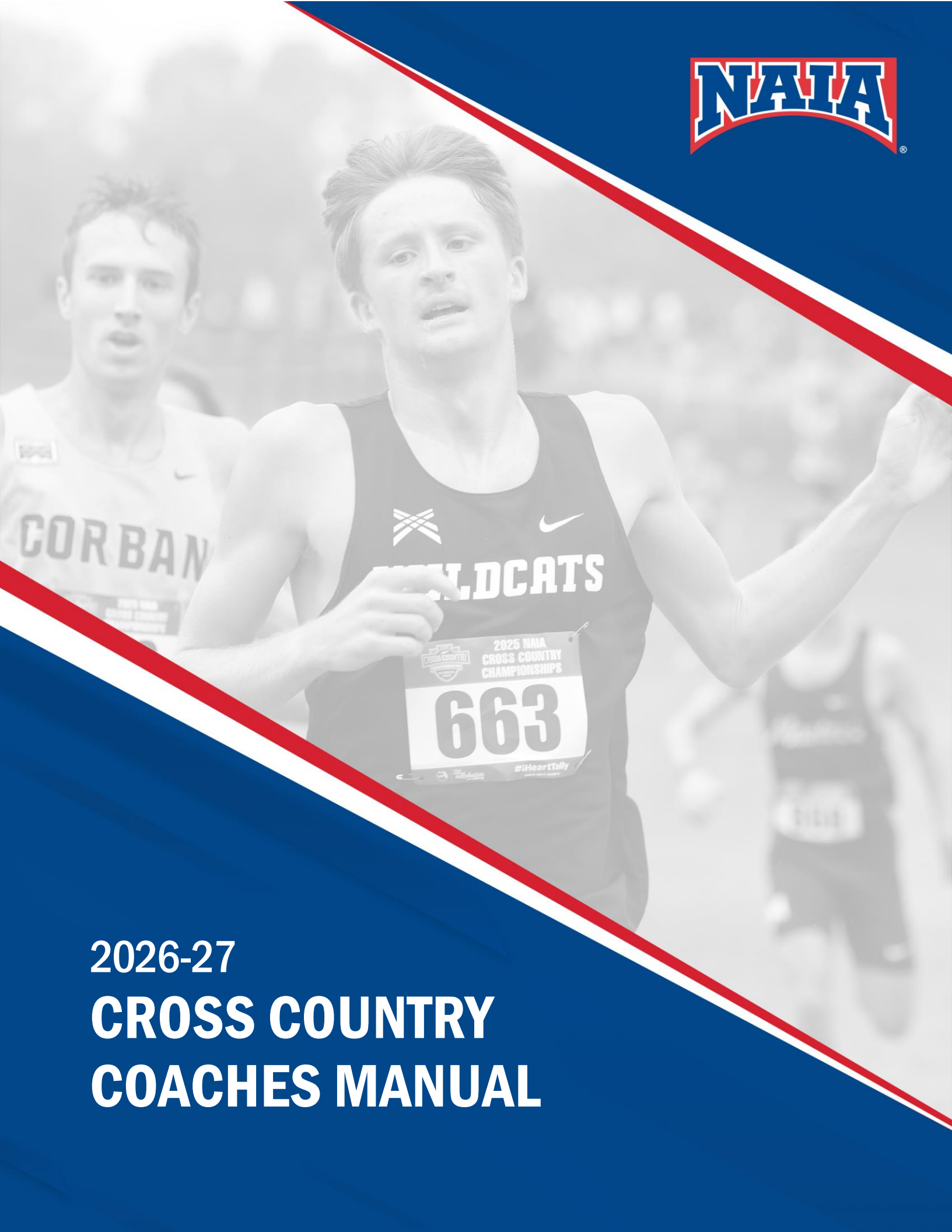




2026-27
**CROSS COUNTRY
COACHES MANUAL**



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

Samantha Walker

swalker@naia.org

816.595.8156

**For Ratings and Athletic Communication Inquiries, contact –
Senior Manager of Athletic Communications**

Katie Green

kgreen@naia.org

816.595.8104

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The NAIA Cross Country Championship is under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA and the Jury of Appeals.



NAIA CROSS COUNTRY — IMPORTANT DATES

2026-27 CROSS COUNTRY SPORT CALENDAR

AUGUST 10	START – For practices, scrimmages, and exhibitions
AUGUST 20	START – National Ratings Releases <i>Dates: Aug. 20, Sept. 24, Oct. 8, Oct. 15, Oct. 29, Nov. 10</i>
AUGUST 27	START – For competitions
SEPTEMBER 9	START – Player of the Week Releases <i>Dates: Sept. 9, Sept. 16, Sept. 23, Sept. 30, Oct. 7, Oct. 14, Oct. 21, Oct. 28</i>
SEPTEMBER 30	DEADLINE – Submitting NAIA Scholar-Athletes
OCTOBER 11	DEADLINE – Undeclare from Postseason
NOVEMBER 8	DEADLINE – For completion of national championship qualifier meets (conference/CAC/unaffiliated championships)
NOVEMBER 10	RELEASE – Qualifiers for Cross Country National Championship Men's Selection Show – 4:00 pm CT – Individual qualifiers posted online Women's Selection Show – 4:30 pm CT – Individual qualifiers posted online
NOVEMBER 11	DEADLINE – Submitting Champions of Character Individual Award Nominations
NOVEMBER 12	DEADLINE – For online entries for BOTH team and individual qualifiers at the National Championship
NOVEMBER 16	DEADLINE – Submitting Sport Motions to be heard at the Business Meeting
NOVEMBER 20	NAIA Men's & Women's Cross Country National Championships <i>Fort Vancouver National Historic Site – Vancouver, Wash.</i>
DECEMBER 14-17	NAIA Cross Country Coaches Association Business Meeting <i>USTFCCCA Convention – Grapevine, Texas</i>
JUNE 30	DEADLINE – Submitting Scholar Team Award Nominations
JULY 15	DEADLINE – Submitting Hall of Fame Nominations to NAIA National Office

FIVE-YEAR CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Conference Tournament Deadline	Nov. 8	Nov. 7	Nov. 5	Nov. 4	Nov. 10
National Championships	Nov. 20	Nov. 19	Nov. 17	Nov. 16	Nov. 22

Women's National Championship Website – [Click Here](#)

Men's National Championship Website – [Click Here](#)

PLAYING RULES AND REGULATIONS

RULEBOOK

NAIA Cross Country will use NCAA Men's and Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Rule book. The rulebook can be found [HERE](#).

