NCAA DII Softball Caucus Meeting

12/8/16 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM Salon E-H

I. Gary Bryce
   a. Introduction of HCC Representatives
   b. Announcement Meeting Friday 11/9/16 8:00 AM go over 14 new rule proposals/changes

II. Samantha Ekstrand – NCAA Legal Counsel
   a. Introduction: “coaches lawyer” 20(+) years of coaching experience lacrosse
   b. Duties:
      i. Advise through troubles
      ii. Contract – terms, worst case scenarios, getting a contract
      iii. Investigations – complaints, hazing, etc.
      iv. Separation Agreements
   c. Contact Information on NFCA website – feel free to contact if you need help or counsel

III. Donna Vavrinec – UIC
   a. Introduced: www.suparbitersport.com
      i. How umpires communicate to each other and us coaches
      ii. Same website umpires use – free of charge to coaches
      iii. Need to “register” by clicking on “coaches”
      iv. Forms:
         1. Strongly encouraged to fill our post season umpire recommendation forms
         2. SUP Observation Form → direct message to UIC
   b. Umpire Training
      i. In person training in January
         1. Open to all umpires, DI post season umpires have to go, DII umpires are strongly encouraged
         2. Video from training available online
      ii. New 2017 Pilot Program: Softball Umpire Institute
         1. In September 2017
         2. Clinic includes: video, classroom, and on field work
         3. Goal to improve and keep moving umpires and game forward

IV. Melody “Mel” Cope – Coaches Connection
   a. Objective: improve the lines of communication between coaches, conference offices, and NCAA
   b. Role to be an advocate

V. Brittany Bennett (UNC Pembroke / Peach Belt Conference) – Bat Testing Feedback
   a. Done at all conference games in contract and nonconference games as determined by host school
   b. Cost:
      i. 1 Time Cost of Tester $800
      ii. Sticker (2-3 year supply) $110
      iii. Total approximately $1000 start up
   c. Main Concerns in favor of bat testing: safety and cheating
   d. Process/Comments:
      i. Failed bats are removed from site and can try to retest the next day
ii. 1st time took coached 45 minutes by end of season 15 minutes
iii. 1st year Peach Belt didn’t have stringent rules (need to change procedures)
   1. All bats tested by 1 hour 15 minutes prior to game time
   2. Who is going to be present during testing? (suggested game day administrator)
   3. What surfaces do you test on
iv. Currently 3 conferences in DII adopted bat testing, encouraged to start having discussion to adopt
v. Peach Belt willing to share their policy
vi. HCC going to advocate to adopt

VI. Molly Simons – Annual Report Overview
   a. Went over NCAA regional representation
   b. 2017 Post Season Schedule:
      i. Selection Show May 7th
      ii. Regionals May 12th – 14th
      iii. Super Regionals May 18th – 20th
      iv. Elite Eight 25th – 29th
   c. Bid process for future sites released in April 2017
      i. 2017 selection criteria the same
      ii. Committee taking request for changes in selection criteria for 2018
   d. June 21-22nd Annual Meeting
      i. Email topics by June 1st for Agenda
   c. Noted: changing to ranking for championship bracket

VII. Gary Bryce
   a. Discussion: Permanent Site
   b. Committed to Festival in 2020 and 2024 [NCAA will not allow to let softball our of festival]

VIII. Mairin Dudek (American International College) – Festival Year Alternate Schedule Proposal
   a. Problem: during festival year lose 1 week of games
   b. Proposed solution: during festival year remove super regional
   c. Sample Schedule:
      i. Selection Show May 3rd
      ii. 8 team double elimination tournament [5/7 – 5/11]
         1. 5/7 4 Games
         2. 5/8 4 Games
         3. 5/9 4 Games
         4. 5/10 2 Games
         5. 5/11 If necessary
      iii. Championship Series 5/13 – 5/16
   d. Pros of Proposition:
      i. Week longer in regular season
      ii. No excessive games in 1 week
      iii. Less missed class time
   c. Cons of Proposition:
      i. Quick turnaround into championship series 5/11 to 5/13
         1. Weather issues
         2. Well Being of Student Athlete
         3. Making travel arrangements (quick turnaround)
ii. Campus Facilities able to host 8 team double elimination tournament (losing opportunity for campuses to host)
f. Moved to vote – decided “no vote” consensus to have more movement for being removed from festival year
   i. Discussion (before vote):
      1. Asked if moving back festival date is an option
      2. Why do female student athletes have to give up 11 days of season every 4 years and counterpart baseball does not
      3. Student athlete welfare – cramming games into last 2-3 weeks of season when weather permits and the affects physically and emotionally on athletes in addition to missed class time
      4. Education component – class time, stress, mental health issues → DII prides itself on education (balance) and festival year schedule doing injustice to softball student athletes

