



2026-27
FOOTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES MANUAL

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Welcome

On behalf of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), congratulations on your qualification to the 2026 NAIA Football Championship Series! The event will be held on campus sites November 21 & 28, December 5 & 12. This Football Championship Series packet will serve as an in-depth guide for participating in & hosting the Football Championship Series.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the NAIA is to promote education and development of students through intercollegiate athletic participation. Member institutions, although varied and diverse, share a common commitment to high standards and the principle that athletics serve as an integral part of education.

The NAIA embraces the concept of the student and recognizes the importance of the individuality of each member institution, the value of the conference and independent structure, and the benefits of membership in a national association. (Additional information relative to the philosophy of the NAIA can be found in the NAIA Official and Policy Handbook.)

About the NAIA

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) was founded in 1940 as the National Association of Intercollegiate Basketball (NAIB) to provide small colleges with a championship basketball tournament. In 1952, the organization expanded to include other sports and became the NAIA. The NAIA was a pioneer in college athletics, being the first to offer championships for African-American student-athletes and the first to sponsor a national championship for women's sports in 1980. Today, the NAIA supports smaller colleges and universities, emphasizing character-driven athletics and student-athlete development.

Football Championship Series General Information

The administration of the Football Championship Series is the responsibility of the NAIA Championships Department, representatives of the NAIA Football Coaches Association (NAIA-FCA) and the NAIA Sports Information Directors Association (NAIA-SIDA). The Football Championship Series is conducted in conformance with the policies of the NAIA-FCA and NAIA National Administrative Council (NAC). The general management of all FCS games are under the control and direction of the following:

Game Administrator

The Game Administrator is a member or representative of the NAIA Championships Department staff who is responsible for the overall conduct and supervision of the FCS games and related activities.

Game Committeeman

The Game Committeeman is a representative of the NAIA-FCA who is responsible for, among other things, the supervision of the traveling team(s), the officiating crew and preparation of the playing field. The NAIA will assign a Game Committeeman to each Football Championships Series site.

Sports Information Director

The Sports Information Director is a member of the Department of Sports Information staff, host-site Sports Information Director, or a representative of the NAIA-SIDA who is responsible for the supervision of the press box operation, services to the media representatives covering the game, selection of the Outstanding Players of the Game award recipients and production of a media kit for the FCS games.

Host Institution Coordinator

The host institution provides a game liaison person on a full-time basis during the week of the game to work with the Game Administrator in organizing and promoting the event. This responsibility includes arranging meetings with key community leaders, civic organizations and news media and assisting with various details of game administration as outlined by the Game Administrator.

National Selection Committee Policy

The National Selection Committee policy lives on the NAIA Football Coaches Corner. Teams are seeded 1-20. The committee shall use the same criteria for selection to the seeding poll for the seeding and pairings of all teams in the Football Championship Series. The final pairings of the Football Championship Series will be determined based on the following prioritized criteria –

- NSC final seeding
- Geographical location of teams
- Financial considerations

Every attempt will be made not to pair conference teams in the First Round of the FCS. Based on the pairings and selection criteria above, this may be unavoidable.

Game Sites

Site Selection

The Football Selection Committee, along with the NAIA Department of Championships, will determine game sites based on the following criteria –

- Submitted bids
- Availability of quality facilities
- Potential income
- Comparative cost factors among the available sites
- Competition from other activities

Automatic Host Criteria for Higher Seeds

- For First Round matchups, seeds 13-16 that bid at least \$30,000 will host first round contests unless a flight could otherwise be eliminated.
- If the No. 1 – No. 8 seeds bid at least \$30,000 for the Second Round, they will host second round contests in the Football Championship Series.
- Unless a flight could otherwise be eliminated, the four highest remaining seeds that bid at least \$30,000 for the Quarterfinal Round will host Quarterfinal contests in the FCS.
- Unless a flight could otherwise be eliminated, the two highest remaining seeds that bid at least \$30,000 for the Semifinal Round will host Semifinal contests in the FCS.

- The National Administrative Council and the Council of Presidents have approved a flat fee reimbursement rate for traveling teams in all FCS competitions.

Host Institution General Information

An institution wishing to host a Football Championship Series game shall submit a FCS Host Site Host Bid projecting anticipated income and expenses in administering the event. This FCS Host Bid (electronic form) can be accessed on the Football Coaches Corner page on the NAIA website.