DEFINITION OF A CROSS COUNTRY MEET

To be considered a cross country meet by NAIA standards, a competition must meet all of the following criteria:

1. A minimum of 2 collegiate teams participating and scoring;
2. Scored in the same manner as the NAIA Cross Country National Championships; and distance between 3k and 6k for women, and between 4k and 10k for men.

Contests not meeting the definition of a meet still count against maximum contest limitations.

MEET DIRECTOR REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

Institutions must ensure that the electronic submission of results for all meets in which their student-athletes compete are reported by the meet host to the Track and Field Results Reporting System for Cross Country ([TFRRS-XC](#)) through the online provider DirectAthletics.

Detailed account information, instructions on how to set up meets, and how to download team rosters in preparation for uploading cross country results are available for meet hosts, meet directors, and timers at www.TFRRS.org (select the link for 'Submitting Results' at the bottom of the page). Meet hosts should note the following:

- Meet hosts may use their method of choice to manage meet entries. It is NOT required to use DirectAthletics for meet entries, however, TFRRS IDs are available only via DirectAthletics' meet entry system at www.directathletics.com.
- There is no cost to use DirectAthletics' meet entry services for college and junior college meets.
- It is the responsibility of the meet directors/timers to download valid TFRRS IDs for their entering teams, regardless of the meet entry method.
- All TFRRS IDs are single-meet IDs and not transportable from meet to meet; entry downloads for each meet will contain valid IDs for tracking results for that meet only. TFRRS IDs are available at no cost to any meet director/timer at www.directathletics.com via the DirectAthletics entry system.

For problems using the DirectAthletics of TFRRS system, please contact DirectAthletics via email at support@directathletics.com or by phone at 347-674-3002.

It is the responsibility of the meet HOST to electronically submit meet results to TFRRS by midnight Central time, no later than one day after the completion of a competition.

RACE REPORT RESPONSIBILITIES

After the conclusion of a meet, each team finishing with 5 or more runners (receiving a team score) is required to submit a race report within 24-hours of the completion of the meet. These should be completed by either institution's Head Coach or Sports Information Director. Race reports should be submitted through the link below.

Race Report Link: https://naiaforms.formstack.com/forms/naia_cross_country_race_report_submission_form

CONDUCT IN COMPETITION

EJECTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS

An ejection is an action enforced in conjunction with competition by an official consistent with the playing rules in that sport. A suspension is required by NAIA bylaws (Article 6, Section B, Item 7) as an additional consequence related to ejections in conjunction with competition.

Ejections are not subject to appeal. Some sport rules allow protests through an official process outlined in each sport rule book.

Suspensions may be appealed starting with the Conference/Continental Athletic Conference (CAC) (formerly the Association of Independent Institutions). An institution must submit an appeal to their conference within 72 hours of the completion of contest. The conference will submit a recommendation to the national office within 72 hours of receiving the appeal from the institution. The Conduct and Ethics Committee is responsible for all appeals related to suspensions due to ejections of a coach and/or student-athlete.

Once an appeal with appropriate signatures has been submitted to the conference, the student-athlete/coach may continue to participate through the appeal process. If the appeal is not approved, then the student-athlete/coach must sit out of the next scheduled contest(s).

A suspended person cannot be in the competitive venue the day of the contest or communicate with any team personnel or game officials the day of the contest. The student-athlete/coach will normally be removed from the venue during a suspension. However, the game manager will use their best discretion on what is appropriate to risk management procedures regarding their venue.

Ejection reports must be completed by the NAIA game official ejecting a student-athlete or coach. The form must be submitted to the NAIA within 48 hours after the completion of the contest. [Ejection Report Form](#)

POST-SEASON COMPETITION

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

UNIFORM

Uniforms for all cross country team members must meet the following criteria:

1. School issued;
2. Singlets are identical; and
3. Pants may be of any length but must have identical color and markings.

It is recommended that visible undergarments be of an identical solid color. Bare midriff tops are not allowed during competition. All uniforms must allow competitor's numbers to be placed above the waist (front and back). Refer to the NCAA Track and Field/Cross Country Rule Book for additional details.

Sponsor Logos

Approved NAIA uniform rules modifications to allow sponsor logos/patches during competition in Cross Country.

- Limit of one sponsor logo or patch on a uniform.
- The logos may not exceed a standard size of 2.25 inches square.
- Sponsors of alcohol, tobacco, or any other legalized drugs (for example, Oregon marijuana) are not permitted.
- Sponsors whose sole or primary business function is sports gambling (e.g., FanDuel, DraftKings, etc.) are not permitted.
- Sponsor logos must be in the same location on each set of uniforms (e.g., if you have different colored uniforms, the jerseys of the same color must have the same sponsorship patch and placement. Ex. All red jerseys must be the same, and all white jerseys must be the same.)

Placement – (1) Front shoulder panel opposite the manufacturer's logo. Between the apex of the neckline and the shoulder seam; (2) Centered on the bottom right sleeve (as worn) or centered bottom opposite sleeve of the manufacturer's logo; Alternate Permissible Location: If neither of the primary or secondary locations are available, use the apex/center of the neckline as close to the neckline as possible on the back of the jersey.

ENTRY PROCEDURES & FEES

All entries for the national championships post-season qualifying meets are to be submitted online through DirectAthletics no later than 10 days prior to the conference meet, or the conference set deadline. Entries submitted after the due date shall be charged a \$50.00 late fee payable to the National Office. If you are not sure which team members will qualify, enter all team members before your conference meet. You can scratch individuals without penalty.



In order to participate in the conference/CAC/unaffiliated or national meets, competitors must be registered through DirectAthletics. No other meet entry procedures are permitted for the conference/CAC/unaffiliated or national meets.

All runners are prohibited from running in conflicting meets on the dates of the qualifying/national meets. Violations shall result in disqualification from the national meet.

HOW TO SUBMIT ONLINE ENTRIES

Complete all THREE steps to enter athletes in conference/CAC/ unaffiliated and national championships.

STEP 1—Access your DirectAthletics Account

Each coach must have a DirectAthletics username and password for his/her school. If you do not know your username and password, you will be able to create one or retrieve your existing account by following the instructions below.

If you already have a DirectAthletics account for your Cross Country team, and know your username and password....	If you do NOT know your username and password
Go to www.directathletics.com In the login box, enter your username and password and click Login. (Remember, your password is case sensitive)	Go to www.directathletics.com Click on the link "Sign Up". Follow onscreen instructions. You will be able to create an account online or retrieve forgotten information for an existing account.

