



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR
COLLEGIATE OFFICIATING
2021-26

COLLEGE SPORTS NEED MORE OFFICIALS

DIII IS TAKING THE LEAD...

The Division III Commissioners Association (DIIICA) believes that officiating is at a crisis level due to a declining pool affected by the advancing age of current officials and the lack of interest or incentive among younger populations to enter or remain in the field. To address this growing concern, the DIIICA embarked on a year-long assessment of collegiate officiating that resulted in a report entitled: *DIIICA 2020 Strategic Analysis of the State of Collegiate Officiating*.

The development of the 2021–26 DIIICA Strategic Plan for Collegiate Officiating was driven by data analysis, stakeholder engagement and a collaborative approach to influencing the future of collegiate officiating. The Strategic Plan is guided by an aspirational vision to elevate officiating as a respected and integral component of Division III athletics, and rests on foundational goals of Respect, Diversity & Inclusion, Integrity and Excellence.

The Strategic Plan for Collegiate Officiating reflects the collective commitment of the Division III Commissioners to address the cultural and systemic issues facing collegiate officiating. It has never been more important than today to identify goals and strategies that will influence the future state of officiating for Division III and provide quality officiating for a safe and fair competitive environment that our student-athletes deserve.

DISCOVER. DEVELOP. DEDICATE.

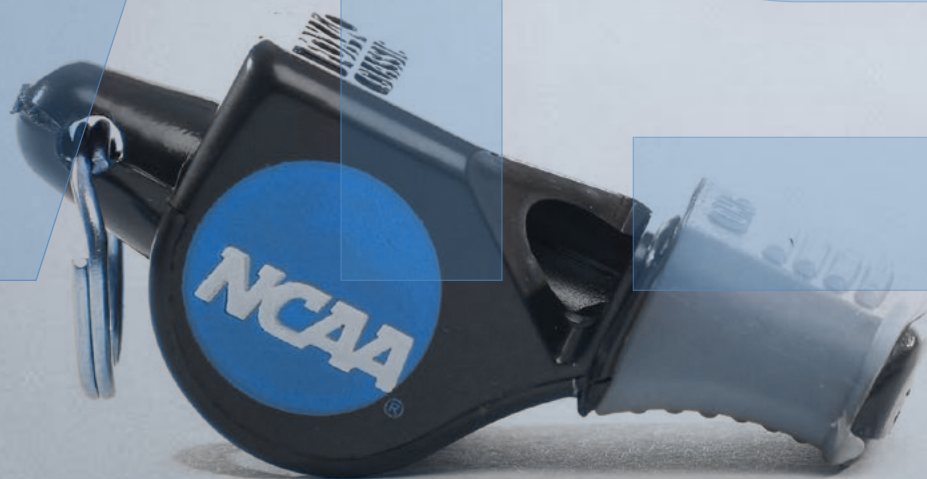
STATEMENT OF **PURPOSE**

To strategically address the cultural and systemic issues identified in the DIIICA 2020 Strategic Analysis of the State of Collegiate Officiating and engage stakeholders in a collaborative approach to influence the future of collegiate officiating.



OUR **FUTURE**

Elevate officiating as a respected and integral component of the Division III athletics experience through a cross-divisional commitment to broad-based, diverse recruitment along with comprehensive strategies for education and retention.



VALUES

The following values statements are the standards of behavior that drive the DIII officiating culture and guide decision-making:

RESPECT

Foster appreciation for the role of officiating within intercollegiate athletics and advance a culture of positive sporting behavior.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Ensure that officiating intentionally reflects the diverse community it serves and is welcoming and supportive of all.

INTEGRITY

Cultivate an officiating environment that emphasizes fairness and accountability.

EXCELLENCE

Instill an expectation of exemplary communication, dedication to continuous improvement and a commitment to consistent and accurate performance.





PILLARS

The DIIICA Strategic Plan for Collegiate Officiating centers on five interrelated focus areas. These focus areas are anchored within the vision and values to create a dynamic approach that will elevate officiating as a respected and integral component of the DIII Experience.

1. PARTNERSHIPS

Focus on NCAA cross-divisional initiatives, pre-NCAA recruitment, and other collaborations that will advance DIII officiating.

2. RECRUITMENT TO NCAA DIVISION III

Target officials prepared or preparing for entry to NCAA officiating.

3. ADVANCEMENT PATHWAY

Clarify pathway, onboarding, education, training, evaluation, mentoring, assigning, officials' costs and fees, and other retention strategies.

4. CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Address treatment, sporting behavior, and officiating community.

