

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

There are three phases in the process:

- I. **Select** the 34 best at-large teams;
- II. **Seed** the teams; and
- III. **Place** the teams into the championship bracket.

<b>General Principles for Selection, Seeding and Bracketing</b>
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The basketball committee will abide by the following principles:

At no point in the process shall a member vote for a team the individual represents as an athletics director or commissioner.

A member shall not be present during discussions regarding the selection or seeding of a team the individual represents as an athletics director or commissioner.

An athletics director shall not answer questions about the team the individual represents, except for factual questions (e.g., dates of injuries, status of injured players).

An athletics director is permitted to discuss other teams in the individual's conference only when asked.

A commissioner is permitted to answer general questions (i.e. relative strengths of teams within a conference) about teams in the conference the individual represents.

When 24 or fewer teams remain in the pool of teams (during the selection and seeding processes), a member may not participate in "list X teams" votes if a team he or she represents as a commissioner or athletics director is included. An athletics director or commissioner may not participate in cross-country votes (i.e., ballots where the members rank a selected number of teams) that involve a team the individual represents.

When 20 or more teams are under consideration in "list X teams" ballots, each member shall list eight.

When 14 to 19 teams are under consideration, each member shall list six.

When 13 or fewer teams are under consideration, each member shall list four.

All votes will be by secret ballot.

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

*The Principles and Procedures are part of a comprehensive annual review of the Division I Men's Basketball Championship conducted from the conclusion of that year's championship through July 1. This document was revised and approved by the Division I Men's Basketball Committee, Summer 2006.*

## I. Principles for Selecting At-Large Teams

The committee shall select the 34 best teams to fill the at-large berths, regardless of conference affiliation.

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

### Procedures for Selecting At-Large Teams

#### First Ballot

1. Prior to selection weekend, each committee member will receive one ballot with two columns listing all eligible Division I teams in alphabetical order.

Each committee member will submit the ballot by a designated time Thursday evening of selection weekend.

- a. In the first column, each committee member shall identify not more than 34 teams that, in that member's opinion, should **be at-large selections** in the tournament based upon play to date, even if they could eventually represent conferences as automatic qualifiers.
  - b. In the second column, each committee member shall identify all other teams that **should receive consideration** for at-large berths. There is no minimum or maximum limit in the second column.
2. A member need not vote for a team that has earned automatic qualification at the time the ballots are submitted.
  3. Any team receiving all but two of the eligible votes in Column 1 shall move into the tournament field as an at-large selection.
  4. The committee will form an "at-large nomination board" consisting of an alphabetical listing of all teams that:
    - a. Received more than one vote in either of the initial ballot's columns but did not receive enough votes to move into the tournament as at at-large team;

- b. Did not receive more than one vote in the initial balloting, but subsequently was recommended by more than one member prior to closing initial nominations, or

- c. Won or shared the regular-season conference championship or conference divisional championship.

5. The process for creating the initial "at-large nomination board" will then be closed.

A team may be added to the nomination board at any time providing it receives at least three votes. A team may be removed from the nomination board if it receives all but two of the eligible votes. Verbal nominations are permitted.

#### Remaining Ballots

1. The committee will begin evaluating those teams on the at-large nomination board.
2. Each committee member will submit a list of eight teams to be added to the at-large field.
3. Those teams receiving all but two of the eligible votes shall be added to the at-large field.
4. From those teams not moving to the at-large field in Step No. 3, the top four vote-getters will be held for the next ballot.
5. Each committee member will submit a listing of eight teams to be considered in the next at-large ballot. Those teams receiving the most votes will be included with the teams held over from Step No. 4 to provide a pool of eight teams for the next at-large ballot.
6. Committee members then rank the eight teams, using a cross-country scoring system (i.e., the best team is valued at one point).
7. The four teams receiving the fewest points shall be added to the at-large field. The other four teams will be held for the next ballot.
8. Steps No. 5, 6 and 7 will be repeated until all at-large berths are filled.