NOTE ABOUT ACCOUNTS: Most coach accounts control a school's Men's AND Women's team. You control only one gender at a time, so you will complete the below steps for your Men, and then switch to your Women's team and repeat the process (or vice versa). The team you are controlling is listed on the blue navigation bar across the top of your account, for example:

Sport: Cross Country Team: ABC University (M)

This indicates that you are controlling the ABC University MEN'S team (M=MEN). To switch to your Women's team, you would select "ABC University (W)".

STEP 2—Edit/Set up Your Online Roster

Before entering an athlete into a meet, you must add all attending athletes to your roster. If an athlete is already on your online roster (from previous seasons) you do not need to add him/her again. Most schools will just need to add new athletes and delete athletes no longer on the roster.

1. Upon logging in, click the TEAM tab.
2. If you have used DirectAthletics before, you will see last year's roster. School years are automatically moved forward one year. You can click "Import Track Roster" which is listed on the left. You will be able to add athletes from your Track roster to your Cross Country roster. If you do not see this link or you are new to DirectAthletics, skip this step.
3. Click the green "Add Athletes" link under the Team Roster header. Select an approximate number of athletes you would like to add (you can add more at any time).
4. Enter your athletes First Name, Last Name and School Year (all other information is NOT necessary) and click "Submit"
5. You may add, edit or delete athletes on your Team Roster at any time before the deadline by clicking the TEAM tab.

STEP 3—Submit Online Meet Entries

Once your athletes are added to your roster, you must declare your athlete entries for your post-season qualifier meet to complete the entry process.

1. In the HOME tab (under Upcoming Meets) or in the SCHEDULE tab, click the green Register button next to the meet you wish to enter.
2. Check the box for each athlete you wish to enter. You can check the "All" box to select (or un-select) your entire roster.
3. When you have completed your entries, click "Submit". You MUST click "Submit" to submit your entries.
4. You will see your current, submitted entries on the "View Entries" page. At any time before the entry deadline, you may edit your entries by clicking the "Edit Entries" link.
5. For entry confirmation, simply print the "View Entries" page or click the Email Confirmation link at the top of the "View Entries" page. An Email Confirmation will be sent to the email address in your account.

EXPENSES

Each participating team shall be responsible for its own expenses in route to, during and from all post-season events.

COACHES RESPONSIBILITY

The coach or designated person for each participating team must be in attendance and is responsible for their team at all times while at the site of the National Championship. This person shall accept the responsibility for the conduct of his student-athletes at the National Championship site, during the championship and at all activities connected with the team's participation. In case of property damage, the offending institution shall be held financially responsible.

INSURANCE

Each participating team shall provide its own medical, hospitalization, travel, and accident insurance for all members of its official party.

AFFILIATED CONFERENCE/CAC/UNAFFILIATED GROUP MEETS

The Affiliated Conference/ Continental Athletic Conference (CAC) (formerly the Association of Independent Institutions)/Unaffiliated Group Cross Country tournaments are planned and administered by the Affiliated Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group Cross Country Committee under the leadership of their respective Cross Country chair and subject to approval of all standards and conditions as may be prescribed by the Affiliated Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group Executive Committee/Commissioner.

Affiliated Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group tournament plans for all fall sports must be submitted to the National Office no later than **September 1** of each year.

Dates are determined by each Affiliated Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Group and deadlines can be found in the Important Dates section of this manual.

COURSE DISTANCE

The men's race distance is 8,000m. The women's race distance is 6,000m.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

DATES AND SITES

The 2026 NAIA Men's & Women's Cross Country National Championships will be held at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in Vancouver, Washington, on Friday, November 20, 2026.

ADMINISTRATION

The NAIA Cross Country National Championships are under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA Jury of Appeals and Meet Director. These individuals are responsible for the management of competition and the general welfare of participants and coaches. They conduct championship coaches' meetings and coordinate both pre- and post-championship ceremonies.

All national champions should be determined in competition, with national championships contested to conclusion. Playability should be determined by the on-site Committee in consultation with the national office, making every effort to conclude on schedule. The committee should make every possible effort to finish in the timeliest fashion possible.

The NAIA Cross Country Championship is under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA and the Jury of Appeals.

COURSE DISTANCE

The men's championship race distance is 8,000m. The women's championship race distance is 6,000m.

TEAM QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION

The national championship field is limited to 36 teams for men and 36 teams for women. All teams have the opportunity to qualify for nationals as stated below.

Automatic Berths

For each gender, conferences/CAC will receive one automatic berth per six teams listed in the qualification plan, two berths per twelve teams participating in post-season. If a conference falls below 12 teams finishing the race with 5 runners, only one auto-berth will be awarded.

Conferences/CAC will not receive a second automatic bid if the team in question finished outside of the top 30 in the final rankings. Teams are not required to meet the minimum number of competitions to receive an automatic berth.

- 1. Conference Qualification Plan with six or more teams.** The grouping will receive one automatic berth for the winning team. At least six teams must declare and be listed on the Qualification Plan to get the berth. Groupings with five or fewer declared teams on the Qualification Plan can qualify through the at-large selection process only.
- 2. Do not contest a qualifying event.** The grouping will receive one automatic berth to the highest rated team on the national rating used for selection. If no qualifying meet is held and no team in the grouping is rated in the top 25 in the national rating used for selection, an additional at-large berth will be added.

If there is a tie for first place at a conference/CAC/unaffiliated group qualifying meet, then the tied first place teams qualify for the national championships. This will not affect the number of at-large berths.

At-Large Berths

Once all automatic berths have been assigned, the remaining berths will be awarded through the at-large selection process. For consideration for an at-large berth, a team must score in at least **FOUR** meets prior to its national championship qualifier meet (conference/CAC/unaffiliated championships). Reporting requirements are outlined in the General Information Section VI-D-Reporting Results of this manual.

At-large selections are determined by the final rating which takes place the day following the deadline for national championship qualifying meets.

National Championships Host Institution

If the host is an NAIA institution that has declared its intent to participate in cross country, its teams shall receive automatic berths to the national championships (men's and women's) if they do not qualify through automatic or at-large qualifying procedures. If a host bid is contracted, the host bid is considered 1 of the 36 qualifying teams.

INDIVIDUAL QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION

For each gender, individuals must qualify for the national championships at a post-season conference/CAC/ unaffiliated championship meet, based on the following standards:

Conference/CAC/unaffiliated groupings of 12 or more teams finishing

- Top 6 finishers not on a qualifying team (automatic or at-large)
- Individual scoring finish must be 20th or better

Conference/CAC/unaffiliated groupings with 6-11 teams on qualification plan

- Top 4 finishers not on a qualifying team (automatic or at-large)
- Individual scoring finish must be 15th or better

Conference/CAC/unaffiliated groupings of 5 or fewer teams on qualification plan

- Top 2 finishers not on a qualifying team (at-large)
- Individual scoring finish must be 8th or better

Case Example: ABC Conference has 7 teams listed on the original qualification plan. One team undeclares as a team before the deadline. Another team does not finish the race with 5+ runners for a team score. The conference will still receive 4 individual qualifiers from the top 15 scoring finishers not on an automatic or at-large team because they had 6+ teams on the qualification plan.

