
Southern Athletic Association

By-Laws



Foundational Principles and Bylaws of the Southern Athletic Association

as approved by the Council of Presidents representing
Berry College, Birmingham-Southern College, Centre College, Hendrix College, Millsaps
College,
Rhodes College, Sewanee – the University of the South, and Oglethorpe University

Foundational Principles

Founding Principles Adopted: June 7, 2011

Foundational Principles Amended: January 5, 2019

The vision and purpose of the Conference is to foster athletic competition and cooperation among academically selective, residential liberal arts colleges located in the southeastern region of the United States. Members of the conference are committed to a model of academic excellence that emphasizes the importance of student engagement as a critical factor in student learning and success. Thus, it is vitally important that students have the opportunity to work closely with talented teacher-scholars. In the same way, member colleges expect students to be fully engaged in the life and well-being of the campus community, both as participants and leaders. Varsity athletic programs are an integral part of the campus experience and offer significant opportunities for self-understanding, commitment, mastery, maturation and leadership.

The Conference vigorously affirms the spirit and principles of Division III as articulated in its philosophy statement:

Colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletic activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience, and in which coaches play a significant role as educators.

In this regard, the Conference's policies and operating principles are meant to exemplify this philosophy and serve as a model of "best practices."

The Conference exists to provide a context for competition where the playing field is level, the rules of the game are clear and fair, teams have compatible values and operate with reasonable parity in resources, one's opponents are respected, and rivalries are good-natured. Conference members affirm that the Conference and its championships are the primary context for competition.

Core Values and Associated Operating Practices

Core Values. In this spirit, the Conference affirms eight founding values (numbered 1 through 8 below) from which it derives specific operating principles and practices as well as a foundation for future decision-making.

Operating Principles and Practices. Based on these eight founding values, the member institutions commit to developing principles, policies and practices along the lines described (and lettered) for each value.

Value 1. Varsity athletic programs offer an important and healthy means of student engagement at residential colleges; they contribute to the excellence and vitality of campus residential life.

Therefore, Conference members seek to offer a wide range of varsity teams and to promote participation for both women and men.

- a. Conference members will offer a wide variety of intercollegiate sports, with the expectation that members will field a minimum of 18 sports.

Value 2. Varsity athletic teams are valued as part of a comprehensive program of vigorous and structured physical exercise that promotes healthy living, self-discipline and character development for all students. Varsity athletic programs as well as intramural and recreational programs are integrated into the whole of the college's educational offerings.

- a. Member institutions provide a recreational and intramural program that engages at least as many students as the varsity athletics program.
- b. Coaches and other athletic department staff are involved with students other than athletes and seek to promote and support recreational and intramural sports programs for all students.

Value 3. Varsity athletics are integrated into the whole of the student's educational experience in a way that allows for and promotes both competitive athletics and multi-faceted engagement.

Conference members always look to do what is best for students in the context of a complete educational experience and high academic standards.

- a. Conference members have internal procedures in place to ensure that student-athletes have reasonable opportunity to participate fully in other student organizations and campus activities, including the possibility of participation in a second varsity team.
- b. If Division III as a whole votes to relax standards regarding length of the season or off-season, or the number of playing dates for specific sports, the Conference will evaluate such changes in the context of the complete educational experience and high academic standards.
- c. The Conference will choose specific start and finish dates for regular season competition, that enable student-athletes both to enjoy the full benefit of seasonal play and participate in other campus, co-curricular or athletic activities.
- d. Conference members will manage regular season competition and post-season play in a manner that minimizes conflicts with class schedules and examinations. With the exception of when May 1 falls on a Sunday, the spring championship(s), will take place on the last weekend of April. If May 1 does fall on a Sunday, the championship will be played the prior weekend in April. As a regional conference, member institutions manage regular season scheduling using travel partners to minimize travel time and expense.

- e. The presidents will confer with the Faculty Athletic Representatives from member institutions as appropriate regarding academic issues such as length of season, number of playing dates, and start and finish dates.