9. If a team fails to be included among the four teams receiving the fewest points (Step No. 7) for two consecutive at-large ballots, it shall be returned to the nomination board.
10. A team may be removed from the at-large field by a vote of all but two of the eligible votes. Such a team would be returned to the nomination board.
11. At any time during the process, the chair may suggest that the committee begin reviewing teams that should be eliminated from consideration. The same voting procedures will be used.
12. At any time during the process of selecting the at-large teams, the committee may elect to begin seeding the teams. This will permit the committee to move ahead and still consider the results of games played during selection weekend.
13. At any time during the process, the chair may call for a cross-country vote of the teams remaining.
14. 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 from four to two to be moved into at-large berths per Procedure No. 7.

## **II. Principles for Seeding of Teams**

The committee will create a "seed list" (i.e. rank of the teams 1 through 65) which is used as a reference to ensure balance. Once the "seed list" is finalized, it remains unchanged throughout the committee's deliberations in placing the teams into the championship bracket.

The bracket-placement principles adopted by the committee may preclude a team from being placed in its "true" seed (in accordance with the "seed list").

### **Procedures for Seeding the Teams**

1. Each committee member lists the best eight teams, not ranked in order, from teams that are in the tournament as automatic qualifiers or at-large selections.

2. Committee members rank the top eight vote-getters from No. 1, using a cross-country scoring system.
3. The four institutions receiving the fewest points are moved into the seed list in ascending order of vote total.
4. The remaining four teams are held for the next cross-country ballot.
5. Each committee member lists four additional teams from the automatic qualification and/or at-large group. The top four vote-getters will join the four remaining teams on the next cross-country ballot.
6. Committee members rank the eight teams from Steps No. 4 and No. 5, using a cross-country scoring system.
7. The four teams receiving the fewest points are moved into the seed list in ascending order.
8. Steps No. 4, 5, 6 and 7 are repeated until all the teams are seeded, 1 through 65, for the seed list.
9. After a team has been voted into the seed list, it may be moved to a different position by a vote of all but two of the eligible voters.
10. 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 seed list.

## **III. Principles for Placing Teams into Championship Bracket**

1. A top priority for the committee is to balance the bracket in each region across the country.
2. The teams seeded 64 and 65 will compete in an opening-round game the week of the first round. The winner of the opening-round game will play as a No. 16 seed in the first round at a Friday-Sunday first-round site to be determined by the committee during selection weekend.
3. The committee will assign all four teams in each 'pod' (seeds 1, 16, 8, 9), (4, 13, 5, 12), (2, 15, 7, 10), (3, 14, 6, 11) to the same first-/second-round site. There will be two

'pods' at each first-/second-round site. The first-/second-round sites that feed into a regional site may be in different geographic areas from the regional. Also, the two 'pods' at a first-/second-round site may feed into different regional sites.

4. Sixteen levels are established (i.e., the seeds, 1 through 16) in the bracket that transcend each of the four regions, permitting evaluation of four teams simultaneously on the same level.
5. Each region is divided into four sections with four levels in each, permitting the evaluation of four different sections within each region against the complementing sections in every other region.
6. All four teams on each seed line (No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, etc.) should be as equal as possible.
7. Teams will remain in or as close to their areas of natural interest as possible. A team moved out of its natural area will be placed in the next closest region when possible.

If two teams from the same natural region are in contention for the same bracket position, the team ranked higher in the seed list shall remain in its natural region.

8. A team will not be permitted to play in any arena in which it has played more than three regular-season games, not including conference post-season tournaments.
9. A host institution's team shall not 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.
10. Each of the first three teams selected from a conference shall be placed in different regions.
11. No more than one team from a conference may be seeded in the same grouping of four (in line Nos. 1-4 and 13-16) in a region. (Note: The only possible exception would occur if a conference has five or more teams seeded in line Nos. 1-4. The other principles herein would apply in the exception case.)