Case Example: 123 Conference has 12 teams listed on the original qualification plan. On race day, one team does not finish the race with 5+ runners for a team score. Similar to the 2nd automatic team berth, the individual qualifiers are not protected. The conference will receive 4 individual qualifiers from the top 15 scoring finishers not on an automatic or at-large team.

If 5 or more individual qualifiers are from the same team they will be scored at the national meet as an additional team. This does not reduce the number of at-large berths.

Only 7 individuals count towards individual qualification from an institution when more than 7 individuals from the same institution are competing.

CHAMPIONSHIP SELECTION APPEALS PROCESS

If there is a misapplication of NAIA policy and procedures regarding tournament selection, an institution may appeal to the NAIA National Office.

Criteria for filing an appeal –

1. A written appeal citing the specific NAIA policies and/or procedures that have been misapplied must be submitted to the NAIA National Office within 24 hours from the time the tournament field has been released.
2. Once an appeal has been submitted a response will be provided within 24 hours from receipt of appeal.
3. Appeals must be submitted and signed by the Athletics Director and President of the institution.

NOTE – The NAC sport liaison will be involved in the selection to listen to the discussion of national championship selection.

The NAC liaison will report any concerns to the NAIA National Office immediately following the conclusion of the selection. The oversight committee will review ratings to prevent any ratings process violations or unethical use of the ratings process.

TEAM HOUSING

All participating teams **MUST** stay at the designated hotels. Failure to do so would make a team **INELIGIBLE** for participation or be subject to a fine.

ENTRY PROCEDURES & FEES

All entries for the national championship meets are to be submitted online through DirectAthletics.

In order to participate in the conference/CAC/unaffiliated or national meets, competitors must be registered through DirectAthletics. No other meet entry procedures are permitted for the conference/CAC/unaffiliated or national meets.

All runners are prohibited from running in conflicting meets on the dates of the qualifying/national meets. Violations shall result in disqualification from the national meet.

Entry fees for the national meet are \$90.00 per team (5-7 runners) and \$22.00 per individual (1-4 runners). Entry fees for the national championships are payable to the Host.

All athletes on a qualified team who are not declared by the close of the declaration period will be scratched from the meet, unless a fine for non-declaration/registration of any individual sports of \$1,500 per occurrence, with a maximum of \$5,000 is paid to the national office. Late entry requests and arrangements to pay are due no later than 24 hours after the deadline. (Deadline at 5:00 pm on Thursday, Late entries due no later than Friday at 5:00 pm).

**PARTICIPATION IN FUNCTIONS AT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

All participating teams and individuals competing in a National Championship must attend all functions including, but not limited to – Parade of Champions, coaches' meetings, Teaming Up for Character event, and Student-Athlete Experience event. Failure to comply will result in a penalty of a \$1,500 fine to the institution.

CREDENTIAL INFORMATION**OFFICIAL PARTY**

The official party for each team participating in postseason play will be a declaration of a maximum of ten (10) runners in DirectAthletics, with a maximum of seven (7) runners competing. All 10 declared runners will receive bibs and those that do not compete will be marked as "DNS".

An institution that is in violation of this regulation and does not promptly conform to it shall automatically forfeit the competition. There shall be no inordinate delay of the competition to allow the institution to conform to the rule.

Institutions qualifying as a team shall enter five to seven runners in the national championships and MUST compete as a team. If fewer than five runners from a team finish the race, those finishing shall be scored as individuals. Individuals qualifying as individuals shall be scored as individuals.

The host, with approval of the NAIA national office sport manager, shall establish appropriate guidelines for the issuing of tickets and working passes. Credential passes will be provided upon request to coaches, managers or other members of the participating institution's official party. Competing student-athletes will use race bibs to gain entrance into the facility.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL

Each team is allowed up to two (2) athletic training/medical personnel on the team sideline. One of which must be an ATC, MD, or DO. A licensed health care provider's license information/number must be submitted in the application in order to receive any medical/athletic training credentials for your team. Applications will close 72 hours before the event starts. Medical personnel credentials can be picked up during team check-in/registration only with a photo ID.

Please apply here for medical personnel credential: [LINK](#)

SPORTS INFORMATION/MEDIA PERSONNEL

All SIDs/Media personnel will need to apply for a credential for the final site. Applications will close 72 hours before the event starts. Media Credentials can be picked up at team check-in or by contacting the host media coordinator if arriving outside of the check-in window, only with a phone ID. Media credentials will NOT be included in the team packets at coaches pick up.

Please apply here for SID/Photographer and Media Credentials: [LINK](#)

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

All Presidents and Athletic Directors from qualifying teams will each receive two credentials. These credentials can be picked up at the box office.

All other administrators will receive free admission with their NAIA membership card when presented at the box office.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If inclement weather should cause travel delays for any team(s) competing in the national championship, it will be up to the discretion of the NAIA Sport Manager, Host and the Jury of Appeals to make changes to the national championship to accommodate such delays.

It is the responsibility of the host Medical Director/Athletic Trainer at NAIA Championship events to determine when an event should be suspended and when it is safe to return to play as the result of severe weather. The AT is to notify the NAIA Championship Manager who, in collaboration with the appropriate personnel (i.e. Jury of Appeals) will implement the predetermined action plan for both player and spectator safety.



JURY OF APPEALS

The Jury of Appeals for these championships shall be composed of appropriate committee members attending the meet. It shall be the responsibility of these individuals to review appeals of decisions made by the meet referee.

RELATED INFORMATION

Prior to both the National Championship, an information packet will be posted on the NAIA website for all potential qualifying teams to review, including specific instructions regarding transportation, housing, practices and all responsibilities upon qualification.

Practice – Participants are allowed to practice on the course on which the championships are conducted. The host shall set practice times. Vehicles shall not be allowed on the course.

Coaches Meeting – The first **OFFICIAL** function which all head coaches **MUST ATTEND** is the pre-championship meeting, conducted by the NAIA Championships Manager. This meeting is **MANDATORY** and will serve as a forum for all participating teams. The meeting will include a briefing by the NAIA National Supervisor of Officials.