Value 4. Student-athletes are not valued more than or treated differently from other members of the student body.

- a. Student-athletes, individually and collectively, should be representative of the student body as a whole, both at the point of admission and in their academic performance, preferences and educational outcomes. Recruited student-athletes should reflect a wide breadth of intended majors and interests.
- b. Conference members share with one another recruitment, retention, engagement and graduation information for student athletes and non-athletes, and develop appropriate outcome expectations. Recruited student-athletes should be comparable to non-student-athletes with regard to standardized test scores and high school grade point average (unweighted). Graduation rates should also be comparable.
- c. Conference members will not allow special admissions processes for athletics prospects, including no special admissions slots involving differential admission criteria. Data (without names) on recruited student athletes will be submitted to the conference office on a regular basis and shared among member schools.
- d. Consistent with Division III policy and practice, no financial aid may be awarded to any student on the basis of athletics leadership, ability, participation or performance. Coaches and athletic staff shall not be involved in any decisions regarding offers of financial aid. Notification of financial aid awards may be offered in writing only by the institution's director of financial aid (or comparable campus official) and not before the student has been admitted. Coaches and athletics staff shall not be provided with written or oral financial aid evaluations of prospective student-athletes prior to an offer of admission, and they shall not be involved in any adjustments to financial aid packages for student-athletes. (See Appendix A of the Bylaws.)

Value 5. All sports sponsored by the conference and its member colleges are valued equally. The Conference, and its member institutions, are committed to diversity and gender equity in all athletic policies, procedures, and operations.

- a. Member institutions strive to provide equitable levels of staffing and coaching resources across the sports that each sponsors. Conference members will share information, by sport, regarding staffing levels as well as game-day and non-personnel operating expenses.
- b. No head coach may receive total compensation in excess of the College's highest paid full professor in the arts and sciences. (Items included in total compensation include any extra benefits provided such as use of automobiles, country club memberships, etc.)
- c. Athletics booster organizations will focus on providing quality experiences for the student-athletes generally with respect to activities and facilities. No booster, parent or alumni donations will fund coaching salaries, gifts or bonuses.

Value 6. The Conference serves as the primary context for competition, and Conference championships are the priority. At the same time, the Conference strives to provide good

opportunity for post-season play at a national or regional level. Thus, the Conference seeks to maintain a sufficient number of member institutions to ensure “Automatic Qualifiers” in all core sports.

- a. The Conference seeks to have 7 (or ideally 8) schools participating in each core sport in order to ensure the “Automatic Qualifier” as well as a robust structure for conference scheduling.
- b. The Conference will carefully consider expansion in cases where there seems to be a good institutional fit in terms of academics, athletics, and geography.
- c. Core sports for the conference include:
 - 11 for women: basketball, cross country, field hockey, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track & field, and volleyball;
 - 10 for men: baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, lacrosse, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis, and track & field.
- d. The Conference members will carefully consider adding “core” sports as designated by the conference for purposes of the “Automatic Qualifier” and conference scheduling. The Conference may also sponsor other sports (including championship play) when it benefits a subset of the Conference members. In these instances, the Conference will actively consider the addition of affiliate members.

Value 7. Varsity athletic participation provides a context for character development, self-discipline, and leadership development. In this context, coaches and other athletics staff serve as role models, educators, and mentors. Thus, it is the Conference’s expectation that all coaches, administrators, athletes and spectators adhere to sportsmanship ideals and reflect positively on the college and the Conference in all situations and interactions.

- a. Coaches, trainers and athletic administrators should be hired and evaluated based on their willingness to embody and support the campus culture, the principles and values of Division III, and the ideals of the Conference.
- b. Coaches, in particular, should be formally evaluated as educators and should actively encourage student-athletes to engage fully in the life and well-being of the campus community.

Value 8. The presidents of the member colleges together assume the responsibility for ensuring that the conference lives up to these values and standards. All member colleges have an equal seat at the table.

