



NAIA SOFTBALL SELECTION COMMITTEE POLICY

Committee Appointment Process:

Area Rating Committees (ARC) – Area Rating committees will consist of a representative from each conference in that local area as well as an at-large representative from the National Selection Committee. ARC's will meet, via conference call, every other week beginning **April 6, 2026**. The out-of-area ARC being involved in this part of the process allows for a better understanding of another Area that is not their own and adds more transparency to the process.

West – Golden State Athletic Conference, Cascade Collegiate Conference, Frontier Conference

North – Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference, Crossroads League, River States Conference, Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference

East – Southern States Athletic Conference, The Sun Conference, Appalachian Athletic Conference, Mid-South Conference

Midwest – American Midwest Conference, Heart of America Athletic Conference, Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference, Great Plains Athletic Conference

South – Red River Athletic Conference, Sooner Athletic Conference, Continental Athletic Conference, HBCU Athletic Conference

National Selection Committee (NSC) – the National Selection Committee will consist of one representative from each Area Rating Committee, NAC Sport Liaison, an officer or Past-President of the Softball Coaches Association and three members connected with NAIA softball but not a current coach. The NSC will meet, via conference call, every other week.

- No more than two members per conference and no more than three members per area
- Nominees for at-large positions provided by the Softball Coaches Officers
- At least one at-large must be a current NAIA Administrator (AD or Commissioner)

ARC/NSC Chair – Each ARC will designate a chair of that group who also will represent the ARC on the National Selection Committee. The National Selection Committee will also select its chair through nomination and vote of the committee. The chair position must be filled with an at-large administrator or NAC liaison.

At-Large Representative Role Description –

- The rationale for NSC At-Large members in the selection process is to cultivate individuals on the NSC who incorporate a broad view involving multiple ARC's and consider all potentially eligible sport playing institutions.
- Sport personnel tasked with appointing NSC At-Large members should strive to incorporate non-coaching personnel to the role.
- NSC At-Large member affiliation with an out-of-area ARC is designed to create comprehension and appreciation for another ARC(s).
- NSC At-Large members are tasked with protecting the validity of the selection committee process. To that end, NSC At-Large members:
 - Should not be involved with ARC's in which they are employed as an administrator, coach, or other role,

- Maintain neutrality as non-voting members of assigned ARC's,
- Act in the role of guide to members of their assigned ARC,
- Insist on evaluation of ARC teams based on the selection criteria as defined in sport NSC Handbooks,
- Create an atmosphere of transparency from NSC to ARC and vice-versa.

Committee Role:

The role of the National Softball Selection Committee is to have oversight for the Softball Championship. The committee will focus on the following during the year:

1. Evaluate teams throughout the season.
2. Serve as a chair and/or member of an area Rating committee.
3. Participate on area and national committee calls.
4. Participate in the selection meeting.
5. Attend committee meetings as scheduled throughout the year.

Criteria For Selection

The criteria which will be used by the Selection Committee for both At-Large Selection and Seeding are as follows:

Primary Criteria (No Weight or Order)

- Overall Record/Winning Percentage
- Area Rating
- Massey Rating
- NAIA Ratings Index Percentage (RPI)
- NAIA Strength of Schedule (SOS)

Secondary Criteria (No Weight or Order)

- Conference Record
- Head to Head
- Common Opponents
- Conference/non-conference

Additional Information Considered

- Team schedule
- Home/Visitor/Neutral
- Score
- Opponent
- Opponent's record

Rating Calls

The first committee conference call for all Area Rating Committees will be **March 23rd, 2026** to prepare for the 2026 championship. The first call for the National Selection Committee will be **March 24th, 2026**.

Each Area Rating Committee will meet the Monday of any designated polls week to evaluate the teams in each area. The National Selection Committee will meet the Tuesday of any designated ratings week.

Each Area rater will submit at most a Top 16 (for Areas with four conferences) or Top 12 (for Areas with three conferences) to their Area Chair for each of the four Area ratings.

Schedule of Calls:

*April 6-7

*April 20-21

*May 4-5

**Released to NAIA Coaches*

All Times Central

Monday	10 am 12 pm	Conference Ballots for each Conference Call due to the Area Chair Conference Call for Area Committee to discuss Area rating
Tuesday	9 am 9:01–9:30 am 10:00 am 1:00 pm	Final ARC rating for each Area due to the NAIA National Office National Office Prepares Grid and Distributes to ARC Committees National Selection Committee Call to Review Release of ARC to NAIA Coaches

Basic Principles for Selection

1. At no point in the process may a member vote for a team that he/she represents as an athletic administrator or coach. A committee member from a conference office may vote for all teams that he/she represents.
2. All votes will be by confidential ballot.
3. All committee meeting discussions, votes, brackets, seedings, pairings are strictly confidential and should not be shared with anyone outside of the softball committee until after the championship bracket announcement.

