

2018 NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round Host Sites Announced

Sixth year of Opening Rounds will take place May 14-16



Story by Chad Waller, Director of Athletic Communications & Media

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) has released the list of 10 host sites for the sixth annual NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round, the national office announced Wednesday. The event will be played May 14 – 16 and features 10 four-team, double elimination tournaments throughout the country. The 40 qualifiers and pairings for the Opening Rounds will be announced Tuesday, May 8 at 5 p.m. EDT on the [NAIA Facebook](#) page. The opening round playing format can be found [here](#).

The hosts include Bowling Green (Ky.) Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB); Central Methodist University (Mo.); **City of Dodge City, Kan.**, and the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference (Co-hosts); Georgia Gwinnett College; Lindsey Wilson College (Ky.); Southern Oregon University; University of Mobile (Ala.); Oklahoma City University; and William Carey University (Miss.). Bowling Green is hosting two separate opening round events at Michael O Buchanon Park. Overall, seven

schools that are a part of hosting are guaranteed a berth in the 40-team field of the National Championship Opening Round.

Five of this year's hosts are returning for the second-straight year. Within that group, Lindsey Wilson and Oklahoma City will each be hosting for the sixth-straight time since the NAIA Opening Round Championship format began in 2013. William Carey is hosting for the fourth time in the last six events.

The University of Mobile, **the City of Dodge City** and Southern Oregon University are first-time hosts in this event.

Last year, only four of the 10 Opening Round hosts won their bracket and represented their school at the NAIA Softball World Series.

The champion of each Opening Round will advance to play in the 38th annual NAIA Softball World Series in Clermont, Fla., that runs May 25 – 31. The World Series is a 10-team double elimination tournament held at Legends Way Ball Fields with the championship and if-necessary games taking place on Thursday, May 31. The World Series bracket will be announced on Wednesday, May 16.

Last year's national champion, Oklahoma City won its record 10th World Series trophy and second in as many years.

The Opening Round site selection process takes into account: geography, facilities, student-athlete experience, current rating of the team and host qualification. In the event that a host bid is directly tied to an institution, that school is guaranteed at least an at-large berth into the field in order to host. The bid deadline was April 1.

For the complete Opening Round schedule, click [here](#).

For more championship information, click [here](#).

2018 NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round Host Sites

(Listed alphabetically by Host)

Host Entity	Years Hosted	Facility	Location	Bracket Name
Bowling Green Convention & Visitors Bureau #1	2017, 2018	Michael O Buchanan Park	Bowling Green, Ky.	Bowling Green Bracket #1
Bowling Green Convention & Visitors Bureau #2	2017, 2018	Michael O Buchanan Park	Bowling Green, Ky.	Bowling Green Bracket #2
Central Methodist	2015, 2018	Cox Softball Complex	Fayette, Mo.	Fayette Bracket
City of Dodge City, Kan. / Kansas Collegiate Athletic	2018	Legends Park	Dodge City, Kan.	Dodge City Bracket

Conference

Georgia Gwinnett	2016, 2017, 2018	Grizzly Softball Complex	Lawrenceville, Ga.	Lawrenceville Bracket
Lindsey Wilson	2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018	Marilyn D Sparks Park	Columbia, Ky.	Columbia (Ky.) Bracket
Southern Oregon	2018	US Cellular Field	Medford, Ore.	Southern Oregon Bracket
Mobile	2018	Gulf Shores Sportsplex	Gulf Shores, Ala.	Gulf Shores Bracket
Oklahoma City	2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018	Ann Lacy Stadium	Oklahoma City, Okla.	Oklahoma City Bracket
William Carey	2014, 2015, 2017, 2018	Joseph & Nancy Fail Field	Hattiesburg, Miss.	Hattiesburg Bracket

NAIA Softball National Championship Opening Round Facts

- This opening round championship format occurs for the sixth time in the history of the sport, which spans back to 1981. From 2005-12, the championship format was played out at one location and included pool play with the champions advancing to double-elimination action.
- Opening Round All-Time Records (by seeds since 2013)
 - 1 seeds: 106-36 (.746)
 - No. 2 seeds: 79-65 (.549)
 - No. 3 seeds: 47-76 (.382)
 - No. 4 seeds: 26-77 (.252)
- Since the Opening Round format began in 2013, the top seed has been the Opening Round champion in 31-of-50 events. There have been three No. 4 seeds to win the event in the five-year history: Webber International (Fla.) won the 2016 Reinhardt Bracket (Ga.) with a record of 3-0; Ottawa (Kan.) won the 2017 Morningside Bracket (Iowa) with a 2-0 record and Indiana Wesleyan won the 2017 Bowling Green Bracket (Ky.) with a 3-0 record.
- Lindsey Wilson and Oklahoma City are the only programs to serve as Opening Round hosts in all six years.
- The 40-team Opening Round field will be comprised of 31 automatic qualifiers and nine at-large berths. The 19 conferences will receive one berth per six teams and two berths per ten teams.
- The 10-team World Series bracket will be officially announced May 16 after the Opening Rounds have been completed (late in the day).
- Currently, 195 NAIA schools sponsor a varsity softball program among a membership of nearly 260 colleges, universities and conferences.

