



NCAA to relocate championships from North Carolina for 2016-17

September 12, 2016 6:10pm

Based on the NCAA's commitment to fairness and inclusion, the Association will relocate all seven previously awarded championship events from North Carolina during the 2016-17 academic year. The NCAA Board of Governors made this decision because of the cumulative actions taken by the state concerning civil rights protections.

In its decision Monday, the Board of Governors emphasized that NCAA championships and events must promote an inclusive atmosphere for all college athletes, coaches, administrators and fans. Current North Carolina state laws make it challenging to guarantee that host communities can help deliver on that commitment if NCAA events remained in the state, the board said.

"Fairness is about more than the opportunity to participate in college sports, or even compete for championships," said Mark Emmert, NCAA president. "We believe in providing a safe and respectful environment at our events and are committed to providing the best experience possible for college athletes, fans and everyone taking part in our championships."

The board stressed that the dynamic in North Carolina is different from that of other states because of at least four specific factors:

- North Carolina laws invalidate any local law that treats sexual orientation as a protected class or has a purpose to prevent discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender individuals.
- North Carolina has the only statewide law that makes it unlawful to use a restroom different from the gender on one's birth certificate, regardless of gender identity.
- North Carolina law provides legal protections for government officials to refuse services to the LGBT community.
- Five states plus numerous cities prohibit travel to North Carolina for public employees and representatives of public institutions, which could include student-athletes and campus athletics staff. These states are New York, Minnesota, Washington, Vermont and Connecticut.

"As representatives of all three divisions, the Board of Governors must advance college sports through policies that resolve core issues affecting student-athletes and administrators," said G.P.

“Bud” Peterson, Board of Governors chair and Georgia Institute of Technology president. “This decision is consistent with the NCAA's long-standing core values of inclusion, student-athlete well-being and creating a culture of fairness.”

These seven championship events will be relocated from North Carolina for 2016-17:

- 2016 Division I Women’s Soccer Championship, College Cup (Cary), Dec. 2 and 4.
- 2016 Division III Men’s and Women’s Soccer Championships (Greensboro), Dec. 2 and 3.
- 2017 Division I Men’s Basketball Championship, first/second rounds (Greensboro), March 17 and 19.
- 2017 Division I Women’s Golf Championships, regional (Greenville), May 8-10.
- 2017 Division III Men’s and Women’s Tennis Championships (Cary), May 22-27.
- 2017 Division I Women’s Lacrosse Championship (Cary), May 26 and 28.
- 2017 Division II Baseball Championship (Cary), May 27-June 3.

Emmert said the NCAA will determine the new locations for these championships soon.

“The NCAA Constitution clearly states our values of inclusion and gender equity, along with the membership’s expectation that we as the Board of Governors protect those values for all,” said Susquehanna University President Jay Lemons, vice chair of the Board of Governors and chair of the ad hoc committee on diversity and inclusion. “Our membership comprises many different types of schools – public, private, secular, faith-based – and we believe this action appropriately reflects the collective will of that diverse group.”

Historically, the Association has taken steps to ensure its championship environment is consistent with its values. The NCAA bans championships in states where governments display the Confederate battle flag or authorize sports wagering and at schools that use hostile and abusive Native American imagery.

The only championship events that can be hosted in North Carolina this academic year are those that are decided when student-athletes earn the opportunity to play a championship on their own campus. The Board of Governors said this decision to allow these championships – called nonpredetermined sites – to be played in North Carolina is consistent with the NCAA’s commitment to student-athletes.

Based on an April directive from the Board of Governors, which represents all three divisions, cities interested in hosting future NCAA championships completed a questionnaire this summer that required sites to provide information about any local anti-discrimination laws; provisions for refusal of services; and other facility-specific information.

A group of representatives from NCAA schools will continue to evaluate these responses to determine which locations can host future championships. These decisions, typically announced in early December, will be delayed until next year, Emmert said.