



BYLAWS

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Bylaws of the Appalachian Athletic Conference

Article I Name

The name of this organization shall be the Appalachian Athletic Conference (AAC) (hereafter, the Conference). It is an affiliated conference within the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). The Conference is a tax-exempt corporation under Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)(3).

Article II Vision

That we would be a top-tier affiliated collegiate athletic Conference that fully supports the overall educational programs of its members by providing high quality athletic competition which enhances the academic and character development of its students.

Article III Mission

The mission of the Conference is to promote the education and development of students and to provide athletic competition among its member institutions for the purpose of designating champions in sponsored sports, to increase visibility of its members to their publics, and to promote the highest ethical standards of character, conduct, sportsmanship, and fair play.

Article IV Values

We recognize the value of athletic competition on our campuses for the purposes of developing character and school spirit and aim to live out the NAIA five core values on the field of play, on our campuses, and in our communities:

- respect,
- responsibility,
- integrity,
- servant leadership,
- sportsmanship.

Article V Membership

1. The membership shall be limited to NAIA Division II member colleges of senior rank accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or one of the five other regional accrediting bodies.
2. Qualified institutions may make application for membership in writing to the Commissioner no later than 120 days prior to the Council of Presidents annual meeting. The Executive Committee shall schedule a visit to the applicant

- consisting of representatives from member institutions to evaluate facilities and programs. The recommendation for membership of the visiting committee shall be presented at the meeting along with a presentation by the applicant, if desired. Election shall be by three-fourths of the members in good standing.
3. Upon payment of annual dues, the new member shall have full privileges and requirements of membership.
 4. Institutions that decide to drop their Conference membership must notify the Commissioner in writing of their intention by the date of the Council of Presidents meeting prior to the start of their last academic year as a member in order to be eligible for postseason competition.

Article VI Meetings

1. The annual meeting of the Council of Athletic Administrators and Faculty Athletic Representatives shall be held in the third week in May at a date and location set by the Executive Committee.
2. The annual meeting of the Council of Presidents shall be held within 90 days following the meeting of the Council of Athletic Administrators and FARs.
3. Special meetings of the Council of Athletic Administrators and FARs or the Council of Presidents may be called by the Executive Committee or by any three member institutions.
4. Written notice stating the place, day, and hour of the called meeting and the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be given not less than 14 days before the meeting date, either personally or by mail, or by and at the direction of the Commissioner, the Treasurer, or the persons calling the meeting. If mailed, such notices shall be deemed to be given when deposited in the United States Mail addressed to the chief executive officer of each member institution at his/her address as it appears in the Conference membership directory.
5. Notice of a meeting of the Conference to act on an amendment of the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, or on a plan of merger or consolidation shall be given, in the manner provided above, not less than 25 nor more than 60 days before the date of the meeting. A copy of the proposed Articles of Amendment, proposed plan of merger or consolidation, shall accompany any such notice.
6. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, whenever any notice is required to be given to any member institution of this Conference of any meeting for any purpose, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be equivalent to the giving of such notice. A chief executive officer or his/her designated representative who attends a meeting shall be deemed to have had timely and proper notice of the meeting, unless he/she attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the

- meeting is not lawfully called or convenient.
7. Each member institution in good standing shall have one vote at each meeting.
 8. A majority of the members entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the membership. If a quorum is present, the affirmative vote of the majority of the members present at the meeting and entitled to vote on the subject matter shall be an act of the membership except that in elections of officers those receiving the greatest number of votes shall be deemed elected even though not receiving a majority.

Article VII Board of Directors

The business and the affairs of the Conference shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of the chief executive officers of the member institutions or their designated representatives known herein as the Council of Presidents.

Article VIII Executive Committee

1. There shall be an Executive Committee of the Conference that shall consist of four members elected from and by the Council of Presidents plus the Commissioner (Chair).
2. Written notice stating the place, day, and hour of an Executive Committee meeting and the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be given not less than 14 days before the meeting date, either personally or by mail, or by and at the direction of the Commissioner, or the persons calling the meeting. If mailed, such notices shall be deemed to be given when deposited in the United States Mail addressed to the Committee member at his/her address as it appears in the Conference directory.
3. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, whenever any notice is required to be given to any Executive Committee member of this Conference of any meeting for any purpose, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be equivalent to the giving of such notice. An Executive Committee member who attends a meeting shall be deemed to have had timely and proper notice of the meeting, unless he/she attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convenient.
4. Any vacancy occurring in the Executive Committee shall be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining Executive Committee members.
5. A majority of the members of Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The act of the majority of the Executive Committee present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Executive Committee.