The information submitted in the FCS Host Bid is used in determining game sites. The NAIA strongly considers as host institutions those that have the potential for producing game income, can secure the best possible hotel rates and can provide items on the form on a complimentary basis.

General Requirements

The host institution shall provide a host institution coordinator, who will coordinate all facets of game administration from the time of site selection and pairings through game day, on a full-time basis.

The host institution shall provide the personnel to discharge the functions of game administration before, during and after the game, under the direction of the game administrator.

The cost of host team meals, lodging and transportation are the responsibility of the host institution and cannot be included as authorized on-site expenses.

Qualifier Call

There will be a **MANDATORY** Qualifier Call for all Head Football Coaches and Athletic Directors of participating institutions. The Qualifier Call will take place on Monday, November 16 at 1:00pm CST. Zoom links will be sent out to qualifying teams.

Administration

- **Ticket Sales** – Every effort should be made to maximize the selling of tickets to individuals as well as to groups and businesses. A person should be appointed to supervise the selling of tickets and to handle the auditing and accounting.
- **Publicity and Promotion** – Your institution, as well as your community, can benefit from hosting a Football Championship Series game. It is important that the game be well-publicized through the press, radio and television. In addition,

general advertising, public appearances at civic clubs, pep rallies, newsletters to alumni, other meetings, etc., should be utilized in publicizing and promoting the game. Your institution's Sports Information Director will be expected to handle the press box operation in providing services to the media, game statistics and other needs as prescribed by the NAIA Department of Athletics Communications & Media.

- **Game Day Personnel** – Ticket sellers and takers, ushers, adequate security/police, concession vendors, public address announcer, program sellers, etc., are necessary personnel needed for game play.
- **Game Officials** – The NAIA Football Sport Manager works with NAIA National Coordinator of Officials to determine the officials for all games. The officiating team arrives at the game site on the day before the game and will be housed at a different hotel from the traveling team. Normally, the officiating team departs the site following the game and requires housing for only one night. However, in certain situations due to the length of travel officials may require an additional night of housing following the game. If officials require an additional night's stay, please reach out to the NAIA Football Sport Manager to discuss the options.
- **Game Headquarters** – The host institution should provide or designate office space on campus to serve as game headquarters. This office should serve as an information center before the game and as the office for NAIA personnel and should be located convenient to the ticket box office, the host Athletics Director and Sports Information Director.
- **Office Supplies** – The host institution should provide secretarial help, computers, copiers, paper and other supplies at headquarters location to assist in headquarters functions throughout game week.
- **Post-Game Awards Ceremonies** – These ceremonies are held in the center of the field immediately following each game. Personnel should be assigned to handle the awards and have them at the right place at the right time.

Signage

As directed by the National Administrative Council (NAC), the NAIA National Office will send a signage package to each FCS host. Hosts will be connected to the NAIA signage vendor to have the signage package sent for \$500, plus shipping & handling, and will not be required to return the signage to the NAIA National Office.

If the Host has a local partnership where signage can be provided without cost, [signage templates can be found here](#). If signage is printed locally, NAIA Sport Manager must approve.

If FCS signage has been purchased in the last three years, schools may choose to reuse that signage should it still be in quality condition.

Host Institution Financial Requirements

Game Guarantees

The host institution will be required to provide a cash guarantee of \$30,000 to the NAIA for each game of the Football Championship Series. Confirmation of this guarantee must be provided in writing and received by November 6, 2026.

Potential Game Income

Game income is defined as all income derived from the following –

- Ticket sales (advance, game day)
- Radio/TV Rights
- Parking
- Concession sales (if applicable)

At-Site Expenses

The only authorized expense to be deducted from the guarantee is traveling team local ground transportation at game site (if travel is by air). Officials, ticket takers, press box staff, ushers and other staff positions are not approved at-site expenses.

Game Committeemen housing is requested to be booked by the host and paid for by the Game Committeeman unless complimentary by the host.

NOTE – No other expenses are authorized, therefore only the above items can be deducted from the guarantee.

Host Institution Financial Responsibilities

The host institution shall receive and be responsible for paying all bills for expenses listed under at-site expenses, up to the amount of the cash guarantee figure.

Two weeks following the event, the host institution must submit a final itemized income-expense report to the NAIA National Office. The NAIA will invoice the schools for the amount of the guarantee less the actual amount of authorized at-site expense for which the host institution is financially responsible.