- a. The presidents are responsible for the administration of all aspects of their college’s athletics program, including approval of the budget and audit of all expenditures as well as admissions and financial aid policies and procedures.
- b. The presidents will work together as a council to ensure the quality of participation across the Conference as a whole, recognizing that the well-being of the Conference must always be balanced with the individual identity and health of the individual member institutions.
- c. These Conference Principles and Conference Bylaws were initially ratified by unanimous vote of the founding member presidents. Subsequent amendments to the Conference Principles or the Conference Bylaws shall require affirmative vote by 3/4s of the presidents’ council (rounded to the nearest whole number). However, Issues of membership shall be decided by unanimous vote.

- d. The rules, policies and procedures for sponsored sports will normally be recommended to the presidents' council by a council of athletic directors representing the member institutions. The sports operating documents were originally adopted by unanimous vote of the presidents' council. Subsequent modifications shall require a 3/4s vote.
- e. Member institutions will support a Conference Commissioner and appropriate staff as necessary to carry out the proper supervision and promotion of the Conference goals and member's athletic programs. The Commissioner will report to the presidents' council. The Commissioner will submit annual goals and a budget to the presidents' council and will receive an annual evaluation.

By-laws of the Southern Athletic Association

Article I - MEETINGS

Section 1 – Official meetings

- A. Conference business is conducted through regular meetings of three kinds of councils: Council of Presidents, Athletics Directors Council, and Sports Councils.
- B. Notice of conference meetings and the request for agenda items shall be sent to member institutions from the conference office at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Agenda items shall be received from member institutions in the conference office at least 14 days prior to the meeting; and final dates, times and agenda shall be received by member institutions at least seven days prior to the meeting.
- C. The Council of Presidents normally meets twice annually. The winter meeting takes place between December 1 and February 28 in a given academic year. The Spring meetings is held prior to June 15th. The Council of Presidents may meet either face-to-face or by conference call to conduct SAA business, with the understanding that the Council normally meets face-to-face at least one time annually with the intention of maintaining meaningful and healthy personal relationships.

Section 2 – Order of Business

- A. Councils adhere to the following order of business.
 - 1. Report of the Executive Committee or Chair
 - 2. Reports of any special committees or officers
 - 3. Report of the Commissioner (as necessary)
 - 4. Agenda
 - 5. New business
 - 6. Election of new officers
 - 7. Adjournment

- B. The chair may alter the stated order of business of any meeting unless there is an objection from the floor. In that event, a majority vote of the designated voting delegates shall be required to alter the order of business.
- C. Robert's Rules of Order (Revised) will be the parliamentary authority for the conduct of all meetings and will be the deciding reference used in case of parliamentary challenge.

Section 3 – Called Meetings

The order of business at any special called meeting shall be set by the chair, provided the business for which the meeting is called is given first attention. The commissioner will record all minutes and report them to the Council of Presidents, Athletics Directors Council and Sports Councils as appropriate.

Article II - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Rules of Eligibility

The member institutions of the conference will adhere to the eligibility rules of the NCAA Constitution and Bylaws in conducting their programs, **except** where the eligibility rules of the conference are more restrictive than those of the NCAA.

Section 2 – New Members

In order for new members to be admitted to the conference for full or affiliate membership, a unanimous affirmative vote of all members is required from the Council of Presidents (see III.2.C)

Section 3 – Dues

Dues will be determined annually by the Council of Presidents, upon the advice of the commissioner, payable prior to July 31. The fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. This conference operates as a non-profit (501c3) organization and receives funds solely for the intent of administering its stated objectives.

Section 4 – Affiliate Members

The Council of Presidents may approve Affiliate Memberships, on a four-year basis, for any Division III institution wanting to compete in any of the Conference's approved sports.