6. The Executive Committee will normally meet twice a year, in January and June. However, other meetings of the Executive Committee may be held at any time. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, written notice of such meetings shall be mailed by an officer of the Conference to each member of the Executive Committee not less than 10 days before any such meeting. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any such meeting of the Executive Committee need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.
7. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be held by telephone-conference calls, and when so held, the action of such conferences shall be entered in the minutes of the Committee and provided to the membership at the next annual meeting.

Article IX Governance/Administrative Councils

1. The Council of Presidents shall consist of the chief executive officers of the member institutions, or their designated representatives. The Council of Athletic Administrators and FARs shall elect one representative from its body to serve as an ex-officio member to the COP. The COP shall have final decision-making authority over all matters involving general policy and planning, membership, terms of employment of Conference officers, dues and budgets.
2. The Council of Athletic Administrators and FARs shall consist of the senior athletic administrator, or his/her designated representative, the Faculty Athletic Representative from each member institution, and the COPs' Representative. This Council shall have final decision-making authority on operational matters involving rules, regulations, and procedures (e.g., Sport Policies). They shall make recommendations to the Council of Presidents for final resolution of all other matters, as described above.

Article X Officers and Agents

1. The officers of the Conference shall consist of a Commissioner, Vice-President, Treasurer, Faculty Athletic Representative, Eligibility Chair, and a CEO's Representative, each of whom shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of two years. Officers may succeed themselves in office. A vacancy in an office shall be filled by the Executive Committee. Nominations for officers of the Conference shall be presented to the membership by the Executive Committee. Nominations may also be made from the floor of the membership at the annual meetings of the Conference.
2. The officers, less the Commissioner, shall serve as an Appeals Committee for operational policy decisions forwarded to it by a member institution regarding a rule interpretation made by the Commissioner. Matters outside the jurisdiction of the officers, as described in Article VII, 2, shall be referred to the Executive

- Committee.
3. The Commissioner shall serve as the senior executive of the Conference. He/she shall preside at all meetings, chair the Executive Committee, have general supervision of the affairs of the Conference, sign or counter-sign all contracts, make reports to the directors and membership and perform all such other duties as are incident to his/her office or are properly required of him/her by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee will present the terms of contact for the Commissioner to the Board of Directors for approval.
 4. The Vice President shall chair the Appeals Committee and serve temporarily as the senior executive of the Conference if the Commissioner is incapacitated or otherwise unavailable to function as senior executive.
 5. The Treasurer shall have charge of the seal and corporate books. He/she shall sign with the Commissioner such instruments as require such signature, pay bills of the Conference as submitted within 30 days of receipt of the invoice, and he/she shall make such reports and perform such other duties as are incident to his/her office or are properly required of him/her.
 6. The Treasurer shall have the custody of the funds and securities of the Conference and deposit the same in the name of the Conference in such bank or banks as the Executive Committee may elect. He/she or some duly authorized agents of the Conference shall pay out and dispose of the funds of the Conference under the direction of the Executive Committee. He/she shall, at all reasonable times, exhibit the books of accounts to any director or Conference member college upon application at the office of the Conference during business hours.
 7. The Eligibility Chair shall review and approve, return for correction, or deny all NAIA Official Eligibility Certificates, Transfer Player Eligibility Statements, and Eligibility Certificates for Entering Freshmen, as submitted by Conference members. He/she shall chair the Conference Eligibility Committee and make recommendations to the national eligibility staff liaison regarding all eligibility issues brought before them for endorsement.
 8. The Secretary is an agent of the Conference and not an officer. The Secretary shall record and distribute the minutes of all meetings of the Executive Committee and Conference meetings and changes to the Bylaws, and Operational Policies for Sports. He/she shall perform various other administrative duties as assigned by the Commissioner or other members of the Executive Committee.
 9. Other agents of the Conference include the Registrar and the Sports Information Director.
 10. The Secretary, Registrar, and Sports Information Director shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of two years. They may succeed themselves in office.
 11. Any officer or agent may be removed with or without cause at any time

whenever the majority of the membership in its absolute discretion shall consider that the best interest of the Conference would be served thereby.

Article XI Seal

The Conference seal shall have inscribed thereon the first letters in the name of the conference, "AAC."

