

NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING THE BRACKET

There are three phases in the process:

- I. **Select** the 33 at-large teams;
- II. **Seed** the teams; and
- III. **Place** the teams into the championship bracket.

General Principles for Selection, Seeding and Bracketing

The basketball committee will abide by the following principles:

- A committee member ("member") shall not be present during discussions regarding the selection or seeding of a team the individual represents as an institutional or conference administrator.
- At no point in the process shall a member vote for a team the individual represents as an institutional or conference administrator.
- A member shall not answer questions about the team the individual represents, except for factual questions (e.g., dates of injuries, status of injured players). A conference administrator is permitted to answer general questions (i.e., relative strengths of teams within a conference) about teams in the conference the individual represents. An athletics administrator is permitted to discuss other teams in the individual's conference only when asked.
- All votes will be by secret ballot.
- The process for selecting the at-large teams, seeding the teams and placing the teams in the tournament bracket shall be conducted in the prescribed chronological order (e.g., selection, seeding and bracketing).
- Principles must be followed by the committee during selection, seeding and bracketing of the championship field. Selection, seeding and bracketing principles are not considered in priority order. All principles must be adhered to throughout each of the three processes. The committee will make every effort to apply "additional considerations", provided they do not cause a violation of the principles.

Among the resources available to the committee are complete box scores, game summaries and notes, various computer rankings, head-to-head results, chronological results, Division I results, non-conference results, home and away results, results in the last twelve games, rankings, polls and the coaches' regional advisory committee rankings.

The NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Principles and Procedures for Establishing the Bracket document is included in the comprehensive review of the Division I Women's Basketball Championship, conducted annually by the Division I Women's Basketball Committee. This document was revised and approved by the Division I Women's Basketball Committee, June 2008 and will be in effect for the 2009 championship.

I. Principles for Selecting At-Large Teams

The **committee shall select the 33 best teams** to fill the at-large berths.

There is no limit on the number of teams the committee may select from one conference.

Procedures for Selecting At-Large Teams

- Prior to selection weekend, each committee member will receive an "initial ballot" comprised of two columns listing all eligible Division I teams in alphabetical order.

Each committee member will submit the ballot by a designated time on the first full day of the selection meeting.

- In the first column, each committee member shall identify not more than 33 teams that, in that member's opinion, should **be at-large selections** in the tournament based upon play to date, regardless of whether the team could eventually represent its conference as the automatic qualifier.
- In the second column, each committee member shall identify all teams that **should receive consideration** for at-large berths. There is no minimum or maximum limit in the second column.
- A member need not vote for a team that has earned automatic qualification at the time the initial ballot is submitted.
- Any team receiving nine (9) or more of the eligible votes in Column 1 shall move into the tournament field as an at-large selection.
- The committee will form an "at-large nomination board" consisting of an alphabetical listing of all teams that:
 - Received more than one vote in either of the columns of the initial ballot but, did not receive enough votes to move onto the at-large board.
 - Did not receive more than one vote on the initial ballot, but was subsequently recommended by more than one member prior to closing initial nominations.
 - Won or shared the regular-season conference championship or conference divisional championship.

- The process for creating the initial "at-large nomination board" will then be closed.
- A team may be added to the at-large nomination board at any time provided it receives at least three eligible votes.
- A team may be removed from the nomination board if it receives a vote of seven eligible voters. Verbal nominations are permitted.

Remaining Ballots

- The committee will evaluate those teams on the at-large nomination board.
- Each committee member will submit a list of the best eight teams from the nomination board, not in rank order, to be added to the at-large field.
- The eight teams receiving the most votes comprise the next at-large ballot.
- Each committee member will "rank" the eight teams, using a cross country scoring system (e.g., first or best is valued at one point).
- The four teams receiving the fewest points shall be moved into the tournament field as an at-large selection. The other four teams will be held for the next ballot.
- The "list" eight, "rank" eight, "move" four process will be repeated until all at-large berths have been filled.
- If a team fails to move onto the at-large board for two consecutive at-large ballots, it shall be returned to the at-large nomination board.
- A team may be removed from the at-large field and returned to the at-large nomination board by a vote of seven eligible voters.

Additional Considerations

- At any time during the process, the chair may suggest that the committee begin reviewing teams that should be eliminated from the at-large nomination board. A team may be removed from consideration by a vote of seven eligible voters.
- The number of teams eligible to receive votes may be increased or decreased by the chair if circumstances warrant. Further, the chair has the option to revise the

number of teams to be moved onto the at-large board from four to two.

- At any time, the chair may call for a cross-country vote of all remaining teams on the at-large nomination board.
- At any time during the process of selecting the at-large teams, the committee may elect to begin seeding the teams.

II. Principles for Seeding of Teams

The committee will create an **s-curve** (i.e., rank of the teams 1 through 64) which is used as a reference to assess competitive balance across the four regions. Once the s-curve is finalized, it remains unchanged while placing the teams into the championship bracket.

The bracket-placement principles may preclude a team from being placed in its “true” seed, in accordance with the s-curve.

Procedures for Seeding Teams

- Each committee member will submit a list of the best eight teams, not in rank order, from teams that are in the tournament as automatic qualifiers or at-large selections.
- The eight teams receiving the most votes comprise the next s-curve ballot.
- Each committee member will “rank” the eight teams, using a cross country scoring system (e.g., first or best is valued at one point).
- The four teams receiving the fewest points shall be moved into the s-curve, in rank order. The other four teams will be held for the next ballot.
- The “list” eight, “rank” eight, “move” four in rank order process will be repeated until all teams have been seeded in the s-curve.
- After a team has been voted into the s-curve, it may be moved to a different position by a vote of seven eligible voters.
- The committee is not obligated to seed the lines in chronological order. For example, at any time, the committee may use the procedures to determine the fourth quadrant of teams in the s-curve.