Team Check-in – Coaches will verify and sign rosters, pickup coaching credentials and competitor race bibs. At least one coach from each team must attend.

Student-Athlete Experience Event – The opening event will be held the evening prior to the national championship. All teams and individual qualifiers must attend this event.

Teaming Up for Character™ – The Teaming Up for Character™ event will be held in conjunction with the host community. One representative from your team or all athletes may be required to participate in this event.

Awards – Team trophies are presented to the champion, runner-up, third-place, and fourth-place finishers. Additionally, All-America awards are presented to the top 40 finishers per gender.

Radio, Television and Internet – The broadcast of any post-season contest is governed by NAIA broadcast policies as printed in the NAIA Policy Handbook. This includes audio broadcasts and video broadcasts through conventional outlets and new media avenues. Below are the Cross Country post-season tournament rights fees:

	RADIO/AUDIO/ VIDEO STREAMING	TELEVISION	WEB BLOGGING
<i>Commercial</i>	\$150	\$300/day (live or delayed)	\$75
<i>Non-Commercial</i>	\$100 for both events	\$300/day (live or delayed)	\$50

Third party carriers other than school/radio station of streaming audio on websites will be assessed the additional station feed charge.

TRAVEL

SHORTS TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Qualifying institutions are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the National Championship.

The Official Travel partner of the NAIA is Short's Travel Management. Please contact **Short's Travel (816-323-6405)** to book your travel arrangements.

Short's Travel has contacts with charter air travel as well as charter buses for ground travel.

NATIONAL CAR RENTAL

National Car Rental/Enterprise Rent-a-Car is offering special rates for the NAIA National Championship. Teams will be able to access these special rates by providing the special NAIA contract ID #XZ05146.

Click [here](#) for account setup and instructions to use the code.

MASTER'S TRANSPORTATION

Master's Transportation is the official provider of all shuttles/buses for your sale, lease, and rental needs. Please contact Maria Duran at (816) 979-3493 or mduran@masterstransportation.com for more information.

NAIA POLICY HANDBOOK INFORMATION

The NAIA Policy Handbook can be found at [HERE](#). Please refer directly to the NAIA Policy Handbook for the following –

Competition

- A. Declaration of Intent to Participate – Bylaws, Article I, Section L
- B. Frequency of Play and Scheduling – Bylaws, Article I, Section F
- C. Criteria for Countable Contests – National Administrative Council, Article XXV, Section A, Item 12
- D. Reporting Results – National Administrative Council, Article XXV, Section A
- E. Forfeits – National Administrative Council, Article XI
- F. Conduct in Competition Guidelines – National Administrative Council, Article IV
- G. Ejection Policy – Bylaws, Article VI Section B Item 7
- H. Drug Testing and Reinstatement Procedures – Bylaws, Article VIII

Eligibility

- A. Definitions for Eligibility – Bylaws, Article V, Section B
- B. Eligibility Requirements – Bylaws, Article V, Section C
- C. Transfer Rules – Bylaws, Article V, Sections F-H
- D. Amateur Rules and Reinstatement – Bylaws, Article VII

Recruiting & Financial Aid

- A. Recruitment – Bylaws, Article II, Section D
- B. Campus Visitations and Tryouts of Prospective Students – Bylaws, Article II, Section C
- C. Financial Assistance – Bylaws, Article II, Section B
- D. Financial Aid Limits – Council of Presidents, Article XII

SUNDAY POLICY PLAY

As a matter of policy, NAIA Opening Round and National Championship competition will not be scheduled on Sunday. See NAIA Policy Handbook, National Administrative Council, Article XXIII for additional information.

DRUG TESTING

Drug testing may be done at any randomly selected NAIA National Championship competition for performance enhancing drugs. In accordance with the guidelines set forth by the National Drug Testing and Education Committee, the National Office will select which championships will incorporate drug testing each year. Student-athletes may be tested before, during and/or after NAIA National Championships.

For more information regarding championship drug testing, the [National Administrative Council Drug Testing Policy Manual](#), the safety of supplements and over-the-counter medications and resources to increase awareness on your campus, please visit – www.naia.org/wellness

DRUG TESTING CONSENT FORM

Each academic year all eligible NAIA student-athletes must sign a [Drug Testing Consent Form](#) in which he or she consents to be tested for the use of drugs prohibited by the NAIA Banned Substance List to participate in any NAIA National Championship competitions. This consent form shall be administered by the institution.

To ensure all student-athletes participating in NAIA National Championship competitions have signed a consent form and such form is on record with the institution, a representative of each institution participating in any NAIA National Championship competition must sign an [Official Certification of Student-Athlete Consent Form](#) at check-in.

It is recommended that before the season begins that an institution has all student-athletes complete the form to minimize the possibility of issues occurring when the post-season roster is submitted at a NAIA National Championship.

MEDICAL EXEMPTION FORM

The NAIA recognizes that some banned substances are used for legitimate medical purposes. Accordingly, the NAIA allows exemptions to be made for those student-athletes with a documented medical history demonstrating the need for regular use of

such a drug. Exemptions may be granted for substances included in the following classes of banned drugs – Stimulants, anabolic agents, beta blockers, diuretics, peptide hormones, anti-estrogens, and beta-2 agonists.

[Medical Exemption Form](#)

AWARDS

RUNNER OF THE WEEK

Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Runner of the Week

There is conference recognition of outstanding performances on select dates. Nominations for Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Runner of the Week must be submitted to the NAIA Department of Sports Information by 5:00 p.m. (CST) Tuesdays (during the honors calendar) by the conference sports information director or his/her designated representative. Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Runners of the Week are considered for National Runner of the Week honors. All nominations must be submitted via Presto Awards website: <https://naiaawards.prestosports.com/awards/award-status>.

National Runner of the Week

There is weekly recognition of outstanding performances at the national level. Honorees are selected from Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated Runners of the Week. Honorees are released by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on Wednesdays during the season.

Honorees are selected by the national voting committee and the NAIA Athletic Communication Department. Nominations must be made by the conference/CAC information director or their designated representative. **The National Office will NOT accept nominations from anyone but the conference/CAC information director or their designated representative.** Conferences/All groupings may nominate only one athlete weekly for national consideration.

ALL-AMERICA

The top 40 individual finishers at the Men's & Women's NAIA Cross Country National Championships earn All-America status.

CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AWARD

Each participating team shall nominate one student-athlete that has shown a documented display of exemplary character and sportsmanship during competition, on campus and in the community that exemplify the core values of Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Sportsmanship and Servant Leadership.

The deadline for Champions of Character nominations is **November 11** and can be completed [here](#).