5. ADMINISTRATION

Centralize leadership and management, and support conference level engagement.



PARTNERSHIPS

Focused on NCAA cross-divisional initiatives, pre-NCAA recruitment, and other collaborations that will advance DIII officiating.

GOALS

1. Collaborate across NCAA divisions to recruit and retain officials.
2. Partner with coaches' associations to collaborate on humanizing officiating, recruiting officials, and to help officiating to be seen as integral to safe and fair competition.
3. Analyze the benefits of a regional approach to training and developing coordinators/assignors and to creating assigning alliances that will maximize the development of officials across conferences and divisions.
4. Identify allies and facilitate partnerships to cultivate resources and financial support (e.g., NGBs, NFHS, NCAA Grant Program).
5. Create a National Educational Officiating Alliance with representatives from educational entities such as NFHS, NJCAA, NAIA and NIRSA to develop strategies to recruit officials into the avocation, improve the environment of officiating and strengthen the pathway for officials.
6. Develop relationships with officials' associations (e.g., sport-specific organizations, NASO) and individual sport NGBs to improve communication and engage officials to be part of the solutions to enhance recruitment, retention and diversity initiatives and to improve the culture of officiating.





RECRUITMENT TO NCAA DIV. III

Target officials prepared or preparing for entry to NCAA officiating.

GOALS

1. Create a national campaign with regional activation to grow the pool of officials across all sports with a strong emphasis on the core areas of diversity such as age, gender and race/ethnicity.
2. Create and promote pathways to NCAA DIII officiating to and from high school and youth sports with strong NGB officiating programs.
3. Create regional strategies to support coordinator/assignor camps and clinics as well as other education and training opportunities that involve engagement with high school associations, NIRSA, NJCAA and NAIA officials.
4. Increase the number of qualified officials using sport-specific strategies with priority given to sports that regularly reschedule contests due to a lack of officials.
5. Further evaluate the barriers to entering NCAA DIII officiating by sport and create mitigation strategies to alleviate the impact.



ADVANCEMENT PATHWAY

Clarify pathway, education, training, evaluation, mentoring, assigning, officials' costs and other retention strategies.

GOALS

1. Create and articulate the position of DIII officiating within the advancement pathway as a primary network which provides focused opportunity for education, supervised training, experience and exposure to officials desiring to officiate NCAA sport (Discover. Develop. Dedicate.).
2. Create a best practices model for comprehensive education, training and development for quality and consistent officiating.
3. Further identify and mitigate retention barriers to increase tenure of officials and decrease dropout rates.
4. Strategically advance talented officials at a thoughtful and intentional pace along the pathway from start of the avocation to entering the NCAA.
5. Set standards and expectations for observation and evaluation and develop creative strategies to increase frequency and equitable application of same.
6. Outline and strategically communicate an official's advancement pathway by sport prior to and within NCAA officiating to assist with recruitment and retention.



CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Address treatment, sporting behavior and officiating community.

GOALS

1. Position officiating as an integral part of collegiate athletic competition through strategies that communicate the human side of officiating and illustrate the important role officials play in the student-athlete experience as a fundamental, vital part of fair and safe competition.
2. Improve sporting behavior by encouraging a respectful and inclusive climate during competition and fostering mutual appreciation off the field of play.
3. Create a climate surrounding officiating that promotes safety, diversity, inclusion and equity among officials and coordinators/assignors.
4. Broadly communicate best practices on game-day treatment of officials including institutional hospitality provided (e.g., in-event hydration, access to an athletic training facility, secure parking).
5. Encourage demonstration of appreciation for officials and share best practices from institutions, conferences and sport cultures.
6. Create a trusted evaluation tool for officials to assess their institutional experience that can be shared in aggregate with athletic directors, coordinators/assignors and conference commissioners.





ADMINISTRATION

Centralize leadership/management and support conference-level engagement.

GOALS

1. Establish national oversight for NCAA Division III officiating.
2. Create a national registry for NCAA DIII officials and their coordinators/assignors that requires registration and provides basic onboarding education and other critical resources.
3. Engage conferences to provide onboarding, training, education, evaluation and succession planning for coordinators/assignors and increase accountability to mitigate strongholds or other barriers to officials' advancement.
4. Evaluate regional competitiveness of officiating fees and fee structure (including travel reimbursement) by sport and provide data to conference commissioners regarding investments needed to retain quality officials.
5. Create centralized sport-specific national standards for education and evaluation of officials by conference coordinators/assignors.



**INTERESTED IN OFFICIATING?
PLEASE CONTACT OUR CONFERENCE COMMISSIONERS**

www.diiica.org