Article XII Committees

1. The following are the standing committees of the Conference:
 - Executive Committee
 - Appeals Committee
 - Eligibility Committee
 - Awards Nominating Committee
 - Specific Sports Committees
2. Ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Commissioner.
3. Decisions of the Commissioner relating to interpretation of Conference rules and regulations may be directed to the Appeals Committee or the Executive Committee, as described in Article VIII, 2. The decision of the Appeals Committee or the Executive Committee, by majority vote, is final.
4. The specific Sport Committees, consisting of the head coaches in each sport, are charged with the responsibility of: (a) bringing recommendations to the Conference on their respective sports policies and procedures; and (b) filing a complete written report of the championship events including an accurate statement of income/expenses of the event to the Treasurer of the conference within fourteen (14) days of the completion of the championship event(s). Additional responsibilities may be listed in the Operational Policies for Sports. Recommendations regarding policy of any sport may come to the conference from any standing committee.

Article XIII Dues

1. The annual institutional dues for the succeeding academic year shall be established by the Executive Committee and submitted to the Conference for ratification. Dues shall become due August 1 and delinquent on September 15.
2. Institutions delinquent in payment of dues, shall forfeit voting privileges and all conference contests until the delinquency is resolved. The Treasurer shall send one or more reminders to the delinquent institution.

Article XIV Financial Aid Reports

1. Each member institution will file an AAC Institutional Financial Aid Report with the Commissioner based on *current year* data according to the following deadlines: October 15 for fall and winter sports, and February 15 for winter and spring sports.
2. These reports will be prepared by the institution's Financial Aid Office with roster input provided by the Department of Athletics.
3. Additionally, each member institution shall file with the Commissioner by September 1 a copy of its year-end NAIA Institutional Financial Aid Report.
4. Member institutions may be ineligible for postseason competition if reports are not submitted by the deadlines.

Article XV Eligibility

1. Requirements - Student-athletes of member institutions shall meet all eligibility requirements and be certified by the Conference Eligibility Chair in accordance with current NAIA regulations before participation in any Conference-sponsored sport. The following additional policies apply:
 - a. A student who has participated (used a year of eligibility, as defined by NAIA) in any college sport as a member of a team at a member institution cannot participate in that intercollegiate sport at another member institution for 365 days following the closing date of the student's last season of competition.
 - b. A student who has signed a letter-of-intent or a grant-in-aid with a member institution can not participate at another member institution in the sport which he/she has signed, unless the signing institution will, by written consent (in the person of the Athletics Director), release the student from the signing of said letter-of-intent or grant-in-aid.
2. Violations
 - a. In addition to the requirement, as a member of the NAIA, to report any apparent violation to which any officer of an institution may become aware (NAIA bylaws, Article VI, Section B.3), it shall be the duty of any Conference member having knowledge of the ineligibility of any player of another member institution to file immediately a protest with the Commissioner accompanied by such evidence he/she may possess. This protest is to be filed after the complaint is registered with the Athletics Director of the college involved. Any student against whom charges are made shall be eligible until a decision is reached by the Executive Committee. However, any player under protest who is permitted to engage in athletic contests, places the institution in the position whereby the contests in which that particular player participated during the

current academic year shall be forfeited to the offended institution in case the player is finally declared ineligible.

- b. In case a player is declared ineligible by the Conference or the NAIA, all members of the Conference shall be advised immediately by the Commissioner.
- c. Any athlete who knowingly makes false statements in regard to his/her eligibility shall be subject to permanent loss of eligibility.

3. Procedure Governing Violations

- a. The Executive Committee will serve as the fact-gathering body of the Conference.
- b. All allegations and complaints relative to a member's violation of the legislation or regulations of the Conference shall be channeled through the Commissioner. The Executive Committee, so far as practicable, shall make a thorough inquiry and investigation of all reasonable substantiated charges received from a responsible source. The Executive Committee may conduct a preliminary inquiry to determine whether there is adequate evidence to warrant an official inquiry. It may also initiate inquiry on its own motion when it has reasonable cause to believe that a member is or has been in violation of its obligations as a member of the Conference.
- c. If the Executive Committee determines that an allegation or complaint warrants an official inquiry, the Commissioner shall direct a letter to the chief executive officer of the member institution involved (with copies to the Faculty Athletics Representative and the Athletics Director of the member institution) fully informing him/her of the matter under inquiry and requesting cooperation to the end that the facts may be discovered. By this letter, the Executive Committee shall call upon the chief executive officer of the member institution involved for the disclosure of any relevant information and may require his/her appearance or the appearance of his/her representative before the Executive Committee at a time deemed necessary by the Committee.
- d. The Executive Committee shall prepare a written summary statement on each case that has been subject to an official inquiry. If a violation is found for which the Executive Committee recommends that the Conference impose a penalty, a full report shall be submitted to the institution and to the next Conference meeting. The report shall include:
 - i. A statement of the origin of the case.
 - ii. A summary of all the evidence before the Committee.
 - iii. The findings of fact made by the Committee, its conclusions as to whether the member has been in violation of its obligations as a member, and, if so, the particular respects in which the member has been in violation.