NAIA SCHOLAR-ATHLETE

Criteria for the NAIA Scholar-Athlete Award are as follows:

1. Nominee must be a sophomore or above in academic standing;
2. Nominee must have been in attendance at the nominating institution one full academic year at the time of the nomination deadline (Sept. 30)
3. Nominee has a minimum grade point average of 3.50 (on a 4.0 scale) at the time of the nomination deadline (for transfer students, the GPA is only at the current NAIA institution).
4. Nominee has been certified as eligible and is listed on the eligibility certificate submitted to the conference eligibility chair.
5. Nomination form is complete and submitted through NAIA Connect.
6. All the above information is to be received by Sept. 30 to be eligible for national press release/website, certificate and honors database – All criteria must be met by this date.

NOTE – There are no statistical/playing requirements needed to receive this award. NAIA Scholar-Athlete nominations will be filled out via NAIA Connect.

If you do not have an account, please sign up and create your own. Access will be granted (usually) within 24 hours. Nominations will be processed entirely electronically. To complete a nomination, the student-athlete must have approved and signed a release of their cumulative grade point average for nominating purposes. If you or your sports information office does not have a signed release form from the nominated student-athlete on file, a blank document (PDF) will be available for download.



This release form does not need to be turned into the NAIA National Office. You are asked to retain it for your institutional records. The administrator nominating the student-athlete will sign electronically. To be eligible for listing on website or honors database, forms must be submitted by **September 30**. Late nominations will not be accepted.

To download a template to create an award certificate for your student-athletes that have earned this honor, [CLICK HERE](#).

NAIA RED BANNER SCHOLAR AWARD

NEW FOR 2026-27:

The Red Banner Scholar Award recognizes the highest level of academic achievement among student-athletes competing at each NAIA National Championship Final Site. The award celebrates the NAIA's commitment to developing champions in the classroom, character, and competition by honoring the student-athlete(s) with the highest cumulative institutional grade point average participating in the national championship.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the Red Banner Scholar Award, a student-athlete must:

1. Be listed on the official active championship roster (team sports) or be an official qualifier and active participant (individual sports) at the NAIA National Championship Final Site.
2. Be recognized as an NAIA Scholar-Athlete for the applicable academic year.
3. Meet all established NAIA Scholar-Athlete eligibility requirements and be submitted through the official NAIA Scholar-Athlete nomination process by the applicable sport deadline.

Selection Process

The NAIA National Office will determine the recipient(s) using approved NAIA Scholar-Athlete data.

- The eligible student-athlete with the highest cumulative institutional GPA at the national championship final site will receive the Red Banner Scholar Award.
- In the event of a tie for the highest GPA, all tied student-athletes will be recognized as co-recipients.
- No additional nomination is required beyond the NAIA Scholar-Athlete submission process.

SCHOLAR TEAM AWARD

In recognition of academic achievement, the NAIA names a Scholar Team for all sports in which Scholar-Athletes are recognized. Based on a cumulative 3.0 season GPA for the current academic year on a 4.0 scale, all members of the team who appear on the eligibility certificate will be included in the GPA compilation.

The deadline for Scholar Team nominations is **June 30**. Scholar Team nominations may only be submitted via NAIA Connect. Honorees will be announced annually on NAIA National Awards Day.

NAIA COACH OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The NAIA-Cross Country Coaches Association recognizes conference/CAC/unaffiliated and national cross country coaches of the year for men and women.

Cross country coaches' vote for conference/CAC/unaffiliated coaches of the year by the conclusion of their respective post-season championship meets. National Coach of the Year ballots are distributed prior to the national championship and subsequently collected and counted by the 1st Vice President and Secretary of the NAIA-CCCA at the conclusion of the national championship meet.

Conference/CAC/Unaffiliated and National Coaches of the Year are recognized at the Awards Ceremonies during the national championships.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS

The NAIA maintains a standardized awards program for the national championship meet. National championship awards are presented to the official parties (maximum eight) of the top four teams (men's and women's divisions). The top 40 competitors at the national meet will receive individual plaques. In addition, the NAIA recognizes the top four combined programs (men and women) at the national championships.



The men's and women's national champion teams are each presented the traditional championship banner

ORDERING AWARDS

Appropriate conference tournament awards are to be ordered by the conference chair and are the financial responsibility of the conference or the conference tournament host institution. Official NAIA awards MUST be ordered from:

Collegiate Awards

18081 E. Trafficway, Springfield, MO 65802

Contact – Brad Stout – brads@collegiateawards.com



COACHES ASSOCIATION

NAIA-CROSS COUNTRY COACHES ASSOCIATION

The NAIA-Cross Country Coaches Association (NAIA-CCCA) is an organization of collegiate cross country coaches at NAIA institutions. The NAIA-CCCA meets annually and conducts its business meeting in conjunction with the USTFCCCA Convention. The NAIA-CCCA is charged with the responsibility of carrying out programs beneficial to the sport of cross country and the members of the NAIA-CCCA. The NAIA-CCCA elects officers (president, first vice president, second vice president and secretary) who serve two-year terms and provide the leadership for the Association. This committee also elects five Regional Representatives for each of the USTFCCCA Regions – Great Lakes, Midwest, West, South Central, South. The goal of the regional rep positions is to liaison between the assigned region and the executive committee to open communication across the association.

NAIA-CCCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Officers

Year one of a two-year term

President	Grier Gatlin	Southern Oregon	541-552-6500	gatling@sou.edu
1st Vice President	Mike Wojciakowski	Aquinas (Mich.)	616-632-2482	wojmicmic@aquinas.edu
2nd Vice President	Alstin Benton	Saint Mary (Kan.)	913-758-4353	alstin.benton@stmary.edu
Secretary	Beth Jansen	St. Ambrose	563-333-5694	jansenbetha@sau.edu
Past President	Nate Wolf	Dordt (Iowa)	712-722-6427	nate.wolf@dordt.edu

USTFCCCA Representatives

Great Lakes Region	Bryan Burk	Spring Arbor (Mich.)	2026	bryan.burk@arbor.edu
Midwest Region	Craig Christians	Bellevue (Neb.)	2027	cchristians@bellevue.edu
West Region	Kyle Will	Bushnell (Ore.)	2027	kwill@bushnell.edu
South Central Region	Ben Ledbetter	John Brown (Ark.)	2028	bledbetter@jbu.edu
South Region	Justin Watson	Tennessee Southern	2028	jwatso83@utsouthern.edu

