



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

There are three phases to establish the bracket:

- I. **Select** the 34 best at-large teams;
- II. **Seed** the field of 65 teams; and
- III. **Place** the teams into the championship bracket.

### **General Principles for Selection, Seeding and Bracketing**

The Division I Men's Basketball Committee will abide by the following general principles:

- A committee member ("member") shall not be present during discussions regarding the selection or seeding of a team the individual represents as an athletics director or commissioner.
- At no point in the process shall a member vote for a team the individual represents as an athletics director or commissioner.
- An athletics director or commissioner is permitted to answer only general, factual questions about teams in the conference the individual represents.
- All votes will be by secret ballot.

Among the resources available to the committee are complete box scores, game summaries and notes, pertinent information submitted on a team's behalf, by its conference, various computer rankings, head-to-head results, chronological results, Division I results, non-conference results, home, away and neutral results, rankings, polls and the NABC regional advisory committee rankings.

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***The Principles and Procedures are part of a comprehensive annual review of the Division I Men's Basketball Championship conducted from the conclusion of each year's championship through July 1. This document was revised and approved by the Division I Men's Basketball Committee, Summer 2009, and will be in effect for the 2010 championship.***

## I. Principles for Selecting At-Large Teams

The **committee selects the 34 best teams** to fill the at-large berths. There is no limit on the number of at-large teams the committee may select from one conference.

### Procedures for Selecting At-Large Teams Initial Ballot

1. Prior to selection weekend, each committee member receives 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 selection meetings:

- 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, regardless of whether the team could eventually represent its conference as the automatic qualifier.
  - b. 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; however, only teams meriting serious consideration should receive votes.
2. Any team receiving all but two of the eligible votes in Column 1 is moved into the tournament field as an at-large selection.
  3. The committee will form an "**under-consideration board**" consisting of an alphabetical listing of teams that:
    - a. Received more than one vote in either of the columns of the initial ballot but did not receive enough votes to be an at-large team; or
    - b. Were recommended by more than one member prior to closing, or
    - c. Won or shared the regular-season conference championship, as determined by the conference's tie-break policy where applicable.

4. The initial "under consideration board" will then be closed.

A team may be removed from the "under-consideration board" at any time if it receives all but two of the eligible votes. A team may be added to the "under-consideration board" at any time provided it receives at least three eligible votes.

Verbal nominations are permitted.

### Remaining Ballots

1. The committee then begins evaluating those teams on the "under-consideration board".
2. Each committee member will list the best eight teams from the "under-consideration board," in no particular order, to be added to the at-large field.

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.

3. When 24 or fewer teams remain in the pool of teams (during the selection or seeding process), 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 in the "pool."
4. The eight teams receiving the most votes comprise the next at-large ballot.
5. Committee members rank the eight teams, using a cross-country scoring system (i.e., the best team is valued at one point).
6. 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.
7. Each committee member then submits a list of the best eight teams remaining on the "under-consideration board" to be added to the at-large field. The four teams with the highest vote totals are added to the teams carried over from No. 5 to comprise the next at-large 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. 4) for two consecutive "rank" ballots, it shall be returned to the "under-consideration board," without prejudice.
10. At any time during the process of selecting the at-large teams, the committee may elect to begin seeding the teams (Section II). This allows the committee to proceed while allowing time for results of games played during selection weekend.
11. 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 "under-consideration board," without prejudice.
12. At any time during the process, the chair may suggest that the committee begin reviewing teams that should be eliminated from the "under-consideration board." The same voting procedures will be used, beginning with Procedure No. 2.
13. 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. 5.
14. At any time, the chair may call for a cross-country vote of the teams remaining on the "under-consideration board."

## II. Principles for Seeding of Teams

The committee will create a "**seed list**" (i.e. rank of the teams in "true seeds" 1 through 65) which is used as a reference to assess competitive balance of the top teams across the four regions of this national championship. Once the "seed list" is finalized, it remains unchanged while placing the teams into the bracket.

Importantly, various bracketing principles may preclude a team from being placed in its "true" seed on the "seed list."

## Procedures for Seeding the Teams

1. Each committee member will submit a list of the best eight teams, in no particular order, from teams that are in the tournament as automatic qualifiers or at-large selections.

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.