Institutions that do not meet the financial obligation may be subject to not hosting future FCS games or other NAIA events.

Traveling Teams Transportation & Housing

All arrangements for the traveling team's official party (maximum of 86 persons; 80 official party & up to 6 athletic trainers for expense purposes) must be approved by the NAIA Department of Championships. The traveling team will receive and pay the transportation bill (air and/or ground) and any meal and housing bills incurred to and from, and while at the game site. Exceptions will not be made to these policies unless approved in advance in writing by the NAIA Department of Championships.

Host Institution Financial Responsibilities

There are three categories for transportation reimbursement –

For trips under 400 miles, the NAIA would reimburse no more than –

Pre-approved expenses for two 55-passenger buses (no additional vehicle).

If it has been determined by the NAIA Championships Department that an institution will bus to the site of a Football Championship Series game and be reimbursed for those expenses, that institution will be responsible for arranging ground transportation.

Pre-approved hotel for 43 rooms (one night). The NAIA Championships Department, in coordination with the host institution, arranges housing for the traveling team's official party while on site.

All participating teams must stay at the designated headquarters hotel or assigned property in order to be eligible for the event and any reimbursement funds.

For trips between 401-800 miles –

Pre-approved expenses for two 55-passenger buses (no additional vehicle).

If it has been determined by the NAIA Championships Department that an institution will bus to the site of a Championship Series game and be reimbursed for those expenses, that institution will be responsible for arranging ground transportation.

Pre-approved hotel for 43 rooms (maximum of two nights). The NAIA Championships Department, in coordination with the host institution, arranges housing for the traveling team's official party while on site.

All participating teams must stay at the designated headquarters hotel or assigned property in order to be eligible for the event and any reimbursement funds.

For trips over 800 miles, air transportation will typically be used and reimbursement is as follows –

Air transportation costs (see information below)

Pre-approved hotel for 43 rooms (maximum of two nights). The NAIA Championships Department, in coordination with the host institution, arranges housing for the traveling team's official party while on site.

All participating teams must stay at the designated headquarters hotel or assigned property in order to be eligible for the event and any reimbursement funds.

Air Transportation Reimbursement

The NAIA has reserved at least one charter airplane with STM Charters for each weekend of the Football Championship Series. The arrangement includes a \$15,000 non-refundable deposit for each weekend, ensuring airplane availability and competitive pricing. **TEAMS TRAVELING BY AIR MUST USE STM CHARTERS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT.** Institutions using air travel must be prepared to pay for all costs associated with the flight immediately after flight confirmation with STM.

When charter air travel is used, the institution is eligible for reimbursement for 81 seats (official travel party). **REMAINING SEATS MAY BE FILLED BY THE INSTITUTION BUT WOULD BE SUBTRACTED OUT OF THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT.** For the purpose of determining eligible air charter reimbursement, the assigned value of the remaining seats will be \$450 per seat in the reimbursement formula (see examples below).

The traveling team's institution is responsible for transportation expenses incurred from campus to the NAIA designated airport for departure and return.

CHARTER FLIGHT EXAMPLES

A charter flight has 172 seats, and the total cost is \$145,000.

- 172 (number of seats available) – 86 (official party for reimbursement) = 86
- Extra Seats Occupied 25 x \$450 = \$11,250 (institution's responsibility)
- **\$145,000 – \$11,250 = \$133,750 (eligible for reimbursement)**

A charter flight has 150 seats, and the total cost is \$120,000.

- 150 (number of seats available) – 86 (official party for reimbursement) = 64
- Extra Seats Occupied 15 x \$450 = \$6,750 (institution's responsibility)
- **\$120,000 – \$6,750 = \$113,250 (eligible for reimbursement)**

NAIA Expenses

- NAIA Personnel – NAIA Championship event staff, game committeeman, game administrators, etc. – Expenses include transportation, meals and housing (if not complimentary).
- Other game administration expenses – Postage, shipping, etc.

General Information – Arrangements

Advertising

Local and national advertising shall be the financial responsibility of the host institution and shall not be included as Authorized Expenses.

NAIA policy governing acceptable advertisers and advertising copy for game programs, broadcasts and telecasts of NAIA Championship events, states –

Beer, wine, liquor or any form of alcoholic beverages or any form of tobacco products shall not be endorsed by NAIA, but the advertisements of such products in connection with NAIA conference and national events, as well as sponsorship, is permissible under the following conditions –

All 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 areas of any NAIA event.