Basic Procedures Considered In the Following Order

1. Determine the automatic qualifying teams and then select the remaining at-large teams
2. Place all qualifying teams in pools of ten each by seed 1, 2, 3, 4; and a pool of eight for the 5 seeds.
3. Place the teams into the championship bracket according to established criteria
 - a) Geographic location
 - b) Finance
 - c) Seed

Selection of At-Large Teams

Principles

1. Select the best available teams to fill the at-large berths.
2. There is no limit on the number of teams the committee may select from one conference or area.

Procedures

1. Prior to the selection meeting, committee members shall prepare the following information:
 - a) A Rating of all teams within his/her area to be considered for at-large berths
 - b) Rating of teams within each conference within his/her area.
2. At-Large Nomination Pool
 - a) All teams with an RPI ranking of 75 or better will be placed in the nomination pool.
 - b) Also, any team finishing first or second in their conference in the regular season will be placed in the nomination pool.
 - c) Other teams mentioned during the committee's final evaluation call that do not meet the aforementioned criteria will automatically be considered part of this process.
3. The first ballot procedures will be conducted as follows:
 - a) Each committee member shall present information from their respective area and discuss those teams that should be considered for selection. A committee member whose team is under focused consideration may present objective data about his team but may not participate in votes regarding a team that he represents as a coach or athletic administrator.
 - b) Each member shall consider the teams recommended for at-large berths and vote for any number of teams that he believes are deserving of selection.
 - c) Teams that receive 70 percent (7 of 10) of the votes cast will automatically be designated as at-large selections. However, a minimum of 50 percent of the available at-large positions must be left vacant. If less than 50 percent are vacant, each committee member will then prepare a ballot, consider only those teams that received 70 percent of the votes and list in rank order a number of teams equal to the total berths available minus 50 percent and conduct a poll vote.
4. The committee will fill the remaining at-large berth as follows:
 - a) All teams in the at-large pool will be considered for the remaining berths and each committee member shall vote on teams to be selected by listing the number of teams as there are berths available.
 - b) Teams receiving 70 percent of the votes will be selected at large, however no more than half of the remaining berths will be filled. If more than half of the berths are filled, a separate ballot will be conducted with only those teams receiving 70 percent of the first vote being considered. Each committee member shall list a number of teams equal to the number of berths remaining. A poll vote will be taken, which would involve each committee member rating the teams under consideration and a point value would be given to the rating with the top team receiving a number of points equal to the number of teams being considered and each team thereafter would be given points in descending order.
 - c) Steps a and b will be repeated with each committee member voting for the same number of teams as berths that are available and no more than half of the berths are to be filled.
 - d) At any time during the process, the committee may determine that a team be eliminated from the pool. In order to eliminate a team, at least 70 percent of the votes would be required.
 - e) Whenever a consensus cannot be reached, the chair may call for a poll vote. During poll votes, 70 percent of votes are not required and a simple majority will determine the team for at-large selection.

Seeding of Teams

1. Teams are seeded in groups (ten No. 1's, ten No. 2's, ten No. 3's, ten No. 4's, eight No. 5's).
2. The committee shall use the same criteria for selection to the tournament for seeding the tournament.

3. The committee will engage in votes to determine the seeding of each grouping. (i.e. after the No. 2's group has been determined, rank the No. 2's in order while keeping the bracketing criteria in line with geographic location, conference affiliation, etc.)

Placing Teams In Bracket Principles

1. The final seeding bracket will be determined based upon the following prioritized criteria:

- a) Geographical location of teams
- b) Financial considerations
- c) Final rating

2. Every attempt will be made to not pair conference teams in the opening round pairings. Based upon the pairings and selection criteria above, this may be unavoidable.

NAIA SOFTBALL RPI

NAIA RPI (Ratings Percentage Index)

- $WP (0.25) = OWP (0.50) + OOWP (0.25)$
 - WP = Winning Percentage
 - OWP = Opponent's Winning Percentage
 - OOWP = Opponent's Opponent's Winning Percentage

NAIA Strength of Schedule

- $OWP (0.67) + OOWP (0.33)$
 - OWP = Opponent's Winning Percentage
 - OOWP = Opponent's Opponent's Winning Percentage