THE RIGHT WAY FORWARD
NAIA 2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Championships

Disney Model for Event Excellence
This summer, the championships and athletic communications staff completed multiple training sessions to learn the Disney Model for Event Excellence. The shift in operational focus forced us to focus on the entire experience at a championship, and we learned new ways to plan and execute events. This past fall, we focused on coaches and student-athletes and "Mapping the Experience" for them from the time they get on site to the time they leave. Initial survey results are outstanding, as we hit an all-time high in customer satisfaction during the fall championships.

Creating Championship Moments
As part of the Disney model training, we developed a "mantra" for NAIA Championships moving forward - "Creating Championship Moments". This approach has guided us in a new direction for how we go about planning and executing our events. For example, when a team arrives at a hotel, a practice site or the locker room, every step along the way is an opportunity to "Create a Championship Moment".

Streaming/Broadcasting
In 2025, the NAIA built on last year's broadcasting momentum in two ways.

First, beginning on August 28, regular-season featured games debuted with Week 0 football. This continued with featured football games every Saturday and expanded to soccer and volleyball midway through the fall. Basketball featured games began in December, followed by men's volleyball, lacrosse, baseball, and softball in the spring.

Championships also expanded to include all early-round contests for volleyball and basketball, with optional inclusion for football and soccer postseason games on member campuses.

In 2025, NAIA championships attracted 7,762,084 viewers according to advertising metrics.

Host Training Seminar
During the 2025-26 school year, we plan to relaunch our Host Training Seminars with both current and new hosts. Beginning this summer, we will conduct training for all hosts, with plans to include all host cities every two years. For new hosts, we will conduct a training session every year. Our goals include improving preparation and planning, educating host cities about the NAIA, and providing them with the information needed to market the championship in their city. Hosting the training together will allow hosts to share best practices, in addition to receiving a consistent message and direction from the national office.

New Championship Locations for 2025-26

- Cross Country – Tallahassee, FL
- Men's Soccer – Orange Beach, AL
- Bowling – Lansing, MI
- Competitive Cheer & Dance – Topeka, KS
- Women's Flag Football – Bradenton, FL
- Beach Volleyball – Mesa, AZ