NAC Liaison

Rob Cashell, Commissioner – Cascade Collegiate Conference

COMMITTEES

Hall of Fame			7-year terms	Jury of Appeals			3-year terms
Victoria Vinokur	William Penn (Iowa)	Chair		Lisa Voyles	Goshen (Ind.)		2028
Rick Torres	St. Xavier (Ill.)	2029		VACANT			2028
Eric Green	Lawrence Tech (Mich.)	2029		Kyle Will	Bushnell (Ore.)		Regional Rep

PAST PRESIDENTS

1956-61	Ernie Goor, Omaha (Neb.)	1990-92	Jack Hazen, Malone (Ohio)
1961-62	Alex Francis, Fort Hays State (Kan.)	1992-94	Diane Philipp, Hillsdale (Mich.)
1962-63	Dick Abbott, Western Illinois	1994-96	Russell Smelley, Westmont (Calif.)
1963-65	Eldon Fix, Lewis & Clark (Ore.)	1996-97	Brad Moore, Pacific Lutheran (Wash.)
1965-67	Stan Wright, Texas Southern	1997-99	Jim Helmer, Southwestern (Kan.)
1967-68	Pat O'Brien, Eastern Illinois	2000-01	Bob Willey, Rio Grande (Ohio)
1968-69	Bruce Drummond, Western Illinois	2001-03	Kregg Einspahr, Concordia (Neb.)
1969-70	Arnie Pelluer, Whitworth (Wash.)	2003-05	John Foss, Indiana Wesleyan
1970-73	Art Hutton, Central Washington	2005-07	Tim Bauer, Siena Heights (Mich.)
1973-76	George Glass, Taylor (Ind.)	2007-09	Ben Welch, Eastern Oregon
1976-78	Dave Suenram, Pittsburg (Kan.)	2009-11	Mike Collins, Lewis-Clark State (Idaho)
1978-80	David Noble, Angelo State (Tex.)	2011-13	Rod Wortley, Cornerstone (Mich.)
1980-82	Jack Hazen, Malone (Ohio)	2013-15	Mike Rosolino, Embry Riddle (Ariz.)
1982-84	Dave Little, Black Hills State (S.D.)	2015-17	Brad Jenny, Doane University (Neb.)



1984-86	Dick Naylor, Hanover (Ind.)	2017-19	Eric Putnam, Shawnee State University (Ohio)
1986-88	Jim Crakes, Point Loma Nazarene (CA)	2021-22	Ryan Sommers, Bethel University (Ind.)
1988-90	Larry Maddox, Anderson (Ind.)	2023-24	Nate Wolf, Dordt University (Iowa)

NAIA-CCCA VOTING

All business and sport motions will be heard at the NAIA-Cross Country Coaches Association business meeting. All final voting on business and sport motions will take place at this time. A quorum is not required for the sports of Cross Country and Track & Field voting.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING & SPORT MOTIONS

The annual business meeting for the NAIA-CCCA will take place in conjunction with the USTFCCCA Convention on December 14-17, 2026 in Grapevine, Texas. Refer to the CCCA Constitution and Bylaws for the organization of the annual business meeting.

Coaches are able to submit sport motions to the NAIA-CCCA Chair and Sport Manager prior to the annual business meeting. All sport motions from the coaches' body affecting the NAIA National Cross Country Championship will be distributed to all head coaches 1 week prior to the annual business meeting.

NAIA CROSS COUNTRY COACHES ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

Section 1 The name of this association shall be the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Cross Country Coaches Association (NAIA-CCCA).

ARTICLE II - ORGANIZATION

Section 1 The membership of this association is comprised of cross country coaches whose institutions are current members of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Coaches' membership in NAIA-CCCA is an allied association of the NAIA organization. The NAIA-CCCA is charged with the responsibility of carrying out programs beneficial to the sport of cross country and the member coaches of this sport. The activities of this association shall be in accordance with the aims and objectives of NAIA, and under the guidance of the NAIA-National Administrative Council.

Section 2 The NAIA-CCCA shall submit to the NAIA-National Administrative Council, through the NAIA sport manager, statements governing the NAIA-CCCA, plans and practices for approval, and in every way cooperate with the NAIA-National Administrative Council in furthering the stated aims and objectives of this parent organization.

ARTICLE III - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1 The NAIA-CCCA shall supervise and conduct programs utilizing the guidance of the NAIA- National Administrative Council, who will foster and promote interest and enthusiasm in cross country programs which will produce international (Olympic and other foreign competition), national and affiliated conference recognition for teams, competitors and coaches.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Active membership in NAIA-CCCA shall be open to any cross country coach whose institution holds membership within the NAIA.

ARTICLE V - BUDGET

Section 1 A portion of NAIA membership dues shall be assigned to the NAIA-CCCA to conduct its business. The NAIA-CCCA shall submit an annual budget to the NAIA President/CEO by June 1 of each year.

ARTICLE VI - VOTING POWER

Section 1 Current membership in the NAIA-CCCA entitles the member to one vote in all democratic action held in open assembly of the Association.

- Section 2** All NAIA-CCCA members shall be identified before being allowed to vote. Non-members may attend the meeting but may not vote.
- Section 3** Coaches of men's and women's teams are to vote on all matters pertaining to their respective teams only. The president of the NAIA-CCCA shall decide in all questionable situations which group will vote.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

- Section 1** Officers shall be elected from the active membership of the Association at the annual meeting as follows: president, first vice president, second vice president and secretary. Such elected officers shall be from institutions which are in good standing in the NAIA and must be members of the NAIA-CCCA.
- Section 2** Term of office of the president, first vice president, second vice president and secretary shall be for two years.
- Section 3** The progression in office shall be from secretary to second vice president to first vice president to president. Each office is to be held for two years, from one NAIA-CCCA annual meeting to the next annual meeting. In the event a vacancy occurs, the normal progression from secretary to president shall be accelerated to fill the vacant office. The NAIA-CCCA Executive Committee is empowered to appoint officers from the membership-at-large to fill the remaining position. Such appointee shall not succeed in the normal progression of offices unless duly elected by the membership in the next annual NAIA-CCCA meeting.
- Section 4** The nominating committee shall consist of a chairperson and two or more additional members. The chairperson shall be the immediate past president. The additional members (two or more) shall be selected from the past presidents. In addition to nominations from the nominating committee, nominations for office may be accepted from the floor. A candidate for the office of secretary shall be determined by the highest number of votes. The election shall be under the direction of the chairperson of the nominating committee.
- Section 5** The meet committee shall consist of the officers of the NAIA-CCCA.