2. When 24 or fewer teams remain in the pool of teams (during the selection or seeding process), 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 in the "pool."
3. The eight teams receiving the most votes comprise the next seed list ballot.
4. Committee members rank the eight teams from No. 1, using a cross-country scoring system.
5. The four teams receiving the fewest points are moved onto the seed list in ascending order of vote total. The other four teams are held for the next cross-country ballot.
6. Each committee member then submits a list of the best eight remaining teams that are in the tournament as automatic qualifiers or at-large selections. The four teams with the highest vote totals are added to the teams carried over from No. 4 to comprise the next seed list ballot.
7. Steps No. 4, 5 and 6 are repeated until all the teams are seeded 1 through 65.
8. 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.
9. The committee is not obligated to seed the lines in numerical 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

**A top priority for the committee is to achieve reasonable competitive balance** in each region of the bracket.

Sixteen levels are established (i.e., the seeds, 1 through 16) in the bracket that cross the four regions, permitting evaluation of four teams simultaneously on the same level. Teams on **each seed line** (No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, etc.) **should be as equal as possible**.

Each region is divided into quadrants with four levels in each, permitting the evaluation of four different sections within each region against the same sections in each of the other regions.

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. In the event the opening-round site is also a first- and second-round site, the winner of the opening-round game may be assigned to that site, regardless of the days assigned to that site.

The committee will attempt to assign teams to the most geographically compatible first-/second-round site, descending in order on the seed list.

The committee will assign all four teams in each bracket group (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 'bracket groups' at a first-/second-round site may feed into different regional sites.

Each of **the first three teams selected from a conference shall be placed in different regions**.

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

**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, unless a conference has four or more teams seeded in line

Nos. 1-4. In lines No. 5-12, two teams from the same conference may be placed in the same group of four.

**Conference teams shall not meet prior to the regional final** unless a ninth team is selected from a conference. If the committee is unable to reconcile the bracket after exhausting all reasonable options, it has the flexibility to waive this principle to permit two teams from the same conference to meet each other after the first round.

To recognize the demonstrated quality of such teams, **the committee shall not place teams seeded on the first five lines at a potential "home-crowd disadvantage" in the first round**.

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 to the extent 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.

**A team will not be permitted to play in any facility in which it has played more than three games during its season**, not including conference post-season tournaments.

**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.

**A team may be moved one seed 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 the Teams into the Bracket

1. The committee will then 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. The committee will then place the No. 2 seeds in each region in true seed list order.
3. The committee will then place the No. 3 seeds in each region in true seed list order.
4. The committee will then place the No. 4 seeds in each region in true seed list order.
5. After the top four seed 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 exists. Generally, no more than five points should separate the lowest and highest total.
6. In "true seed" order, the committee then assigns each team (and, therefore, all teams in its bracket group—e.g., seeds 1, 8, 9, 16) to first-/second-round sites.
7. The committee will then place seeds No. 5 through 16 in the bracket, per the principles. The committee will assign four teams the seed of its bracket line number (i.e., five through sixteen) rather than using the "true" seed-list number. The four teams on each line 5 through 16, therefore, have the same numerical value.

### **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. If possible, after examining the previous five years' brackets, teams or conferences will not be moved out of its natural region or geographic area an inordinate number of times.

### **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.

Several independent elements are combined to produce the RPI. These elements are a part of the statistical information that may or may not be utilized by each member in any manner they choose.

The RPI is one of many resources/tools available to the committee in the selection, seeding and bracketing process. Computer models cannot accurately evaluate qualitative factors such as games missed by key players or coaches, travel difficulties, the emotional effects of specific games, etc.

In mid-January, the NCAA will release the official RPI on a weekly basis at [www.ncaa.com](http://www.ncaa.com).

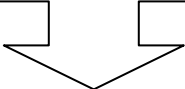
Each committee member independently evaluates a vast amount of information during the process to make individual decisions. It is these qualitative, quantitative and subjective opinions -- developed after hours of personal observations, discussion with coaches, directors of athletics and commissioners, and review and comparison of various data -- that each individual ultimately will determine their vote on all issues related to selections, seeding and bracketing.

The individual components (i.e., win-loss record, opponents' record, opponent opponents' record, where the game is played) of the RPI in and of themselves, are important in the evaluation process.

**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. _____

64. _____
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. In the event the opening-round site is also a first- and second-round site, the winner of the opening-round game may be assigned to that site, regardless of the days assigned to that site.