12. In lines No. 5-12, two teams from the same conference may be placed in the same group of four.

13. Conference teams shall not meet each other prior to the regional final unless a ninth team is selected from a conference. Two teams from the same conference within the same region, therefore, shall not be seeded together in either of the following groups: Nos. 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 16; or Nos. 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14 and 15.

14. There shall not be more than two teams from a conference in one region unless a ninth team is selected from a conference.

15. To ensure equitable competitive opportunities, the committee shall not place teams seeded on the first five lines at a potential "home-crowd disadvantage" in the first round.

16. An institution 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.

17. If the committee is unable to reconcile the bracket after exhausting all possible options, it has the flexibility to waive principle No. 13 to permit two teams from the same conference to meet each other after the first round, if the conference has more than five participants.

#### **Additional Considerations**

1. If possible, rematches of regular-season games should be avoided in the first and second rounds.
2. If possible, rematches of previous years' tournament games should be avoided in the first and second rounds.
3. The committee will examine the previous five tournament brackets to determine the number of times a particular team or conference has been moved out of its natural region. The committee shall attempt to avoid moving a team or conference out of its natural region or geographic area an inordinate number of times.

### **Procedures for Placing the Teams into the Championship Bracket.**

1. Place the four "number 1 seed" teams seeded 1 through 4 in each of the four regions, then determine the Final Four semifinals pairings, making best effort to pair the top No. 1 seed's region against the fourth No. 1 seed's region and the second No. 1 seed's region against the third No. 1 seed's region.
2. Place the No. 2 seeds in each region.
3. Place the No. 3 seeds in each region.
4. Place the No. 4 seeds in each region.
5. After each group of four teams is determined, check for conflicts with the principles for placing the teams into the bracket.
6. After the top four lines have been assigned, determine the relative strengths of the regions by adding the "true" seed numbers in each region to determine if any severe numerical imbalance has been created.
7. After the committee has placed the top four teams in each region, the committee will assign those teams (and, therefore, all teams in their bracketing sequence—e.g., seeds 1, 8, 9, 16) to first-/second-round sites.

The committee will attempt to assign each to the most geographically compatible first-/second-round site, proceeding in order of the seed list. When multiple teams are a similar distance from a site, generally the team with the higher seed-list ranking will be assigned to the site.

8. Place seeds No. 13, 14, 15 and 16 in the bracket per the principles.
9. Repeat steps No. 5, 6 and 7.
10. In each 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-list number. All teams on a given line, therefore, will have the same numerical value. The committee will evaluate each region to ensure that no region includes

all of the highest or lowest seeds from the seed list on each line within a region's group of four. Generally, no more than five points should separate the lowest and highest total.

11. Place seeds No. 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the bracket per the principles.
12. Repeat Steps No. 5, 7 and 10.
13. Place seeds No. 9, 10, 11 and 12 in the bracket per the principles.
14. Repeat Steps No. 5, 7 and 10.
15. Review the groups of fours to ensure adherence to the principles for seeding.
16. Review the principles (Section III) for placing teams in the championship bracket.

### **Rating 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 RPI is intended to be used as one of many resources used by the committee in the selection, seeding and bracketing process. It never should be considered anything but an additional evaluation tool. Computer models cannot accurately evaluate qualitative factors such as games missed by key players or coaches, travel difficulties, a team's performance in the last ten games, the emotional effects of specific games, etc.

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

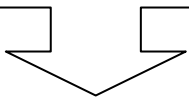
Each committee member independently evaluates a vast pool of information available during the process to develop individual preferences. It is these qualitative, quantitative and subjective opinions--developed after many hours of personal observations, discussion with coaches, directors of athletics and 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.

**SEED LIST**

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

65.



The teams seeded 64 and 65 will compete in an opening-round game the week of the first round. The winner of the opening-round game will play as a No. 16 seed in the first round at a Friday-Sunday first-round site to be determined by the committee during selection weekend.

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