No commercial may relate directly or indirectly by the advertising company of the advertised product to the institutions or athletes involved, or to the NAIA.

Awards

The NAIA maintains a standardized awards program for all National Championship events. For the Football Championship Series, this includes –

- **Outstanding Player Awards (All Games)** – The Most Outstanding Offensive and Defensive Players in each game of the Football Championship Series will receive a plaque. The recipients are selected by the media in attendance.
- **First Round Games** – No team awards are provided.
- **Second Round Games** – No team awards are provided.
- **Quarterfinal Round Games** – No team awards are provided.
- **Semifinal Round Games** – Non-advancing teams receive the standard NAIA team award and 80 individual plaques. These awards are shipped directly to the

host institution's Director of Athletics for presentation in an appropriate manner by the institution. Winning teams receive awards at the site of the National Championship game, as described below.

- **National Championship Game** – Runner-up team receives the standard NAIA team award and 80 individual plaques. Championship team receives the standard NAIA team award, the traditional NAIA team championship banner, the NAIA championship team traveling trophy (to be retained for one year and shipped to the site of the next year's championship game) and 80 individual plaques. These awards are presented on the field immediately following the game.

Bands

Marching bands (a minimum of 25 members in uniform) representing either of the two participating institutions, or a local/regional high school, shall be admitted without charge as long as the group is performing on the field during pre-game or halftime.

Pep bands (a maximum of 25 members) representing either of the two participating institutions, or a local/regional high school, shall be admitted without charge as long as the group is performing in the stadium.

The NAIA Game Administrator, in consultation with the Director of Athletics of the host institution, determines seating for all band groups. Bands wishing to perform on game day should contact the NAIA Game Administrator or the Director of Athletics of the host institution no later than 48 hours prior to game day to receive final approval. Band members do not receive game tickets. Bands shall not play while the game is in progress. All NCAA playing rules regarding bands are in effect during Football Championship Series games.

Cheerleaders

Cheerleaders in uniform (not to exceed 12 total), a mascot and the cheerleaders' sponsor/supervisor shall be admitted without charge. Cheerleaders do not receive game tickets.

Pyramids higher than 2 ½ persons in height are prohibited at NAIA conference, independent and/or national events. Pyramid height is measured by body lengths. A shoulder stand is defined as "2 persons in height," a chair or shoulder sit is defined as "1 ½" persons high."

No external force shall be used by cheerleaders to propel the body at NAIA conference, independent and/or national events – Examples: Trampoline, springboard, clasped hands, etc.

Cheerleaders will adhere to the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors (AACCA) recommendations and safety guidelines for collegiate cheerleading. To obtain a copy of the college safety rules, go to www.aacca.org.

Complimentary Tickets

Authorized NAIA personnel and professional football scouts with appropriate identification (authorization from professional clubs) may receive one complimentary ticket per individual. Professional scouts may not occupy space in the press box or on the sideline.

2026-2027 NAIA Membership Cards shall be honored – The Chief Executive Officers of each member institution shall receive two complimentary tickets upon presentation of the NAIA card and appropriate identification. All cards are non-transferable.

All other tickets not mentioned above must be purchased and included as game income.

Conduct

Each member institution is responsible for the conduct of its student-athletes, coaches and fans at all Football Championship Series games. Students are expected to act responsibly and perform as a positive role model for the institution, community and association.

Institutions will be held financially responsible for damage incurred at hotels or any other facility directly involved with the game.

Postseason Rosters

Official Postseason Roster forms will now be filled out via NAIA Connect (<https://www.naiiaconnect.org/s/login>) and sent to the NAIA National Office. If you do not have a login account, please contact naiiaconnectsupport@naia.org. Once you login, please follow these [instructions](#).

Credentials

Only working representatives of the news media, as designated by the NAIA Game Administrator or Sports Information Director, shall receive press box credentials. Media representatives do not receive game tickets. Non-working media representatives must purchase tickets.

For FCS games, the following credentials will be provided to hosts: NAIA Game Committeeman, Host Staff, VIP, Media, Officials.

Equal Accommodations & Facilities

The host institution is responsible for providing equal and/or comparable accommodations and facilities relative to dressing facilities, half-time refreshments, bench towels, sideline heaters (if applicable), etc.

Game Times

In consultation with the host institution, the NAIA Championships Department establishes game times for all games in the Football Championship Series.