- A. Process of Application
 1. Any NCAA Division III institution requesting affiliate membership status for a specific sport shall submit a letter of application to the Commissioner of the Conference.
 2. The application, along with pertinent information about the institution, will be shared at the next meeting of the Athletic Director's Council for consideration and/or vote.
 3. The Council of Presidents will review this recommendation and the pertinent information at its next meeting. A three-fourths affirmative vote is required for approval.

- B. Obligations of the Affiliate Member
1. An institution accepts affiliate membership in the Conference for that sport only; it agree to be subject to and abide by conference rules and regulations specific to that sport.
 2. Affiliate members shall designate an appropriate representative to participate in all sport specific meetings and will be entitled to one vote on all pertinent voting items.
 3. Affiliate members are considered full members for that specific sport only. All student-athlete awards, coach's awards and automatic qualifying privileges apply.
 4. Dues for affiliate membership will be set by the Council of Presidents and are due according to the regular schedule of Conference dues.
 5. An affiliate member must commit to the Conference for a minimum of four years. After the initial four-year commitment has been satisfied, the Conference assumes that the institution will continue as an affiliate member in good standing. This relationship may be terminated when the Conference notifies the affiliate member of its intent to rescind membership with one year notice (and prior to June 1), or when the affiliate members notifies the Commissioner of its intent to rescind membership with one year notice (prior to June 1).

Article III – REPRESENTATION and VOTING

Section 1 - Institutional Representation and Quorum

- A. Each active full-time member institution in good standing with the conference and NCAA is entitled to one vote at official meetings of the conference. (Provisional Status in the NCAA is considered "In good standing").
- B. Attendance and participation at meetings of the Council of Presidents is defined as Presidents, Chancellors, or persons functioning as Chief Executive Officers at member institutions.
- C. If the CEO cannot attend, he/she shall endeavor to contact the chair of the Council of Presidents and conference commissioner 7 days prior to the meeting. The CEO may appoint a cabinet level representative to serve in his/her capacity, but there must be at least five Presidents in attendance either in person or by phone in order to vote on conference issues. The Appointee may vote on behalf of his/her institution

Section 2 – Quorum, Voting and Amendments

- A. A quorum of five schools is required to conduct business and votes at all official business meetings of the conference, including meetings of the President's council and the Athletic Director's Council.
- B. The Bylaws and Foundational Principles may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the Council of Presidents) at any official meeting of the conference. Any amendments must be submitted in writing as an agenda item to the chair of the Council of Presidents and to the commissioner no later than 30 days prior to an official meeting of the conference. Only the Council of Presidents shall vote on changes to the Bylaws and Foundational Principles.

- C. In order for members to be admitted to the conference for full or affiliate membership a unanimous affirmative vote of all members is required from the Council of Presidents. Likewise, rescinding conference membership requires a unanimous vote of all other members, excluding the institution in question. If an institution wishes to resign membership, they may do so with at least one year's notice. Any institution that resigns without a one-year notice agrees to compensate the Association in an amount equal to one year's dues.
- D. All other business matters presented for consideration at official meetings will be passed by a majority vote of the quorum present. The Operating Manuals may be amended or edited by a simple majority of the Athletic Director's Council and the Council of Presidents. Proposed changes should be submitted as agenda items at least 7 days prior to the official meeting.
- E. Legislation regarding *Sports Policies and Schedules* will normally be presented at official meetings of the conference. Legislation should not be proposed or voted on except at these official meetings. Legislation regarding operating manuals and schedules will be effective for the following season or later; no changes can occur during the current academic year.

Article IV - RULES AND REGULATIONS

Section 1 – Authority of the Commissioner.

- A. The Council of Presidents of the Southern Athletic Association approves the appointment of the Commissioner (The President) and delegates responsibility to that office for leading the Conference on strategic issues, managing its resources and financial operations, administering its policies and procedures, convening its Councils, facilitating communication, and initiating plans for continuing improvement. (See also Value 8.e.)
- B. As its primary financial officer, the Commissioner acts on behalf of the conference to maintain records that are reviewed and approved by the Council of Presidents at their annual winter meetings. The Commissioner, and designee, have the right to manage the account with all privileges gained as full account holders.
- C. The Constitution, Bylaws and Operating Manuals for the individual sports will be the policies and procedures of the Conference. The commissioner shall have the authority to rule on situations in the conference that are either not stated in the Operating Manuals or require intervention to clarify disagreements among member institutions. Such authority shall be protected and unchallenged by any proposed legal action of member institutions or their staffs.

