

Division III National Collegiate Club Championship (Potential)
Meeting held Monday, October 29, 2018 6:00PM EDT

Attending: Tom Tracey, Assistant Commissioner; (Mid-Atlantic-1) Carnegie Mellon University, Aru Rajeevan and Torey Chen; (New York-1) New York University, Julie Kang; (Southeast-1) Emory University, Alison Gartley; (Midwest-1) Washington University in Saint Louis, David Jimenez and Jennie Greenstein; (New England-2) Middlebury College, Brian Goodwin; Wesleyan University, Devon Cooper; (Heartland-1) Carleton College, Rebekah Kissel; (North Atlantic-2) MIT, Vivian Zhang; Tufts University, Emily Grussing, Sophie Anderson and Kathleen Coogan (7 of 8 divisions)

The purpose of this call was to discuss the possibility of starting a Division III Women's National Collegiate Club Championship and to see the interest of starting the Spring of 2019. The following are the divisions that currently include at least one DIII program:

Mid-Atlantic (1-Carnegie Mellon)
New York (1-NYU)
Sierra Pacific (1-UC Santa Cruz)
Southeast (1-Emory)
Midwest (2-WashU in St. Louis, Calvin)
New England (3 – Middlebury, Wesleyan, Williams)
Heartland (5-Augustana, Carleton, Grinnell, Knox, St. Mary's)
North Atlantic (6-Bates, Bowdoin, MIT, Wellesley, Tufts, Coast Guard)

Every division had representation on the call except the Sierra Pacific. For discussion purposes, all schools received the following proposal co-sponsored by Washington University in St. Louis and New York University:

Proposal: *Women's D-III Club Championship*

Sponsors: *Washington University in St. Louis, New York University*

Purpose: *To establish a women's Division III Club Championship*

Rational: *Women's water polo teams at Division-III level schools are at a competitive disadvantage within the Collegiate Water Polo Association (CPWA). While a small number of schools have enjoyed recent success, the majority are not able to compete at the same level as the Division-I schools. D-I schools tend to attract more athletes than a D-III school may. D-I schools also have an increased ability to recruit athletes while D-III schools do not have that opportunity. Recent by-law changes preventing club athletes from receiving an athletic scholarship may help even out the playing field some, but D-I schools will still hold a recruiting advantage. A number of D-I schools also offer varsity options, so their club athletes have an opportunity to graduate to a varsity level and receive athletic scholarships, a situation that is not possible at any current D-III school.*

To increase the competitive opportunities for D-III schools, a D-III Women's Club Championship should be formed. This will give schools who may not be able to overcome D-I advantages a chance to compete against fellow D-III schools who are more likely to provide a similar level of competition. In addition, this will bring women's

water polo within the CWPA in line with the men's championship opportunities. Presently, the men have 29 schools competing for a spot in their 8 team tournament. On the women's side, we currently have 19 D-III level schools across 8 conferences; the number of available teams supports the idea that a championship can be held.

A D-III Club Championship could also lead to additional D-III schools starting a club program. By offering a competition path against similar schools vs. D-I schools, teams may form knowing they have something to play for, and knowing they would play against teams that face the same situations and struggles they do. The CWPA could also use this to market water polo to more D-III schools, increasing their overall membership; there are presently 8 CWPA members offering a D-III men's club team but no women's team, giving us an immediate and easy target for membership increases.

Financial Impact: *Schools qualifying for the tournament will be expected to pay tournament fees. Tournament fees cover the cost for officials during the championship. There will be no impact to league dues and to the non D-III members.*

After reviewing the submitted proposal with the teams, the Assistant Commissioner stated the league office was in support of this as we believed it was a positive addition for the student-athletes. Discussion turned to potential rules, dates and locations for the championship.

Teams unanimously agreed the highest finishing DIII school out of a division, as well as the hosting institution, will have the right to attend DIII Nationals. Teams must declare at the start of the season their intent to attend the championship. If a division decides not to participate, and for the purpose of having at least 6-8 team championship field, the runner-up in the North Atlantic Division will be invited followed by the runner-up of the Heartland Division then the New England Division. This decision was based on the total number of DIII schools currently participating in those three divisions. This is the format for the 2019 championship and will be revisited at the end of the season.

Teams voted unanimously to randomly seed the championship with the following two stipulations:

1. The Host institution will take the final position of the tournament unless they won their division. In this case, the host will take the higher random seed and the division runner-up will take the final position.
2. No division will play another institution from the same division in the first round. In this case, the seed for the second team selected will be randomly drawn again.

Teams voted 5-2 in favor of April 27-28 for the championship date. The Assistant Commissioner noted that there will be a proposal from several teams that will discuss a date rotation for the Women's National Collegiate Club Championship between the first and second full weekends of May. This could have an impact on the future date of DIII Nationals but we will move forward with the weekend of April 27-28 as the first option (backup date May 4-5). The number of days of the event will be determined by the number of teams participating but the Assistant Commissioner believes it will be similar to the Men's DIII Nationals (two days of competition).

The next topic was location. Both Wesleyan and Emory expressed interest in hosting. Teams voted 6-1 with Wesleyan as their first preference and Emory as the backup location. Both schools agreed to check pool availability for the weekend of April 27-28 and May 4-5 providing an update by November 15th.

After the above discussion was completed, teams voted unanimously in favor of starting in the Spring of 2019. This meant the seven division, along with the host institution, would potentially be represented in the inaugural year for the Women's Division III National Collegiate Club Championship. Teams would not have to confirm their intent until February 1st.

The Assistant Commissioner thanked both Washington University in St. Louis and New York University for submitting the proposal as well as all the teams for taking the time to participate on the call.