Half-Time Schedules

The half-time intermission shall be a maximum of 20 minutes. Strict time limits will be imposed on performing groups and the field will be cleared no less than three minutes prior to the start of the second half.

The NAIA Game Administrator establishes the half-time schedule. Performing groups representing the participating teams are given priority for the half-time period, but must notify the Game Administrator no later than the end of the day Wednesday of game week if their group(s) will be available to perform on game day.

Insurance

Each participating institution shall be required to furnish its own accident, medical life and travel insurance for its athletes and coaches (official party).

The NAIA provides liability insurance to cover the NAIA only. The host institution shall provide the NAIA Department of Championships with a copy of the insurance policy coverage. The insurance coverage should include commercial general liability at a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and participant legal liability at a minimum of \$1,000,000 and it shall name the NAIA as an “additionally-insured” party.

Live Stats & Live Streaming

The official statistician is required to report live statistics via Presto Stats, the official statistical software of NAIA National Championship Events. It is recommended to have statistical monitors stationed in the press box for radio and media to view. Live Stats must also be displayed at <https://naiastats.prestosports.com> via StatView.

It is required that each host site broadcast its game on NAIA Network. Host sites may also simulcast to their regular streaming location, if the host is able to send two RTMP signals from on site. The host site is responsible for staffing, equipment and costs associated with the production. Video-streaming production quality must be approved

by the NAIA Athletics Communications Department at least seven days prior to the contest. For complete video-streaming standards for Football Championship Series hosts, please contact Steve Wilson (swilson@naia.org) of the NAIA Athletics Communications Department.

All broadcast productions must include a score bug with quarter, time, down, distance, and score. All broadcast productions must include audio commentary that is NOT a public address announcer.

FCS Hosts are required to have the following technology available to review targeting penalties:

1. Center high & end zone film
2. Video streaming broadcast

All NAIA championship broadcasts, including early-round contests hosted at campus sites, must be broadcast on the NAIA Network. Host institutions may also simulcast to their normal regular-season platform, provided their encoding setup supports simultaneous outputs to multiple destinations. If the host's encoding setup supports only a single destination, the broadcast must be sent to the NAIA Network. Broadcast feeds must be transmitted to the NAIA Network via RTMP or SRT.

As a host site, you are required to send non-NAIA Network viewership numbers, by contest, to the NAIA National Office no later than 10 days after the completion of the event.

Sideline Replay

If the FCS host has sideline replay capabilities, they are allowed to use instant replay. Sideline replay requirements can be found at the end of this packet in Appendix A.

In Game Video Tablets

A maximum of six standard tablets may be used for In-game Video (sport rule modification to Rule 1-4-11-a. Exception 3).

Home team is responsible to provide access (i.e., power, plug-in, wifi, etc.) for the functionality of the visiting teams sideline tablets (Skycoach/Hudl)

Media Arrangement & Press Box

Press box and field credentials will be assigned to the working media at the discretion of the host institution's Sports Information Director in consultation with the Game Administrator. All requests for credentials, radio needs (including wifi, internet line, or phone line), etc., should be directed to the Sports Information Director of the host institution.

Post-game Interview Procedures – After a 10-minute cooling off period (begins when teams enter their dressing rooms), coaches and players will be made available to all members of the news media. Post-game interviews will be conducted in a designated interview area.

The following requirements are in place for press boxes (All Football Championship Series games) –

- Elevated space that can accommodate a minimum of six individuals in a working media capacity
- Ample power outlets, including extension cords
- Wireless internet (password-protected for staff/media) that is not open to the public; if no wireless internet is available, the press box should have a minimum of six dedicated hard lines
- Minimum of two analog phone lines for radio purposes – The visiting team will need to be able to dial-in (no dial-out)
- Facility must have a minimum of two dedicated hard-wired internet lines that are required for a live video-streaming production.

The following requirements are in place for press boxes (National Championship game only) –

- Facility will accommodate television staging and talent, as well as an Instant Replay System and two radio crews, in separate private space in the press box that has walls.
- Must have closed off coaches' rooms to hold a minimum of 10 coaches (five in one separate room, five in another separate room).
- Must have PA system and controls to electronic scoreboard.
- Facility must have platforms for TV cameras on the same side as the press box.

Camera platforms should ideally be located between the 35 and 40 yard lines on both sides of the 50 yard line.

