

SOFTBALL
Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting
September 14, 2011

MINUTES

This summary represents the recommendations of the Committee and is not to be construed as a change of existing rules or regulations. Final action on all items will be taken by the Board of Control at their October meeting.

Committee Members: Rich Frost (Neenah), Mark Ross (Luther), Dale Buvid (Monroe), Kris Saylor (Necedah), Glenda Smith (Tigerton), and Tammy Rademacher (Waunakee). Marcy Thurwachter attended the meeting representing the WIAA. The meeting was chaired by Rich Frost and the minutes were recorded by Marcy Thurwachter.

Dale Buvid (Monroe) and Glenda Smith (Tigerton) received a WIAA pin as recognition of their first year of service on this committee.

I. SEASON REGULATIONS

A. Minutes

Last year's minutes and action taken by the Board of Control were reviewed. Rich Frost thanked Kris Saylor and Mark Ross for last year's recommendation regarding the warm-up protocol. Members of the committee used the procedure throughout the regular season.

It was recommended to accept the minutes. Passed unanimously.

B. Season Regulations

The 2011 WIAA Spring Edition of Season Regulations, pages 27-29 were reviewed.

1. On Deck Circle

Rich Frost asked Marcy Thurwachter to explain how the experimental rule change recommendation was addressed by the NFHS. Marcy explained that Wisconsin would now be entering the third year of their experiment with the on deck batter's location. Since the NFHS usually only allows a three year experiment the Coaches Advisory Committee asked last year that WIAA staff submit the experimental rule as a rule change. It was indicated that the NFHS did not adopt the rule as a change. Staff will submit it again this year and with the addition of John Peterson on the NFHS Softball Rules Committee perhaps he can address issues the committee may have with the procedure. Marcy Thurwachter then asked what was happening with the first batter. The committee shared a variety of examples and felt that a consistent procedure should be followed. It was recommended, at the beginning of each inning, the first two batters should be positioned in front of their team's dugout. Passed unanimously.

2. Clarification of Make-up of Multi-Game Dates

There is confusion regarding how multi-game dates are made up. Wade Labecki verified that if the original teams are no longer available for the make up game(s), that event has changed and would no longer be considered part of the original multi game date. The committee felt an additional note was necessary for clarification. It was recommend that if a portion of a multi game date is postponed, it may be made up without penalty provided all games are played on a single date with the originally scheduled teams. Passed unanimously.

3. Fence Distance

Rich Frost asked for an update regarding the requirement of a fence (185-235') for all regular season varsity games in 2014. Marcy reported that there have been very few calls, but she expects more interest once the 2014 season arrives. The committee recommended keeping this as a Point of Emphasis again next season.

4. 2013 and Future Season Schedules

Rich Frost shared that in 2013 the girls' basketball season will revert to an earlier start season. This would allow softball to return to their old season schedule, allowing the State Tournament to be played one week earlier. Rich Frost suggested moving the sectional finals to Thursday because of potential rain make-ups on Saturday causing too many conflicts. The committee had a lengthy discussion regarding conflicts with graduations and other events. It was felt that it was nearly impossible to find a solution that will work for everyone. Marcy Thurwachter shared that she felt with the current schedule many administrators are hesitant to host the sectionals since they may already be out of school. Dale Buvid still liked the old format where the sectional final was held along with the sectional semi-finals. Marcy noted that more schools now had an opportunity to host since only one diamond was required. It was recommended that for 2013 the dates would be:

March 11 First day of practice

May 16 Regional quarters for Divisions 2, 3, & 4

May 21 Regional semis

May 23 Regional finals

May 28 Sectional semis

May 30 Sectional finals

June 6, 7, 8 State

In following years the dates will be corresponding.

Passed unanimously.

II. TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

A. Tournament Regulations

The 2011 WIAA Spring Edition of Season Regulations, pages 30-34 were reviewed.

