

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
 - v. Rule Book can be downloaded as PDF
 - vi. Need coaches to register and use information to be the “best informed” coach
 - 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
- e. 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 out 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
- e. 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 naaa.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 than 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

NCAA DII Softball Caucus Meeting (Continuation)

12/9/16

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM

Salon E-H

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 grand fathered 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