Section 2 – Appeals Committee.

Following any decision by the Commissioner, an appeal can be made to the Athletic Directors Executive Committee. Direct notice shall be given to the Commissioner and the chair of the Executive Committee if an appeal is filed by a member institution. If an Executive Committee member's institution is involved in an appeal, the immediate past member of the committee shall work with the Executive Committee on the appeal.

However, upon request of an SAA President, an appeal can be directed to the Presidents Executive Committee. (The Presidents Executive Committee consists of the current, prior and incoming chairs of the Presidents Council.)

NCAA rules can be appealed to the NCAA Membership Services Group staff.

Section 3 - Financial Aid

In keeping with the principles of Division III, Conference member institutions shall adhere strictly to the Conference's Financial Aid Guide (see Appendix A).

Section 4 - Conference Competition

- A. All conference contests, tournaments and championships will be conducted under eligibility rules of the NCAA and the Southern Athletic Association and include only varsity intercollegiate teams competing on the NCAA Division III level. The Conference Commissioner or the NCAA Membership Services Group staff will render all rules and eligibility interpretations. When conference regulations differ from and are more restrictive than those of the NCAA, the Commissioner will render interpretations.
- B. No regular-season conference competition may begin before noon local time on Sunday, unless permission is granted through the conference office — based on agreement by both schools involved and with specific reasons given (travel, school activities, etc.) for the beginning of competition before noon on Sunday.
- C. The official scorebook — in those sports in which an official scorebook is maintained — is the final determining factor for ejections, fighting, etc. The act of an ejection and the consequences involved with any ejection must be recorded in the official scorebook by the official scorekeeper in all sports that require official scorekeeping. All conference contests are governed by NCAA rules. All ejections are to be reported to the conference office within 48 hours by member institutions..

Article V – CONFERENCE CULTURE

Section 1 – Commitment to Safety, Fairness and Respect

- A. Consistent with the core values of Division III, the Conference is committed to safety, fairness and respect for all participants.
 - 1. The Conference is committed to implementing health and safety initiatives – including matters such as concussion protocols, mental health, and pain management– as recommended by the NCAA Sports Science Institute.
 - 2. The Conference affirms the NCAA policy requiring that coaches, college athletes and athletics administrators complete annually education regarding sexual violence prevention,

and that athletic departments are knowledgeable about, integrated in, and compliant with institutional policies and procedures.

- B. Collegiate athletics provides an opportunity for students to compete with and against others who come from a variety of backgrounds. Through athletic competition and the common goal of achieving athletic excellence, we can learn to respect and enjoy those with whom we might disagree on important matters, whether they be teammates or worthy opponents.
 - 1. The Conference resolves to create and uphold a culture that is respectful of all persons, particularly as it pertains to matters of personal identity including ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, appearance, religion or political affiliation.
 - 2. No comments or language referencing matters of personal identity should be directed at any player, coach, official, any staff member at a conference institution, or the commissioner. Language directed at personal attribute or features is considered insulting and spiteful and a violation of the Conference Code of Ethics (see Section VI).

Section 2 – Commitment to Sportsmanship

- A. The Southern Athletic Association strives to exemplify the Division III commitment to respecting rivals -- whether winning, losing or failing. The goal is to “create a respectful and engaging educational environment through athletics, for everyone.” This emphasis applies equally to student-athletes, coaches, parents and other fans, and it includes responses directed toward officials. The Conference celebrates positive sportsmanship and addresses instances of negative sportsmanship as a matter of principle.
- B. Conference teams are expected to show respect to the officials, the conference and other member teams at all times. Derogatory remarks or unacceptable conduct may result in a public reprimand and possible suspension from future contests as deemed necessary or appropriate by the Commissioner.

