



NAIA SPORT MANAGER

The NAIA sport manager is a member of the NAIA Department of Championships staff responsible for overall operations and supervision of national championship matches and related activities.

HOST EVENT COORDINATOR

The host event coordinator is the representative from the host venue working directly with the NAIA National Office and the NAIA site supervisor for onsite championship event administration; including but not limited to the student-athlete gathering, championship umpires, administrative services, publicity and promotion, championship personnel, insurance, souvenir program, facility, equipment rental, and medical services. The host event coordinator is the liaison between the NAIA, the site supervisor, the participating teams and all local entities (competition and practice facilities' personnel, hotel personnel, local media, sponsors and merchants).

NAIA SITE SUPERVISOR

NAIA championships are under the direct control and supervision of the NAIA with assistance from each coaches association and the assigned NAIA site supervisor. NAIA site supervisors are selected to work the championship by the NAIA sport manager and coaches association leadership. The NAIA-SCA has requested that site supervisors have previous experience as tournament committee members at the softball national championship whenever possible. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, working with the host event coordinator, acting as liaison to the coaches and umpires, and troubleshooting issues such as security, practices, weather issues, field conditions, etc. The NAIA site supervisor must observe all events and facilities and uphold all rules and regulations of the championships.

CHAMPIONSHIP STRUCTURE

The NAIA Softball Championship consists of a field of 40 teams. The 40 teams will play in 10 national championship opening round tournaments (4 teams at each site). Winners of the national championship opening rounds advance to the NAIA Softball World Series. All competition in each round will be double-elimination format.

AWARDS

Opening Round Champion Trophy – Trophy presented to the team that wins the National Championship Opening Round and advances to the World Series final site.

CONDUCT

Each member institution is responsible for the conduct of its athletes, coaches and fans at all national championship opening rounds. Students are expected to act responsibly and perform as a positive role model for the institution, community and association.

Institutions will be held financially responsible for damage incurred at hotels/motels or any other facility directly involved with the national championship.

OFFICIAL BALL

The Rawlings (.47 core) NAIA-branded softball is the official NAIA softball and is the only ball to be used in all NAIA post season competition. Opening round host sites will receive 24 softballs at least one week prior to the start of the opening round tournament. The NAIA Site Supervisor is responsible for the championship game balls during the opening round

II. National Championship Opening Round

The NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round tournaments are planned by the NAIA in conjunction with the Opening Round Host Coordinator and the designated NAIA Site Supervisor. A complete Opening Round Manual is available for viewing on the NAIA website.

OPENING ROUND CALENDAR

MAY 8	DEADLINE for completion of Conference/A.I.I./unaffiliated group tournaments.
MAY 8	RELEASE of participating teams and opening round pairings.
MAY 15 – 19	NAIA SOFTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP – Opening Round Tournaments.
MAY 25 – 31	NAIA SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES – Columbus, Ga.

GIFT EXCHANGE

There will be no gift exchange at the 2023 NAIA Softball Opening Round

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

The NAIA site supervisor, in consultation with the host coordinator, shall arrange for practice times/sites for each of the teams during the tournament. All four teams shall have the opportunity to practice at the championship field on the day prior to the start of the tournament.

PRE-GAME PROCEDURES

The following pre-game procedures should be followed for all National Championship Games:

- Both head coaches will meet with the games committee one hour prior to their scheduled game time start. Lineups will be exchanged and game balls will be distributed at this time. The meeting spot will be designated by the games committee and communicated to all head coaches.
- Lineup cards must be printed, complete with first and last name, uniform number and position number. All substitutes must be listed. A copy must be provided to the opposing team, the home plate umpire, the official scorekeeper and the public address announcer.
- Team introductions will be made prior to every game. The starting lineup, by batting order, will be introduced, then substitutions, then coaches. The home team will line up from home plate to third base and visitors will line up from home plate to first base all facing the infield.
- Umpires shall check all bats and helmets prior to the start of each game. Any illegal equipment shall be confiscated. The confiscated equipment shall be returned to the team at the conclusion of that team's participation in the championship.
- Pre-game timeline follows the following schedule:

25 minutes prior to game time	Visiting team takes infield (8 minutes)
17 minutes prior to game time	Home team takes infield (8 minutes)
9 minutes prior to game time	Umpire and coaches meet at home plate
5 minutes prior to game time	Lineups and national anthem
- General policies for all games:
 - No game will begin early.
 - Teams are not allowed on the dirt (infield area) until all members of the grounds crew have completed the field preparations and left the infield.
 - The visiting team will take infield first, followed by the home team. If neither team utilizes the full time allotted, the other team will not be given extra time to warm-up.

ROSTER SIZE

Participating teams are limited to a maximum of 20 players in uniform. Official Party (Coaches) are limited to 8 staff members in the dugout. Up to 2 Certified Athletic Trainers are also allowed in the dugout. Any other staff will need to sit either in the stands, or outside the dugout.

FACILITIES

Competition Site - Selection of host sites will be based partly upon the quality of the playing facility. The facility must meet requirements including field dimensions, press box area, concession/souvenir areas, changing areas for umpires, adequate restrooms, athletic training area, public address/sound system, signage and all normal preparation and facility maintenance, etc. The field where the games will be played must be made available for all teams for a practice session the day before the start of the opening round tournament.

Scoreboard - An electronic scoreboard must be provided on the field.

Public Address System/Music System - Either a permanent or portable public address/music system must be available. The equipment will be used for team introductions, substitutions, special recognition, general sponsorship announcements and any other announcements deemed appropriate by the host or NAIA site supervisor. Music can be used as a source of entertainment during team warm-ups and between innings/games.

Video Streaming Capabilities – Even if the host team is not planning to video stream the Opening Round tournament, the capability must be made available if a visiting team wants to videostream the event.

Equal Accommodations and Facilities - The host institution/community is responsible for providing equal and/or comparable accommodations and facilities for all teams relative to locker rooms, refreshments, bench and shower towels, etc.

Signage - The NAIA Department of Championships will provide national championship signage such as banners for each host site. Host sites will be charged for any national championship opening round banners that are not returned to the NAIA National Office.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

All opening round tournaments must be double-elimination to determine which team will advance to the final site. Every effort must be made to complete the opening round tournament on the field. The tournament site supervisor is the final authority on implementation and administration of the inclement weather policy.

The following inclement weather policy will be used at ALL NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round Tournaments:

If 2 days are available	the tournament will be played with a 4-2 (3) format
If 1 day is available	the tournament will revert to a single elimination tournament (games #1, #2, #3 in bracket)

If the tournament is not completed, the following policy will be used at all opening round tournaments:

If less than two games are completed	the #1 seed will be declared the champion
If after games #1 and #2 are completed	the champion will be the highest-seeded undefeated team
If game #7 is needed but cannot be played	the champion will be the winner of game #6

In the event of inclement weather, the Opening Round Site Supervisor, in conjunction with the NAIA National Office, is allowed to move postseason games to an alternate field (including a turf field), if the original host field is deemed unplayable.