



2027 NFCA Division I Leadoff Classic Tournament

February 11-14, 2026, Clearwater, FL

'Elevate the Game Incentive.'

'Elevate the Game' is one of the NFCA's core principles and something we strive for every day.

'Elevate the Game Incentive' Program. The overview below outlines how the allocation and recognition will be awarded across tournament standings, statistical performance, program character, and leadership. Overall distribution is \$100,000.

'Elevate the Game Incentive' Distribution Structure

1. Universal Eligibility

Based upon our [NFCA purpose, core values, and mission](#), it is important all participating teams have the opportunity to 'win' part or all of the incentive based upon performance over the four-day event. Therefore, all participating teams are eligible to receive allocations, ensuring equal access to incentives regardless of conference affiliation or 2026 performance. Allocations will be awarded to programs to help 'elevate the game' within individual programs.

2. Tournament Champion Determination

The primary incentive allocation is determined by overall tournament finish. The winner of the 2027 NFCA DI Leadoff Classic will receive \$50,000.

The 2027 NFCA DI Leadoff Champion will be determined using the following criteria (as outlined in our tournament manual).

1. **Overall Record:** Top win-loss record across tournament play.
2. **Head-to-Head Competition:** Used if exactly two teams are tied and played each other.
3. **Run Differential:** Used if more than two teams are tied OR if tied teams did not play each other.
 - o **Differential Cap:** Maximum of 8 runs per game counted toward calculations.
 - i. Calculated strictly across a maximum of **5 guaranteed games** (extra scheduled games beyond 5 are excluded).
 - ii. **Incomplete Games Provision:** If guaranteed games cannot be completed, calculations revert to a **per-game average**.
4. **Fewest Runs Allowed:** Based on total runs allowed across the 5 guaranteed games (or per-game average if uncompleted).

NATIONAL FASTPITCH COACHES ASSOCIATION

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5. **Most Runs Scored:** Based on total runs scored across the 5 guaranteed games (or per-game average if uncompleted).
6. **If still tied,** both teams will be declared co-champions and split the 'Elevate the Game Incentive' (\$25,000 to each team).

3. Specialty & Performance Awards

In addition to the tournament championship, targeted incentives will be distributed across three distinct award tracks that align with another one of our NFCA primary taglines of **"Innovate. Inspire. Coach."**

- **INNOVATE Awards (Statistical Leaders):** Presented to programs at the conclusion of the tournament who finish the event at the top of the official tournament leaderboard in the following categories:

Offensive Categories

- **Home Runs** (Highest per game total)
- **Stolen Bases** (Highest per game total)

Defensive Categories

- **Strikeouts** (Highest per game total)
- **Runs Allowed** (Lowest per game total)

The \$10,000 per category award will be tracked through official scoring procedures and validated by NFCA team and participating SIDs/Official Scorers. Total distribution to the **Innovate** Award winners is \$40,000.

- **INSPIRE Award:** Presented to the team that best embodies sportsmanship, integrity, and the mission of the **NFCA**. This \$5,000 award will be selected by head coaches, umpires, and credentialed media members at the Leadoff Classic Tournament. Process will be overseen by the Games Committee.
- **COACH Award:** Presented in recognition of an outstanding coaching performance, strategic execution, and overall team leadership. This \$5,000 award will be selected by head coaches, umpires, and credentialed media members at the Leadoff Classic Tournament. Process will be overseen by the Games Committee.