Section 3 – Gameday Statements

The following statement shall be published in all member institutions’ media guides or distributed separately at all member institutions’ contests AND read over the public address system when available:

- A. *“The Southern Athletic Association promotes good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner. Intimidating actions or comments directed at specific officials, student-athletes, coaches or other spectators is not permitted. The consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages is prohibited outside of approved areas. Thank you and enjoy the game.”*

Or

Player one: “As representative participants in today’s contest we ask your cooperation in helping to make today’s contest a positive one for all involved by promoting good sportsmanship”

Player two: “Please refrain from any intimidating actions or comments directed at specific officials, student-athletes, or coaches or other spectators. The use of alcohol is only permitted in designated and approved areas.”

Together: “Thank you for your cooperation”

- B. Other methods of promoting sportsmanship may be substituted with approval from the league office, including materials developed by the Division working group on sportsmanship (see Gameday the DIII way).

Section 4 – Crowd Control at Conference Competition

- A. The director of athletics at each member institution has ultimate responsibility to maintain crowd control at all home athletics events.

The director of athletics will serve as the crowd control officer or appoint an individual knowledgeable in crowd control to supervise and plan for all athletics events. It is the duty of the game operations manager to assign and train personnel to perform the necessary duties at these events.

The game operations manager should be proactive (and take initiative) with respect to any questionable behavior, not just waiting for a complaint from an opponent’s coach or a fan or official.

- B. The game operations manager will provide adequate police and/or security personnel before, during and after for all athletics events. Specific instructions should be given to this security team. Plans should be made ahead to have police and/or security personnel available for team benches, scorer’s table or press box, entrances/exits, officials’ dressing facilities, and any parking areas where officials, teams, coaches or spectators could meet.
- C. The public address announcer will be reasonably impartial and restrained for all SAA regular season contests. The public address announcer should not be a “cheerleader” or incite the crowd at any time.

During SAA tournament competition, the PA announcer must be strictly neutral, providing pertinent information in a concise and restrained manner.

Criticism over the public address system of officials, coaches, players, etc., is a significant violation of conference policy.

- D. The public address announcer must be completely aware of procedures in case of necessary evacuation of the playing area for emergencies. The game operations manager should instruct the announcer of these procedures in advance of the game.

Section 5 – Fan Seating and Behavior

- A. When possible and appropriate, SAA schools should post reserve seating areas for students and fans of visiting teams, preferably behind the visiting team’s bench.

When possible and appropriate, SAA schools should avoid having home seating sections directly behind or adjacent to the benches (dugouts) of the visiting team.

Section 6 – Bands and Cheerleaders

- A. Bands will not play during any action on the field or court and play only before the game, during timeouts, during a break in the action, halftime, and after the game.
- B. Cheerleaders will remain safely away from the action on the field or court at all times. Their safety must be taken into account at all times.
- C. As institutional representatives, band and cheerleaders will follow conference codes of conduct at all times. Any conduct by band members or cheerleaders that is deemed unnecessary or disorderly in that it distracts or hampers a team from normal participation on the field or court could result in the assessment of a penalty or technical foul by game officials.

Article VI – CONFERENCE CODE OF ETHICS

Section 1 – Inappropriate Language

- A. Abusive, profane, or insulting language directed at any player, coach, official, any staff member at a conference institution, or the commissioner, is unacceptable by anyone associated with the conference and its member schools. This includes, but is not limited to, what is sometimes excused as “trash-talking.” Such misconduct could result in disciplinary action by the individual’s institution and/or the commissioner.
- B. It is unacceptable for anyone to comment directly in a derogatory manner to a media member or a player, coach, official, or any staff member of a conference institution, or the commissioner. Such misconduct could result in disciplinary action by the individual’s institution and/or the commissioner.