Medical Personnel & Procedures

The head athletic trainer at the host site shall be responsible for providing the visiting team medical assistance at all practices and during the game. The host athletic trainers shall be responsible for the following –

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

- Special needs of the visiting team (towels, water, modalities, etc.)

- Medical assistance needed for practice
- Training room (location, hours, equipment, phone numbers, etc.)
- Phone numbers for after-hour emergencies.
- Directions to medical facility on campus or in community
- Outline of coverage and staff being provided by host institution
- Emergency procedures and protocol

Each team's athletic trainer shall be responsible for providing the NAIA National Office a report of all injuries for all Football Championship Series games.

- Copies of the NAIA-ATA Injury Report can be found in the NAIA Athletic Trainers Association manual.
- Following each game, the reports shall be forwarded to –
- NAIA, Sara Eckinger at seckinger@naia.org.

Officials

The NAIA Department of Championships, in consultation with the NAIA National Coordinator of Officials, arranges for all officials to be used in Football Championship Series games.

First Round, Second Round, Quarterfinal and Semifinal Games

Game officials (referee, umpire, linesman, field judge, line judge, back judge, side judge and alternate/center judge) pay for all expenses incurred to and from and while at the game site.

A flat rate of \$5,500 will be invoiced from the NAIA National Office to each host institution, which covers cost of all officials' game fees, transportation fees, and per diem.

The NAIA National Coordinator of Officials and NAIA Director of Officiating will notify the host Athletic Director of the officials assigned to your game by EOD Monday of game week. Additionally, the referee will reach out to correspond regarding arrival times, lodging needs, etc. The host institution is responsible for the lodging of each official; eight single occupancy rooms for up to two nights will be paid for by the host.

New for 2026: Transportation of officials to/from the pregame meeting on Friday evening & transportation to/from the game on Saturday is required by the host.

Officials will receive one complimentary game ticket per official.

National Championship Game

Officials will receive one complimentary game ticket per official.

Official Party

Participating teams are limited to a maximum number of 62 players in uniform. Replacements are permitted from among eligible student-athletes, up to the time of the pre-game meeting, which is held the evening before the game.

No replacements shall be permitted after the pre-game meeting, except under emergency conditions. Emergency replacements should be made no later than one hour prior to game time and must be approved by the NAIA Game Administrator.

The number of student-athletes in football uniform shall not exceed the maximum number at the start of the contest. Failure to comply with squad limitation (62 eligible players in uniform) will result in forfeiture of the game to the opposing institution.

For expense purposes, the traveling team transportation and housing reimbursement is based on an official party of 80 official party and up to six additional athletic trainers.

For team dress purposes, the maximum number of players in uniform and on the sidelines is 62. For sideline purposes, the official numbers of players and supplemental personnel should not exceed 80, including players, coaches, managers, etc. In addition to the 80, each institution is allowed to have up to six athletic training/medical personnel on the team sideline.

Note – The 80 on the sideline includes up to 62 players in uniform and 18 "Official Party" members.

For the National Championship Game only –

The head coaches of the participating teams must submit to the NAIA Game Administrator the official roster of the 62 persons who will be dressed in uniform. Three copies of this roster should be presented to the Game Administrator at the pre-game meeting the evening prior to the National Championship game.

Playing Rules

The official [2026 NCAA Football Rule Book](#) are followed during all Football Championship Series games.

All games in the NAIA Football Championship Series will be played on fields with goal posts 18 feet-6 inches apart and where 25-second clocks are used.

Practice Schedule

The NAIA Game Administrator, after consultation with the Athletics Director of the host institution and the traveling team's head football coach, shall establish the practice schedule for the traveling team at the site of the home institution.

As a general rule, practice is not permitted on the game field. If the host institution agrees to allow the visiting team to practice on the game field, both teams may do so. Fair and equal practice time on the game field should be given to both teams. The Game Administrator will assist in making this decision prior to the arrival of the two teams.

Pre-Game Meeting

A pre-game meeting is scheduled by the NAIA Game Administrator on the day before the game at approximately 6:30 PM. This meeting is to be conducted in person at the host institution.