IX. Chelsea Crawford – Proposal with Equivalencies and Scholarship
   a. Proposal No 2017 – 12: count only athletics aid toward individual and team equivalency limits
      i. Only 4 DII schools fully fund all sports (at or above 90% of team limit)
      ii. 2015 GOALS Study showed aid is important decision maker for DII athletes in choosing school
      iii. Average team funded at 56% equiv. rate
      iv. DI considered similar proposal tabled for further review (April)
   b. AMA for Coach Connection – draft for increasing softball equivalency
      i. 60% DII fully funded at 90% or above
      ii. No on hit 7.2
      iii. Average Scholarship equiv. 4.4
      iv. If institution relying on other awards will free up equiv.
   c. Process for getting equivalency increase:
      i. Must have 2 conferences or 16 institutions support by July 15th, 2017
      ii. Creative in rationale (see reasons why in 2015 didn’t get passed – keeping up with DI, Title 9, Gender Equity)
      iii. Need 2/3 votes from membership to pass dominant
      iv. Encouraged to get student athletes voice involved (SAAC): educate and promote
      v. Discuss with AD and Presidents (outreach to coaches in DII)
   d. Group asked in info and power point could be distributed due to conference call being difficult to understand at times

X. Mel, Molly, Jen – NCAA Rankings Overview/Mock Call
   a. Reviewed DII softball selection criteria
   b. Encouraged to get involved in regional advisory committee (RAC)
   c. Team Sports criteria located at ncaa.org
      i. Under championships
      ii. Selection criteria definitions (allows all regions to have similar criteria)
      iii. Definition of “in region”
   d. RAC
      i. 3 years on, couple years off, about 1 ½ hour time commitment per week
      ii. Conference role to appoint
      iii. Evaluate and rank teams in region using selection material
      iv. Stressed confidentiality
   e. Ran through Mock Ranking
      i. Encouraged to not count “columns”
ii. Continue to look at whole schedule (ex. team gets “hot”)

iii. Look at teams 1-3, then 4-7, then 8-10

iv. Questions:
   1. Are criteria weighted?
      a. All criteria equal; tiebreaker use same criteria throughout the year
   2. Why does a team drop in rankings when winning?
      a. Playing weaker opponents then others ranked
   3. What is conference strength is weak?
      a. Play stronger nonconference schedule
   4. Ranked opponent
      a. Ranked in NCAA rankings not NFCA
   5. Will out of conference games hurt?
      a. Will not hurt necessarily

f. Group put together to discuss ideas for avoiding 1st round conference match-ups in post season (regionals)
   i. Looking at crossing regions
   ii. Possibility to adjust seeding line in bracket

g. Note: Championship committees made up of Athletic Directors and Presidents
   i. Communicate to administration
   ii. More conversations about festival years

XI. Shelly and Kristen – All American Committee

a. Restructure All Region Team by reducing nominations from 8 to 6 per school
   i. Reasoning votes are getting diluted
   ii. Not more awards
   iii. Discussion:
      1. Do we need to restructure positions to allow for best players getting all region?
      2. Suggestion: put top six in with two alternatives, minimum nomination for category if not fulfilled make at large category
      3. Requested statistics on how many teams are actually nominating 8 players; can’t govern ethics

b. Restructure All American Team
   i. 45 → 51 awards
   ii. Adding “at large”
   iii. Reasoning to be more in line with DI and DIII
   iv. Discussion:
      1. Concern getting rid of position because looking for best players
      2. Why do we not do LF, CF, RF
      3. Suggestion: eliminate position for INF or OF
      4. Suggestion: every region have one person appear on award
      5. Suggestion: having statistical minimum for all positions to be on ballot