Section 2 – Ejections

A report on any ejections from athletics events involving conference teams will be reported to the respective president(s) within 48 hours after a contest. The home athletics director will contact the conference office first, then a report will be filed by the conference office with the respective president(s). If in the judgment of the Commission there is an attempt to injure an opponent, the Conference will impose additional disciplinary action.

Section 3 – Privacy for officials

Neither a coach nor his/her representative may enter the officials' dressing room facilities. The officials' dressing room must remain private. A capable security guard must be responsible for maintaining the privacy and safety of officials while they are on campus.

Coaches, athletes, parents and other fans are not to harangue, argue with, or insult officials once a game has concluded. They must be shown respect and positive sportsmanship as a vital participant in a competitive and challenging athletic event.

Article VI - PROGRAM OF CHAMPIONSHIPS

Section 1 - The conference sponsors championships in these sports:

MEN (10)	WOMEN (11)
Baseball	Basketball
Basketball	Cross Country
Cross Country	Field Hockey
Football	Golf
Golf	Lacrosse
Lacrosse	Soccer
Soccer	Softball
Swimming/Diving	Swimming/Diving
Tennis	Tennis
Track & Field (outdoor)	Track & Field (outdoor)
	Volleyball

Section 2 - The conference will consider sponsoring a championship in any NCAA sport in which five or more full-time members have competed at the varsity level for at least one year

Section 3 – Post-season Tournaments and Automatic Qualifiers

- A. Championships for cross country, men's and women's lacrosse, men's and women's soccer, volleyball, field hockey, men and women's basketball, swimming & diving, baseball, softball, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's golf, and men's and women's outdoor track & field will take place in postseason tournaments. Football does not conduct postseason conference championships. The winners of these championships will be the Automatic Qualifier for the Conference into NCAA Championship play.
- B. The final day of any conference championship is a full day to be used for championship play. Schools must be prepared to deal with inclement weather for any championship and make adjustments to travel schedules as long as they do not interfere with academic schedules. Any failure to utilize the full use of the final day of any conference championship could result in the forfeiture of competition opportunities.

- C. Conference Championships will be held at the highest seeds when possible and at rotating, predetermined sites for those sports that need to use a larger off campus site. Only schools sponsoring the specific sport will be included in the rotation of these championships.
- D. For postseason championships, the participating institutions are responsible for the expenses for all officials and other related costs necessary to host a conference event at off campus sites. If Championships are held at the highest seed the host institution will be responsible for the costs incurred of hosting this event. These costs may be offset by ticket revenue when applicable.

Admission to any conference championship may be charged, as the facility allows. Admission fees will be determined annually by the Commissioner, in consultation with the Athletic Director's Council. All Conference members students, faculty and staff will be admitted free with a current and valid ID.

- E. Teams are responsible for their own rooms, meals and transportation.

It is the responsibility of the host institution to send a packet of information pertaining to lodging, directions to the school, restaurants, practice opportunities at the championship site, starting times, etc., to each conference member within 24 hours of being named "host". The host institution should work with local hotels and restaurants to assure the best possible rates and prices for visiting teams.

- F. The host institution, in coordination with the conference's sports information director, is responsible for pre- and post-competition publicity with the local, regional and national media for all conference championships. Results should be sent to conference members, local media and national wire services immediately following each day of competition during any conference championship. A final report should be sent to all conference members during the following week. This also applies to conference games that determine championships through regular season play.

Section 4 - SAA Commissioners Cup Guidelines

- A. A top-down cumulative point scale will be used. For sports championships with:
 1. 8 teams competing, each conference champion receives 8 points
 2. more than 8 teams (e.g., football) the count begins with the number of teams (e.g., 9)
 3. less than 8 competitors, the point scale always begins at 8 and moves towards the bottom (see the chart listed below).
- B. Each institution can only count their top 8 sports for men and their top 8 sports for women. Thus, early results may be skewed until after spring competition schools are able to drop certain scores. This approach provides a measure of equity given the number of sports offered.
- C. Affiliate members will count in determining the standings, and points allotted, but they will not be eligible to be ranked in the overall Commissioner's Cup race.

