-150 | 7 |  | \$1,380 | \$1,415 |
| 46 | 4 | 151-200 | 7 |  | \$1,430 | \$1,465 |
| 47 | 5 | 200-250 | 7 |  | \$1,480 | \$1,515 |
| 48 | 6 | 251+    | 7 |  | \$1,530 | \$1,565 |
| 49 |   |         |   |  |         |         |
| 50 | 1 | 0-50    | 8 |  | \$1,440 | \$1,475 |
| 51 | 2 | 51-100  | 8 |  | \$1,490 | \$1,525 |
| 52 | 3 | 101-150 | 8 |  | \$1,540 | \$1,575 |
| 53 | 4 | 151-200 | 8 |  | \$1,590 | \$1,625 |
| 54 | 5 | 200-250 | 8 |  | \$1,640 | \$1,675 |
| 55 | 6 | 251+    | 8 |  | \$1,690 | \$1,725 |
| 56 |   |         |   |  |         |         |
| 57 | 1 | 0-50    | 9 |  |         | \$1,635 |
| 58 | 2 | 51-100  | 9 |  |         | \$1,685 |
| 59 | 3 | 101-150 | 9 |  |         | \$1,735 |
| 60 | 4 | 151-200 | 9 |  |         | \$1,785 |
| 61 | 5 | 200-250 | 9 |  |         | \$1,835 |
| 62 | 6 | 251+    | 9 |  |         | \$1,885 |