The following personnel are required to attend the pre-game meeting:

- NAIA Game Administrator
- NAIA Game Committeeman
- Head Coaches from both teams
- Game Officials
- Public Address Announcer
- Game Communications Director
- Back-up Clock Operator
- Representative from chain crew
- Athletic Trainers/Medical Personnel
- Television Director (where applicable)

The NAIA Game Administrator should address the following items at the pre-game meeting:

- Team introductions
- Awards presentations
- Miscellaneous administrative duties

The Game Committeeman should address the following items at the pre-game meeting:

- Uniform colors for the teams – Visiting team in white; Home team in dark color
- Footballs to be used by both teams
- Locker room assignments
- Team benches – Which side of the field each are located
- Pre-game warmup procedures

- Pre-game and halftime agendas
- Field phones
- Tie-Break Plan

The Referee should address the following items at the pre-game meeting:

- Introduce his crew by position
- Identify team captains for each team
- Discuss overtime rules if needed
- Give interpretations as needed

Pre-Game Schedule

The following time schedule should be followed for all Football Championship Series games –

The two teams should be off the playing field no later than 20 minutes prior to game time and should re-enter the field no later than 15 minutes prior to game time.

The public address announcer should begin opening remarks 20 minutes prior to game time. The opening remarks should last approximately two minutes –

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to (name of stadium, city, campus, etc.) for the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Football Championship Series _____ round game between _____ and _____. (Visiting team) enters the contest with a record of ____ and is ranked ____ nationally. (Visiting team) is making their ____ appearance in the Football Championships Series. (Home team) enters the contest with a record of ____ and is ranked ____ nationally. (Home team) is making their ____ appearance in the Football Championship Series.

At 18 minutes prior to game time, the public address announcer should recognize distinguished guests (where applicable).

- The Chief Executive Officers of the participating institutions
- The Directors of Athletics of the participating institutions
- Dignitaries from state government (governor, etc.)
- Conference Commissioners in attendance
- NAIA Game Administrator
- NAIA Game Committeeman

At 15 minutes prior to game time, public address announcer should begin team introductions – **Teams do not have to be on the field.**

- Introductions should be made at this time. If both teams are on the field, introductions should be made alternately, and in numerical order, starting with

the lowest numbered player on the visiting team, then the lowest numbered player on the home team. All 62 players should be introduced in this manner.

- Introductions of team members and coaches should last approximately nine minutes.

At six-plus minutes (6:30) prior to game time, the National Anthem should be played. If the band is performing the National Anthem on the field, proper time should be allotted for the band to begin the anthem at the scheduled time and for it to march off the field at the conclusion.

The game officials should be introduced by name and position. In addition, the name of the conference and the Assignor of Officials should also be recognized. Recognizing the officials and the result of the coin toss should be done immediately before kick-off.

Radio Policies

The radio policy for all Football Championship Series games shall be as follows –

All requests for broadcasting of any game must be directed in advance to the host institution's Sports Information Director for permission to originate.

Broadcasting space will be assigned as facilities permit.

Radio, Television, Web Blogging – The broadcast of any Football Championship Series games is governed by NAIA broadcast policies as printed in the NAIA Policy Handbook. This includes audio broadcasts, video broadcasts and web-blogging through conventional outlets and new media avenues.

Rights Fees – Football Championship Series and National Championship Game –

	RADIO	TELEVISION
Commercial	\$200 per game + \$75 per*	\$500/game/station (live) \$250/game/station (delayed)
Non- Commercial	\$150 per game + \$50 per*	\$250/game/station (live or delayed)

**Extra charge associated with any additional radio stations that pick up your school's feed. This does not include a team that posts/advertises the internet broadcast of the opponent.*

For information relative to these policies, please contact Steve Wilson - swilson@naia.org.

All rights fees must be made payable to the host institution before the broadcast.

All necessary lines must be requested and paid for by the originating station. The construction of any facilities and any other product cost shall be the sole responsibility of the originating station.

Sports Information/Programs

The NAIA Athletics Communications Department will request information from institutional Sports Information Directors whose teams are in contention for FCS berths. Information requested will include general facts on the institution, head coach information, season highlights, website information and a 62-player numerical roster.

Scouting of Opponents

For the purposes of film exchange during the FCS, the following schedule shall apply:

- First Round – All 2026 regular-season games.
- Second Round – All 2026 regular-season games and a team's First Round game (if applicable).
- Quarterfinals – All 2026 regular-season games and a team's First and/or Second Round game.
- Semifinals – All 2026 regular-season games and a team's First and/or Second Round and Quarterfinal game.
- Championship – All 2026 regular-season games and all three/four rounds of a team's FCS games.

