



BASEBALL

SECTION A: Beginning Practice/Game Dates

1. Pre-season scrimmages must follow ALL NAIA guidelines.
2. The total number of games (in the fall and/or spring) cannot exceed the NAIA limitations of 50 games and 5 scrimmages. The additional fall scrimmages shall be used in the fall and on weekends/days where classes are not in session. More than two scrimmages are allowed as long as the total number of games does not exceed 50 (fall and spring) and does not exceed more than 20% of the regularly scheduled varsity contests for the spring season.

SECTION B: Scheduling of Games

1. All regular season conference games will be 7 innings. Each team will play a four-game series against 8 opponents in a random draw over 9 weekends and over eight weekends.
2. The weekend series may be scheduled on Friday-Saturday, Saturday-Sunday. The four-game series will consist of four 7-inning games.
3. Teams must have completed 26 games in the regularly scheduled conference season.
4. Games may be scheduled at sites other than the designated field of the home team.
5. Official HEART starting time for Monday through Friday contests is 1:00 PM.
 - a. If an institution has lights available, this time may be adjusted if both coaches and Athletic Directors agree.
 - b. Starting times for weekend games may adjust to serve the travel needs of any teams with the stipulation that the Athletic Directors of the involved teams are in agreement.
6. Heart member institutions that do not play contests on Sunday is MidAmerica Nazarene University.

7. School dates are defined as days on which classes are in session.
8. A playing date is defined as competition between two institutions. This is exclusive of tournament competition.

9. Schedule Approval Process:
 - a. The Coaches will have the opportunity to present scheduling parameters to the Commissioner that meet the 60% minimum criteria of overall games set by the COP. This will be reviewed by the Commissioner and submitted to the Heart Scheduling Committee.
 - b. The Scheduling Committee along with the individual sport liaison will then review the proposed scheduling parameters submitted by the Commissioner and approve or alter the proposal. These approved or altered parameters will be returned to the Commissioner to produce a schedule that fits the parameters.
 - c. When the schedule is completed, it will be submitted to the Scheduling Committee (with the sport liaison as an adjunct) for analysis and approval. If not approved, it will be sent back to the Commissioner for alterations.
 - d. Once approved by the Scheduling Committee the Commissioner will forward to the Athletic Directors Committee for final approval. At this point, the schedule will be at the stage where any changes should be made via the schedule change process.
 - e. Approval comes with a 2/3rds majority voting in the affirmative.

SECTION C: Rescheduling of Games

1. Both Athletics Directors must be in agreement and a request for change form must be submitted for final approval from the conference office.
<http://www.heartofamericaconference.com/SIDHelp.php?action=form¶meters=3>

2. Rescheduling of games must follow a priority order:
 - a. #1 – Conference Opponents (see 4b)
 - b. #2 – Non-Conference Opponent

3. Single games and doubleheaders will follow NCAA Rule Book with the exceptions so noted in C.4 and the NAIA Baseball Modified Rules. If the home team is ahead at the end of 4 ½ innings, the game is declared complete.

4. Rescheduling of contests due to inclement weather:
 - a. When the original schedule is altered by inclement weather, unplayable field conditions or other unforeseeable circumstances the following policy will be enforced.

- b. Games will be scheduled Friday/Saturday or Saturday/Sunday; should games be impacted by weather, contests must be made up between 7-14 days. If the games cannot be played within this timeframe they will not be made up. In addition, the games may be adjusted using the Thursday preceding the weekend series running through and including the Tuesday following the weekend series when the original schedule is altered by inclement weather, unplayable field conditions or other unforeseeable circumstances. Games shall be made up in order.
- c. If an institution misses class for travel or competition on Friday, it is recommended that not play on Monday unless the game time is such that no class is missed. If an institution misses class for travel or competition on Thursday, it is recommended they do not play on Tuesday unless the game time is such that no class is missed. If the Athletic Directors at both institutions agree this Friday/Monday or Thursday/Tuesday the missed class rule can be waived.
- d. If a team makes the trip, they are not mandated to make up the games.
 - i. Example – a team travels for a game on Thursday – Friday and the games are postponed. They are not mandated to return on Monday or Tuesday for budgetary reasons.
- e. If circumstances prohibit use of a home field, every attempt shall be made to play elsewhere. The site shall be determined by mutual agreement of both institutions.
- f. If the home site is switched because of inclement weather, unplayable field conditions or other unforeseeable circumstances the team who is now hosting (the original visiting team) will reimburse the team who was originally scheduled to host expenses that they had budgeted for the trip or actual expenses whichever is less.
 - i. EXAMPLE – Graceland is scheduled to host Benedictine. The game cannot be played at Graceland, so it is switched to Benedictine. Benedictine will reimburse Graceland the amount that they had budgeted to travel to Graceland or actual expenses whichever is less. The Athletic Directors of the schools involved will determine the proper reimbursement. There is no reimbursement if both teams agree to travel to a neutral site where both would incur travel costs.
- g. The Coach and Game Day Administrator (Director of Athletics or appointee) will be involved in all schedule changes and will notify the league office.
- h. Postponed games during a four-game division series:
 - i. Game #1 – if not completed, it will be declared a suspended game and will be continued at the next possible opportunity.
 - ii. Game #2 – if not completed, it will be declared a suspended game and will be continued at the next possible opportunity.