- iv. Disciplinary or corrective actions taken by the institution.
 - v. Related factors appropriate for consideration in judgment of the case.
 - vi. A statement of penalties assessed by the Conference.
4. As a guiding principle, the Conference penalty should be consistent with the violation(s). Among the disciplinary measures, single or in combination, which may be used by the Executive Committee are:
 - a. Reprimand or censure
 - b. Probation for one (1) year
 - c. Probation for more than one year
 - d. Ineligible for one or more national championship events
 - e. Ineligible for a specified list of invitational and post-season meets and tournaments
 - f. Requirement to show why membership in the Conference should not be suspended or terminated if, in the judgment of the Committee, the institution does not take appropriate disciplinary action against the head coach of the sport involved.
 5. The Executive Committee shall treat all cases before it as confidential. Any member of the Executive Committee who is directly connected with the institution under inquiry shall not take part in any proceedings connected with the case.
 6. The decision of the Executive Committee is final unless modified by a three-fourths vote of the Conference members.

Article XVI Violations of Sportsmanlike Conduct or Ethical Behavior

1. The Conference was founded by institutions with a like mission and a commitment to sportsmanlike conduct, ethical behavior and collegiality. Whenever unsportsmanlike conduct or unethical behavior occurs among teams or individuals, it is generally accepted by the Conference members that the institutions involved will resolve minor infractions. More serious violations of unsportsmanlike conduct or unethical behavior, whether they are resolved or unresolved, must be reported by either institution within 14 days of the incident to the Commissioner. The institutions involved shall investigate and seek to resolve the issues on a timely basis. Each institution must report their findings and any recommended sanctions for their institution to the Commissioner within 30 days from the reporting of the incident to the Conference.
2. The Executive Committee will review the report and any recommended sanctions. The Executive Committee will endorse the findings or impose any additional penalties and sanctions and then submit a report to the NAIA Conduct and Ethics Committee. If in the judgment of the Executive Committee further information is needed, the report will be returned to the institutions involved and

- they will be asked to provide the additional information in a follow-up report within a timeframe agreed to by the Executive Committee.
3. The Executive Committee reserves the right to impose additional penalties or sanctions. Included but not limited to the following:
 - a. probation
 - b. suspension
 - c. forfeiture of game(s)
 - d. prohibition of post-season play
 - e. expulsion from the Conference
 4. If there is a conflict of interest by any member of the Executive Committee, then the member involved will recuse him/herself and the remaining members of the Executive Committee will choose a suitable replacement.
 5. Appeals will be handled in accordance with the NAIA Bylaws.

Article XVII Awards

1. Conference championships may be recognized in those sports in which at least four member institutions participate.
2. A Champion of Character Award will be presented annually to a member institution and a male and female student-athlete that best exemplify the NAIA core values of respect, integrity, responsibility, servant leadership and sportsmanship.
3. The Conference, upon recommendation of specific Sport Committees, shall determine the appropriate team and individual awards and recognitions.
4. Each Sport Committee Chair will submit a request for awards at the annual meeting. A list of awards to be presented by the Conference will be listed in the Operational Policies for Sports. Sport Committees may choose to make additional awards though not funded by the Conference.

Article XVIII Forfeitures

No victory in an athletic contest may be claimed by forfeit without a written report of the respective Sport Committee and the approval of the Executive Committee whose responsibility will include ruling on each forfeiture claim in accordance with NAIA governing procedures.

Article XIX Admission Prices

Sport Committee Chairs will submit admission prices for each sport for approval of the membership.

Article XX General Principles

1. Each member institution agrees to enact and enforce such measures within its own athletic body as may be necessary to prevent violation of the principles of amateur sport, and agrees to comply with Conference Operational Policies for Sports.
2. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall serve as final authority in parliamentary procedure, providing there is no conflict with Conference rules.

Article XXI By-Law Changes

1. These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote at any regular meeting of the membership at which a quorum is present in accordance with Article IV, Section 4.1.
2. Exceptions to the rules, regulations and procedures stated herein or in the Operational Policies for Sports may be referred on a case-by-case basis to the Executive Committee for resolution, unless otherwise prescribed. The Executive Committee may choose to resolve the issue or submit the case to the membership for resolution at the next meeting of the Council of Athletic Administrators and FARs or the Council of Presidents, as appropriate.
3. Changes in the Bylaws shall be in effect immediately upon adoption by the membership unless otherwise expressly stated.