

Men's Volleyball Announced as 26th National Championship Sport

Men's Volleyball advances to championship status with 40 teams declared for 2018-19

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) announced today that men's volleyball will become the association's 26th national championship sport, effective for the 2018-19. The National Administrative Council (NAC), a membership group comprised of NAIA athletic administrators, unanimously approved the motion.

"The combination of an exciting sport, an attractive college-bound demographic, and an affordable facilities-friendly model has driven growth in men's volleyball across the country," said Kathy DeBoer, executive director of the American Volleyball Coaches Association. "I applaud the NAIA for offering these young men a championship experience as soon as 2019."

In order to gain national championship status, a sport must be sponsored by a minimum of 40 varsity institutions, completed at least two national invitational competitions and get approved by the NAC. There are 40 institutions that have declared their intent to participate in men's volleyball in 2018-19.

"It is exciting to see the growth of not only this sport but also the association with the addition of men's volleyball as a National Championship in the year to come," said Jim Carr, President and CEO of the NAIA.

Men's volleyball has completed two national invitationals and a third invitational will be held April 17-21, 2018 at Grand View (Iowa) in Des Moines, Iowa. Missouri Baptist won the title in 2016 and Park (Mo.) claimed the title in 2017. For more information on the 2018 National Invitational [CLICK HERE](#).

"It's very exciting that men's volleyball will be a championship sport next season," said Missouri Baptist Head Coach John Yehling. "When I became head coach at MBU in 2002, it was an emerging sport and to see the growth of the sport since then has been outstanding."

The season typically begins in January and will culminate in April at the national championship. The 2019 Men's Volleyball National Championship will be hosted by Grand View.

"For our association to hit this milestone is historical," said Grand View Head Coach Donan Cruz. "It is a testament to the institutions that were pioneers in our league that set the foundation to build on and much credit to new programs over the last decade that surged the growth to advance our sport to championship status. Grand View is thrilled and humbled to be a part of this transition as the host institution."

The last sport to earn championship status was competitive cheer and competitive dance in 2016-17. Prior to that, it had been 22 years since the NAIA added a championship sport.

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About the NAIA:

The [National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics](#) (NAIA), headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., is a governing body of small athletics programs that are dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate athletics. Since 1937, the NAIA has administered programs dedicated to championships in balance with the overall college educational experience. Each year more than 65,000 NAIA student-athletes

have the opportunity to play college sports, earn over \$600 million in scholarships, and compete for a chance to participate in 25 national championships.