- D. Standings are for regular season finishes only, not tournament championships, except in the case of sports without such standings (such as golf, swimming, track, and cross country), in which case the final standings from the SAA Championships will be used.
- E. Member institutions must declare the sport as varsity status, and the sport must be recognized by the SAA as a conference sport, in order to receive points.
- F. If the SAA ever changes the number of full-time conference membership to include more than 8 institutions, the scoring system should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

G. Scoring System:

9-teams: 9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

8-teams: 8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

7-teams: 8-7-6-5-4-3-1

6-teams: 8-7-6-5-3-1

5-teams: 8-7-5-3-1

Section 5 – All-Conference Academic Honor Roll

An All-Conference Academic Honor Roll will be named in January (following fall term) and June (following winter/spring term). Recipients must have a minimum grade-point average of 3.25 for the term and be a regular member of a varsity athletics team in a sport sponsored by the conference. The conference office will administer the process.

Section 6 - All-Conference Sportsmanship team

All-Conference Sportsmanship team will be selected in each sponsored sport. The selections will take place the week following each sports' championship game or last regular season game. The head coach of each team will send his or her selection to the conference office and only one student-athlete from each team will be selected.

Section 7 – All-Conference Awards

All-Conference awards will be selected by a vote of the SAA individual sport coaches, Conference Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner. The selection will take place at the conclusion of the regular season. The coaches will nominate individual athletes for review and voting by all coaches in the conference. Coaches may not vote for their own players. Each sport will honor a First Team, Second Team and an Honorable Mention team. In addition, a subsequent vote will determine specialty awards, Player of the Year, Newcomer of the Year, and Coach of the Year.

Appendix A: Financial Aid Guide

The Southern Athletic Association will abide by the legislation established by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) under Bylaw 15 of the NCAA Division III Manual concerning financial aid policies that apply to Division III institutions.

The basic philosophy of NCAA Division III is that neither ability nor participation is to be considered in awarding financial assistance to students who are also athletes. Once awards are made, they may not be retracted or reduced for failure to participate or perform as an athlete. Student-athletes have equal opportunity for receiving financial assistance – of any type or mix – as students who are not athletes. However, student-athletes do not have greater opportunity for receiving financial assistance than those students who are not athletes.

Athletic participation shall not be a factor in determining either admission to an institution or in the determination and award of all forms of financial aid: grants, work opportunities, loans, etc. whether need or non-need based.

The composition of the financial aid package offered to a student-athlete shall be consistent with the established policy of the institution's financial aid office for all students and shall meet all of the following criteria:

- A. A member institution shall not consider athletics ability in the formulation of the financial aid package.
- B. The financial aid procedures used for a student-athlete are the same as the existing official financial aid policies of the institution.
- C. The financial aid package for a particular student-athlete cannot be clearly distinguishable from the general pattern of all financial aid for all recipients at the institution.
- D. The percentage of the total dollar value of institutionally administered grants awarded to student-athletes shall be closely equivalent to the percentage of student-athletes within the student body. A differential is defensible if it can be demonstrated that the average need of the student-athletes at the institution is equivalently greater than the average need of other students.

All forms of financial assistance for student-athletes shall be handled through the regular college agency or committee that administers financial aid for all students. Financial assistance may be offered in writing only by the institution's director of financial aid or comparable campus official and not before the student has been admitted.

Any need-based assistance provided to a student-athlete must be based on financial need as determined by need analysis methodologies that conform to federal, state and written institutional guidelines. The methodologies used to determine the need of a student-athlete shall be consistent with the methodologies used by the institution for all students.

A member institution may offer a student-athlete a financial aid package that takes into account variables in the packaging formula other than need (e.g., academic ability,

employee-based scholarships, etc.), but these variables may not be influenced by athletic ability.