- iii. Game #3 – if not completed, it will be declared a suspended game and will be continued at the next possible opportunity.
- iv. Game #4 - if not completed, it will follow Official Baseball Rules and be declared a complete contest if the home team is ahead after 4 ½ innings. If the contest does not get to 4 ½ innings, the game can be continued that weekend if allowable under the make-up policy.
- v. Both institutions should make every effort to complete suspended games.

5. The host institution should contact the Heart head baseball supervisor of officials to confirm umpires for suspended games.

SECTION D: Game Administration

- 1. The home institution should notify the visiting team of the pre-game schedule.

SECTION E: Official Conference Equipment

- 1. Rawlings NAIA baseballs will be used.
- 1. Only certified bats may be used in all games played by member institutions.

SECTION F: All-Conference Team

- 1. The All-Conference Team is selected at the annual spring meeting. This meeting will be conducted on the day preceding the Post-Season Conference Tournament. All postseason awards must be submitted to the Heart Assistant Commissioner for Communications and cannot be publicly shared until an official announcement is made from the conference office.
- 2. Statistics from ALL contests against NAIA opponents should be considered.
 - a. The following information MUST be provided at the meeting for players to be considered for All-Conference.
 - b. Coaches are required to submit Presto Stats at the meeting to the baseball chair:
 - i. hitting statistics
 - ii. on-base percentage
 - iii. slugging percentage
 - iv. fielding percentage
 - v. all pitching statistics
- 3. Ballots will be used for all voting procedures. One vote per school at the meeting – ONLY the Head Baseball Coach can vote.

4. Coaches will select FIRST TEAM, SECOND TEAM, AND HONORABLE MENTION players based on the following formula:

Position	First Team	Second Team	Honorable Mention
1B	1	1	2
2B	1	1	2
3B	1	1	2
SS	1	1	2
Extra Infielder	1	1	2
C	2	2	2
OF	4	4	4
DH	1	1	2
P	4	4	4
Relief Pitcher	1	1	1

5. Rawlings “GOLDEN GLOVE AWARD” for each defensive position.
6. All FIRST TEAM selections will receive an all-conference plaque.
7. The Player of the Year, Pitcher of the Year, Newcomer of the Year, Freshman of the Year, Assistant Coach of the Year and Coach of the Year will be recognized.

SECTION G: Championship Team Awards

1. The team who wins the “Regular Season” with the greatest total number of wins against all Conference opponents will be declared the HEART CHAMPION and will receive the Heart Championship Banner.
2. The Heart receives two automatic qualifiers for the NAIA National Championship, which will be awarded to the conference tournament champion and the tournament runner-up.
3. If the qualifying event for the NAIA Post-season Championship competition cannot be completed, the representative will be taken from the remaining teams in the tournament based on the highest regular season conference winning percentage.
4. If there is a tie, the following criteria will be applied in sequential order:
 - a. Head-to-Head competition
 - b. Record versus like opponents of the 7 other teams that qualified for the conference tournament.
 - c. Win/loss % of “ALL” NAIA contests.

SECTION H: Conference Championship Tournament Qualification

1. The top 4 teams from both divisions in regular season divisional play will qualify for the Heart Baseball Tournament based on Total Wins. Seeding for the tournament will be based on winning percentages of divisional play. Seeding will alternate by division based off which division has the #1 seed.
 - a. i.e. South Division team has the highest win % and is the #1 seed, the #2 seed will be the highest win % team from the north division, the #3 seed will be the 2nd highest win % team from the south division, the #4 seed will be the 2nd highest win % team from the north division and so on alternating through the 8 seeds.
2. Play a straight 8 team double elimination conference tournament with no "if necessary" game for the 2026 season.
3. Seeding for the tournament will apply the following format:
 - a. (7 v 8 game)
 - b. (4 v 5 game)
 - c. (3 v 6 game)
 - d. (2 v 7/8 game)
4. In the event of a tie, the following criteria will be applied in sequential order:
 - a. Head-to-head competition – there is no head-to-head in a tie involving more than two teams.
 - b. Record vs Common Heart Conference Opponents
 - c. Record vs. Like Opponents in the conference in descending order from first to last.
 - d. Record versus the other teams that qualified for the Conference Tournament
 - e. Analytics (RPI - Bochip) NAIA
 - f. Coin Flip
 - i. Where 3 (or more) teams are tied and a tie is broken, the 2 (or more) teams remaining, will begin the tie breaker process beginning again with Head to Head and moving through the sequential order until the tie is broken.
5. The Heart Conference Baseball Tournament format and procedures will now automatically align with any changes adopted by the NAIA Baseball Coaches Association related to the NAIA Baseball Opening Round format. This includes, but is not limited to, seeding procedures, home/visitor designation, and game operations.