c. Restructure Player of the Year Voting
   i. Watch List Discussion:
      1. Proposed getting rid of watch list to allow more candidates to be nominated
      2. Currently not eligible if not on watch list
      3. Watch list is for media for publicity for our sport
      4. Cannot add once down to 25
      5. Suggestion not giving as much weight to watch list for player of year (50-25-10-1 copied from USA format)
      6. Suggestion to change timeline and move dates back
   ii. Player of Year Stipulations:
1. Must be player of year in conference
   a. General motion was not in favor of this
   b. NFCA award is not a conference award
2. Must be a 1st team All American
   a. Was agreed upon to just stick to a 1st team All American

XII. Closing Remarks – Gary Bryce
a. 2018 – 2 conferences that are bringing scholarship to NCAA floor [Lone Star and GLIAC]
   i. Asking for 9 scholarships (what men have)
   ii. Opportunity for equality
   iii. After 30 years, it’s time to get it on the floor
   iv. Increase in tuition one main reason for scholarship increase
Vickie Van Kleeck – NCAA Softball Rules Committee

A. 2015-2016 Interpretations
   i. Pitcher not taking signal from the catcher – 2 second pause required if pitcher takes signal before stepping on the pitching plate (10.2.2)
   ii. No more standing of offensive team to “intimidate” defense or pitcher between innings
   iii. Compression sleeves must be same color as under shirt
   iv. Smart watches – not allowed on field only in dugout (players and coaches)
      1. 1st violation = warning
      2. 2nd violation = ejected
   v. 2017 Requirement
      1. Minimum fence heights and outfield distances required for institutional fields, not required for non-institutional fields
      2. 190’ Left/Right / 220’ Center / 6 foot High
      3. Over 4 feet grandfathered in
   vi. Protest Procedure:
      1. Rule 7.2.5 Details the Steps
      2. Umpires need to understand and follow:
         a. Coach protests before next pitch
         b. Coach identifies alleged failure to apply correct rule, effort, or misapplication of rule
   vii. In Game Field Maintenance:
      1. Rule 5.2.4 – in game field maintenance shall only be at the direction of the umpire
      2. Looking to change for next year
   viii. Non-regulation Field
      1. 2.17.2
      2. If fence distances are shorter, a fair batted ball over the fence is a ground rule double

B. Possible Rule Changes:
   i. Obstruction – require defense player to have ball in possession
   ii. Illegal Pitch – change to ball on batter only, runners do not advance
   iii. Intentional Walk – not requiring pitchers to throw pitches
   iv. Allow for projected substitutions
   v. Allow coaches to just “point” for a straight substitution for runner or batter
   vi. Limit number of offensive and defensive conferences per game
   vii. Limit number of player to player conferences in an inning
   viii. Require batter to keep 1 foot in box between pitches
   ix. Pitcher has four not five warm up pitches
   x. Limit time between innings and between pitches (possible clock)
   xi. Experimental use of instant replay
   xii. Allow home team to hand drag/rake infield between innings without umpire request
   xiii. Allow coaches to retrieve scouting data from Ipad, tablet, etc during game
   xiv. Hit by pitch – require batter to make attempt to get out of way if ball is in batter’s box
   xv. Artificial noisemakers – umpire will rule on it without opposing coach bringing it to their attention
   xvi. Base running – not allowing baserunners to run into the OF to deceive the defense
C. Rawlings Official NCAA softball for championship play
   i. Can use any ball that meets specifications in 3.2
   ii. Same ball as worth softball

D. Reorganizing rule book (NCAA asked to reduce number of pages)

E. Survey Items (Calendar):
   i. 1/17/17 - 2/24/17 Email, call for proposals (go to arbiter site, forms for rule proposal)
   ii. Proposals generate survey
   iii. Survey 3/27/17 – 5/12/17
   iv. June Committee will meet
   v. Book in 2 years – more voting at NFCA conference
   vi. 7 month process between Rules Committee and book

F. Closing Remarks: Gary Bryce
   i. Encouraged to vote on proposals
   ii. Bat Testing Vote:
      1. Unanimous vote / 0 – “no” votes
      2. Questions:
         a. Umpires still check using bat list
         b. Problem with 3 game series and stickers
         c. Umpire need to check stickers on bats during game