ARTICLE VIII - DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

- Section 1** The duties of the president are to afford leadership and guidance to the NAIA-CCCA through all possible channels and to direct efforts specifically to conducting general meetings and committee meetings. The president is an ex-officio member of all appointed and standing committees of the Association.
- Section 2** The duties of the first vice president are to assume the leadership at all meetings unattended by the president.
- Section 3** The second vice president assumes the leadership designated to the president or first vice president in the event neither is available to perform their required duties.
- Section 4** The secretary shall make an annual report to the NAIA-CCCA membership, taking the minutes at all meetings, supervise the Association correspondence, and perform other duties pertinent to his/her office.
- Section 5** The past president shall serve on the executive committee of the NAIA-CCCA and act as a consultant to the president. The past president acts as the chairperson of the nominating committee.

ARTICLE IX - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Section 1** The executive committee of the NAIA-CCCA is composed of the officers of the Association and the immediate past president and five regional representatives.

ARTICLE X - MEETINGS

- Section 1** The annual business meetings of the Association will be held in conjunction with the USTFCCCA at the time and place designated by the executive committee of the NAIA-CCCA.
- Section 2** An annual clinic may be held in conjunction with the NAIA Cross Country National Championships at a time and place designated by the executive committee of the NAIA-CCCA.

Section 3 All voting will be take place at the annual business meeting. Motions will still be presented and discussed at the Annual Business meeting. If desired, a "straw poll" can be taken by those present to determine if a motion will be opened for vote to the full coaches association.

Section 4 Usual order of business at the open business meetings shall be as follows:

1. Reading of minutes
2. Reports of officers
3. Committee reports
4. Old business
5. New business (all new business must be submitted in writing to the president prior to the business meeting)
6. Adjournment

Section 5 All sport motions from the coaches' body affecting the NAIA National Cross Country Championship will be distributed to all head coaches 1 week prior to the annual business meeting.

ARTICLE XI - CONSTITUTION CHANGE

Section 1 A proposed constitutional amendment shall be presented, in writing, to the president of the NAIA-CCCA. The president must see that the proposal is presented to the membership at the next annual meeting. The amendment must win two-thirds vote of approval by current members of the NAIA-CCCA present at the annual business meeting before amending of the constitution will occur. All changes of the constitution must have approval of the NAIA National Administrative Council.

ARTICLE XII - STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1 The president of the NAIA-CCCA is empowered to appoint committees which will assist in programs designed to produce international or national recognition for teams, competitors and coaches. The president also is encouraged to appoint competent NAIA-CCCA members, who shall assist in any and all ways to foster the aims and objectives of NAIA as they related to the sport of cross country, the participants, the coaches, the spectators and the institutions represented by these groups.

Section 2 Ad-hoc committees shall be appointed by the president.

Section 3 Rating Committee:
The chairperson of this committee shall be elected by the committee at the annual rating committee meeting. For each gender, there will be one rater per conference/CAC/ unaffiliated group. Each group will retain its rater even if it drops below the sponsorship threshold, in order to retain representation for potential at-large qualifiers.

Section 4 Hall of Fame Committee:
The chairperson and committee members of this committee are appointed by the president and executive committee of the NAIA-CCCA. Their function is to recommend and screen desirable candidates for the NAIA Hall of Fame.

Section 5 Jury of Appeals:
The jury of appeals shall consist of three NAIA-CCCA members whose sole function is to be final authority on any referee's decision that is appealed. Each member shall serve three years with one being added and one exiting each year.



NAIA TRACK & FIELD AND CROSS COUNTRY COACHES ASSOCIATIONS – STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of the NAIA is to promote the education and development of students through intercollegiate athletic participation. Member institutions, although varied and diverse, share a common commitment to high standards and to the principle that participation in athletics serves as an integral part of the total educational process (NAIA Official Handbook, Section A).

The NAIA Official Handbook begins with the opening statement of philosophy above and follows in Section B with the NAIA Coaches Code and in Section C with the Code of Ethics. Those codes of conduct will follow some more specific concerns for NAIA Track & Field and Cross Country coaches and our relationship together within our sports, the NAIA and the various organizations around the country.

NAIA Track & Field and Cross Country coaches have enjoyed a unique camaraderie nationwide which has allowed us to have outstanding National Championships and long-term personal friendships. Competition has been something we have been able to enjoy together without having to elevate or diminish the accomplishments of fellow coaches. This camaraderie makes the National Championships a highlight of the academic and athletic year.

With the success we have enjoyed as an NAIA Coaches Association in regards to the conduct of National Championship competitions and the governing of our sports, we must nevertheless continue to remind ourselves and educate new coaches about the responsibilities and duties of being an NAIA coach. It requires the work of many coaches each year to conduct the business of Track & Field and Cross Country and the National Championships. Many are elected to positions, but many are volunteers in the system who give of their time and energy to make our tremendous organization thrive as it does.

Therefore, we as coaches need to be governed, individually and corporately, by a philosophy of competition which surpasses our individual interests. The desire to serve, along with a commitment to involvement nationally, aids each of us in avoiding provincial thinking and actions. We need to look out for the best interests of our sports with progressive ideas that improve each sport as a whole. To promote our sports and to maintain them in a healthy manner takes vigilance, foresight, cooperation and a willingness to set aside the ever-present desire to protect or promote a personal agenda or provincial idea. To this end, we should continue to promote a strong philosophy that helps us set aside our differences and personal desires in order to maintain the long term viability and health of our sports.

Some suggestions for promoting a philosophy and individual responsibility follow:

1. Attend annual national meetings and become an active participant.
2. Volunteer to assist in the conduct of the national meets.
3. Support the Hall of Fame, the NAIA's highest honor, with nominations and attendance at the annual Hall of Fame awards ceremonies.
4. Promote ideas and legislation that can spark debate about how our sports might be improved.
5. Be willing to support higher standards that uphold the significance of achievement at the national level.
6. Learn about how the NAIA is organized and governed from the sports level through administration.
7. Seek first to pose questions rather than to level criticism at your peers or administrators of the NAIA or national events.
8. Conduct ourselves in a professional manner which reflects respect for individual dignity.
9. To make no immodest effort to promote an agenda which ignores the national best interests of the sport.
10. Become a member of the United States Track Coaches Association and maintain communication and positive relationships with NCAA, NJCAA and high school coaches.

As we continue to work together in a profession that promotes the development of Character and achievement, we can have a great and positive effect nationally. As Track & Field and Cross Country coaches we have tremendous opportunities to influence and promote the leaders of tomorrow. Whether an athlete earns the valued distinction of All-American or not, they should have captured a greater vision of the possibilities for their lives by their participation at any level within our sport. Coaching is about more than winning the competition, it involves our assistance in helping students win in their lives. We can and should help one another to achieve this goal for as many students as possible.