No additional vote or coaches meeting will be required to adopt such changes once implemented at the national level.

Example: If the NAIA adopts a rule making the higher seed the home team in the Opening Round, the same rule will apply to the Heart Conference Tournament that same year.

Home Team Determination for tournament play – The home team for the First-Round games in the Affiliated Conference/A.I.I./Unaffiliated group, NAIA Baseball Championship Opening Round and NAIA World Series will be determined by highest seed will be the home team.

There will also be a 10-run rule after 7-innings in every tournament game, except the championship game.

- a. Teams drawing a bye in the first round of all tournaments will be assigned either home or visitor, based upon their opponent's status in the First-Round game.
- b. For subsequent games, the Games Committee shall designate as home team the institution that has been the home team the fewer number of times. If the two teams are equal in this respect, but unequal in the number of times they were the visitor, then the team that has been the visitor the most often will be designated the home team.
- c. If the two teams are equal in the number of times that they have been home and visitor, the Games Committee will observe the following procedures in the order as listed:
 - i. The team that was the visitor in its preceding game shall be the home team, unless both teams were the visitor in their preceding game.
 - ii. If the two teams have met previously in the tournament, the visitor in the previous game shall be the home team in the game in question.
 - iii. If the above procedures do not resolve the matter, the home team shall be determined by a coin flip.

6. **MONDAY, April 28, 2025** - deadline for all regular season conference games to be completed.

7. Conference Tournament Championship timeline:

- a. Wednesday April 30, 2025 – practice day and coaches' meeting.
- b. Tournament Play will begin Thursday May 1 through Monday, May 5th, 2025.
- c. The NAIA deadline to complete the tournament is Monday, May 5th, 2025

8. Site for the tournament: Ozark Mountain Sports Complex; Ozark, MO. The Heart has signed an extension with the Complex for the Heart Championship through 2027.

SECTION I: Official Umpires

1. The supervisor of officials will coordinate the assignment of umpires for all Heart of America Conference games or series consisting of three umpires per game or series.
2. Member institutions shall compensate the umpire assignor the cost of one 7 inning game doubleheader for the services. The Conference Commissioner will send an invoice to the Athletic Director of each member institution.
3. Payment of umpires will be processed through the conference office via RefQuest.
4. Payment of umpires for all conference scheduled contests:
 - a. If the umpires are contacted prior to their departure and do not travel to the game site, they will receive no compensation.
 - b. If the umpires travel to the game site and the games are not played due to inclement weather, they will be compensated a minimum of one game.
5. Umpires who travel for conference weekend series will be provided lodging as part of their compensation as long as they are the same two umpires for both days' contests.
6. If the second day of a Conference Series is cancelled due to inclement weather, they will not receive compensation for the second day.
7. All umpires must be approved by the Conference Arbiter and the Supervisor of Officials.
8. The Umpire-in-Chief has issued a tobacco warning that is already in effect for each game. It is an NAIA and Heart violation to use tobacco in any form during a scheduled contest.
 - a. Any offense noted after that carries an immediate ejection from the game. This applies to all game personnel (coaches, players, statisticians, umpires, administrators).
9. The umpire arbiter will coordinate the assignment of umpires for the Heart Post-Season Tournament. Three umpires will work each game of the Heart Post-Season Tournament except for the Semi-Final and Final Game. Four Umpires will work the Semi-Final and Final Game of the Heart Post-Season Tournament.

- a. The list will be approved by the Heart Supervisor of Officials.

SECTION J: Raters

1. The Heart will elect a rater every two years and nominate that individual to the NAIA as a National Rater:
 - a. NAIA/Heart National Rater – Nate Breland
2. Additional past raters shall serve as liaison to the National Rater selected by the Heart Baseball Coaches to assist the rater with the process and support oversight should it be required.
 - a. Selected to serve for 2023-2025; Brian McCabe, Clarke University & Ryan Goodwin, Baker University.

SECTION K: Appendix: Leadership

1. The Heart baseball coaches shall have a chair to provide leadership, coordinate & manage all meeting's, meeting agendas, and maintain minutes for procedural purposes. In addition, the chair will support communication between coaches, Heart BOG and other pertinent committees and/or organizations. This is a rotating position every two years and shall continue in alphabetical order. A past chair, current chair, and future chair shall be appointed to support the functions associated with the chair duties.
 - a. 2023-2025: Chair: Ryan Thompson, MidAmerica Nazarene University - Past Chair: Doug Brinker, Grand View University - Incoming Chair: Tyler Marik, Missouri Valley College