Game programs, statistics, etc., should be excluded in the film/videotape exchange.

Each team will exchange video of EVERY game from the 2026 regular-season for scouting purposes with their First or Second Round opponent. Scouting in person by any coach, representative or agent of another FCS game is prohibited. The exchange of information or additional videos with other coaches is considered unethical and violators will be reprimanded.

In subsequent rounds of the Football Championship Series, teams are required to exchange EVERY game of the 2026 regular-season with their upcoming opponent, as well as all FCS games they have participated in to that point.

Hudl Video Uploading – The home team’s Video Coordinator is responsible for uploading the game video to the Hudl Video Exchange program by 12 PM (CT) each Sunday during the FCS.

Security

Institutions hosting a Football Championship Series game should provide adequate security for the fans, student-athletes and officials. There must be a minimum of two security personnel on each side of the playing field, including one at each end of the team box and one at each end zone. Spectators shall always remain in the specified ticketed seating area (including pre-game and post-game). Officials should have an escort to and from the field during halftime and post-game.

Souvenir Sales

The name, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and 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 Football Championship Series, the host institution is awarded all rights and privileges in using the NAIA name, initials and marks to promote and market the NAIA Football Championship Series. Such use is restricted in the following areas, which require written approval by the NAIA licensing director –

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

Merchandise featuring the NAIA name or marks for commercial sale or promotional give-away shall be purchased through the NAIA or an approved NAIA vendor. The host site shall prohibit all souvenir sales and promotional giveaways at championship headquarters and/or playing site that have not been approved by the NAIA licensing director, including the sale of or free distribution of competing products. To order NAIA Football Championships Series merchandise, please check out [Fine Designs](#).

Sponsorships

Corporations with business interests beyond the local area of the Football Championship Series game should not be solicited for financial support without the prior approval of the NAIA Marketing Department. Furthermore, no businesses or corporations should be identified or receive recognition as a title sponsor of a Football Championship Series game without prior approval of the NAIA Marketing Department.

Participating institutions are encouraged to secure local corporate sponsorship for all Football Championship Series games to ensure a profitable experience.

Stadium Seating

It is recommended that all permanent seats in the stadium be marked for reserved seating (section, row and seat number).

A stadium seating diagram indicating the number of seats available for sale in all sections of the stadium shall be submitted with the host institution questionnaire required from all contending teams prior to team selection.

Television Policies

Policies & Procedures

- The NAIA owns television rights to all games of the 2026 NAIA Football Championship Series and may award "exclusive rights" to commercial or non-commercial stations in a particular market.
- Television broadcasts must not be simulcast/streamed to an online URL, smart phone app, or Roku/smart TV app outside of NAIA Network.
- All stations interested in producing a telecast from any game in the Football Championship Series must contact and receive permission from the NAIA Department of Athletics Communications.
- Television stations within a 200-mile radius of the site wishing to air a live or same-day telecast must adhere to the following restrictions –
- The NAIA will require that 5,000 tickets or 80-percent of the stadium's seating capacity (whichever is applicable) must be sold by noon Thursday of game week for a station to secure a telecast.
- A stadium's seating capacity will be determined by the NAIA.
- Television stations outside a 200-mile radius of the site wishing to air a live or same-day telecast will not be subject to the ticket sale restriction above.

General Information

- All necessary installation of lines, up-linking, satellite transmission, construction of any facilities, cost of talent and any other production costs shall be the sole financial responsibility of the originating station.
- Participating stations will agree to run 30-second promotional spots on the two institutions involved in the game, plus a 30-second promotional spot on the NAIA.
- See [NAIA Policy Handbook](#) for complete policy.

Tickets/Spectator Policy

An allotment of tickets for sale should be reserved for the participating institutions. The number of tickets designated for the traveling team's institution and the location of seating will be determined by the Game Administrator after consultation with both the host and traveling institution.

The traveling team's institution and fans should receive space in the stadium comparable to that provided for the host institution.

Uniforms

The host institution is designated as the home team and will wear dark colored jerseys. The visiting institution will wear light colored jerseys.

The NAIA Championship Manager or assigned Game Committeeman will contact each head coach during game week requesting uniform colors (helmets, jerseys and pants).

Team Arrival – National Championship Game

Both teams participating in the National Championship game MUST arrive to Fort Worth, Texas on the Thursday prior to the National Championship game. More details will be sent out to all teams in the NAIA FCS Semifinals.