III. Principles for Placing Teams into the Championship Bracket

The committee will attempt to achieve **relative balance in the bracket and provide comparable competition**, while abiding by the remaining principles. Balance does not mean equal. After all teams have been placed in the bracket, the committee will formally adopt the bracket.

- The committee will assign all four teams in each bracket “group” (seeds 1, 16, 8, 9), (seeds 4, 13, 5, 12), (seeds 2, 15, 7, 10), (seeds 3, 14, 6, 11) to the same first-/second-round site. The first-/second-round sites that feed into a regional site may be in different geographic areas from the regional.
- **No more than one team from a conference may be seeded in the same grouping of four** in line Nos. 1-4 in a region, unless a conference has five or more teams seeded in line Nos. 1-4. The other principles herein would apply in the exception case.
- There **shall not be more than two teams from a conference in one region** unless a ninth team is selected from a conference.
- **Conference teams shall not meet prior to the regional final** unless a ninth team is selected from a conference.
- Two teams from the same conference within the same region shall not be seeded together in either of the following groups: Line Nos. 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 16; or Line Nos. 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14 and 15.
- If the committee is unable to balance the bracket after exhausting all possible options, it has the flexibility to permit two teams from the same conference to meet each other after the first round, if the conference has more than five participants.
- All four teams on each seed line (No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, etc.) should be as equal as possible.
- **The committee will attempt to assign each team to the most geographically compatible regional and first-/second-round site, by order of the s-curve.** When multiple teams are a similar distance from a site, the team seeded higher in the s-curve will be assigned to the closest geographical proximity site.
- **If a team’s institution is serving as a first- and second-round host, the team will be assigned to the institution’s site.**

- For the **regional competition, a team may not be assigned to play in any arena in which it has played more than three regular-season games, not including conference post-season tournaments nor may a host institution's team be permitted to play at the site where the institution is hosting.** However, the team may play on the same days when the institution is hosting.
- A **team may be moved one bracket line from its true seed line** (e.g., from a No. 13 seed to a No. 12 seed) when it is placed in the bracket, if necessary to meet the principles.

Procedures for Placing Teams into the Championship Bracket

- Place the teams seeded 1-4 in each of the four regions pairing the No. 1 seed's region against the No. 4 seed's region and the No. 2 seed's region against the No. 3 seed's region. Place the Nos. 2, 3, 4 seeds in each region.
- After teams have been placed in Line Nos. 1-4, the committee may place teams in the following lines in any order: Line Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8; Line Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12, and Line Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 16.
- After each group of four teams is determined, check for conflicts with the principles for placing the teams into the bracket and determine the relative strengths of the regions by adding the "true" seed number in each region (e.g., original s-curve order). Generally, no more than five points should separate the lowest and highest total in Line Nos. 1-4.
- In bracket line Nos. 5 through 12, the committee will assign all four teams a bracket line number (i.e., five through twelve) rather than using the seed number. All teams on a given line will have the same numerical value.
- After all teams have been placed in the bracket and the bracket assignments have been checked to ensure that the principles have been met, the committee will formally adopt the bracket.

Additional Considerations

- If possible, **rematches of regular-season games should be avoided in the first- and second-rounds.**
- If possible, **rematches of previous years' tournament games should be avoided in the first- and second-rounds.**

- If possible, **teams from the same conference shall not be placed in the same region in Line Nos. 1-4.**
- The committee shall attempt to avoid moving a team or a conference out of its natural region or geographic area an inordinate number of times and will examine the previous three tournament brackets to determine the number of times a team or conference has been assigned out of its natural region.

Ratings Percentage Index (RPI)

The Rating Percentage Index (RPI) was created in 1981 to provide supplemental data for the Division I Men's Basketball Committee in its evaluation of teams for at-large selection and seeding of the championship bracket. The Division I Women's Basketball Committee adopted the RPI in 1984.

The RPI is intended to be used as one of many valuable resources provided to the committee in the selection, seeding and bracketing process. It never should be considered anything but an additional evaluation tool. No computer program that is based on pure numbers can take into account subjective concepts (e.g., how well a team is playing down the stretch, what the loss or return or a top player means to a team or how emotional a specific conference game may be).

Several independent elements are combined to produce the RPI. These elements are part of the statistical information that can be utilized by each member in an objective manner.

Each committee member independently evaluates a vast pool of information available during the process to develop individual preferences. It is these opinions, developed after many hours of personal observations (e.g., games watched), review of regional rankings submitted by coaches, discussion with coaches, directors of athletics senior woman administrators, commissioners and review and comparison of objective data that dictate how each individual ultimately will vote on all issues related to the selection, seeding and bracketing process.

While the various elements of the RPI are important in the evaluation process, the tournament bracket each year is based on the subjectivity of each individual committee member to select the best at-large teams available and to create a nationally-balanced championship.

S-CURVE

LINE NO.

1.	2.	3.	4.	1
8.	7.	6.	5.	2
9.	10.	11.	12.	3
16.	15.	14.	13.	4
17.	18.	19.	20.	5
24.	23.	22.	21.	6
25.	26.	27.	28.	7
32.	31.	30.	29.	8
33.	34.	35.	36.	9
40.	39.	38.	37.	10
41.	42.	43.	44.	11
48.	47.	46.	45.	12
49.	50.	51.	52.	13
56.	55.	54.	53.	14
57.	58.	59.	60.	15
64.	63.	62.	61.	16