B. Five Divisions

Rich Frost shared that Jeff Hodgson of Belmont is interested in expanding softball to five divisions similar to basketball. Kris Saylor is also a basketball coach and felt that the expansion in basketball hadn't really addressed the original issue. Tammy Rademacher noted that it had moved Waunakee down to Division 2 in basketball making it one of the largest schools in that division. Waunakee advanced to State. Mark Ross questioned the number of teams that would be in each division and that perhaps it would only take one game to win the regional championship. Rich Frost will have this topic on the agenda for the WFSCA Clinic. No further action was taken.

C. Shared Revenue and Gate Receipts

Marcy Thurwachter explained the WIAA has concerns about revenue sources and that she had been asked to bring this topic forward for discussion. The committee discussed charging admission during the regular season. None of the committee members charge for their home games. No one was aware that their schools had charged for the regional rounds of the WIAA tournament either. The committee cited the following as areas of concern:

1. Issues about facilities. Are facilities built to control access or would it be too much work to try to put up temporary fencing/roping.
2. Quick turn around. In some cases, there is only one day between games. With rainouts it may be difficult to find workers.

At sectionals (pre-determined sites only) the committee felt admission could and should be charged. This would be criteria for hosting the sectional. Kris Saylor said that when they hosted they did so to showcase their facility and weren't concerned with whether it was a money maker or not. Glenda Smith's gate receipts from hosting a sectional go into a tournament account. Dale Buvid felt that this is a topic for athletic directors as they would have more experience with issues associated with charging admission and sharing the gate. Marcy Thurwachter asked if the committee could support the same type of financial arrangement that is used in volleyball. The committee felt this was agreeable.

D. State Tournament Attendance

Marcy Thurwachter provided the committee with the attendance records from the past State Tournaments held at Goodman Diamond. In 2011 the attendance had rebounded from a low count in 2010. It was noted that better weather probably contributed to better attendance.

E. Participating Schools Survey

The committee reviewed a survey that Marcy Thurwachter had conducted after the State Tournament for those schools that had participated in 2011. She will continue to survey as it gives coaches an opportunity to provide feedback.

F. Items from Committee

1. Determination of Home/Visitor Dugouts and Warm-up

Dale Buvid brought up the question of how the home/visitors dugouts and warm-up were determined at a neutral site game. For example, Dale stated that when they arrived at a sectional site they were uncertain as to which dugout they would have. He also wanted his team to know in advance when they would take the infield for warm-ups. Rich Frost thought that they could follow what is used at State.

It was recommended that in neutral site tournament games, the first alpha team, in alternating years, would have the third base dugout and warm-up first. The coin flip to determine home and away should be conducted by the site coordinator or umpires at least 45 minutes prior to the start of the game. In the case of a school hosting and playing in this game, they would determine which dugout is their preferred dugout and would warm-up first. A coin flip would still be necessary. Passed unanimously.

The committee directed WIAA staff to make this a Point of Emphasis in the tournament managers' duties and include it in the rules presentation.

2. 3 inning Rule in Tournament

Marcy Thurwachter explained the situation that had occurred in volleyball this fall with a coach removing her team from the floor prior to the complete of the match. This resulted in the school being placed on probation. During the WIAA Tournament, scores have been reported with games ending in the second or third inning. Current language states that games must be played through the fifth inning with one team ahead by ten runs. When teams fail to comply with this rule their team can be put on probation. Rich Frost strongly stated that the athletes deserve the chance to play as many innings as possible. The committee was not interested in changing the current regulation.

III. SOFTBALL RULES

A. 2011 NFHS Major Softball Rules Changes

The committee reviewed the 2012 NFHS Softball Rule changes. Marcy Thurwachter shared that there continues to be serious discussion regarding pitchers beginning their pitch with both feet in contact with the pitching plate.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Miscellaneous

1. 7th and 8th Graders

Rich Frost had a coach email him asking that 7th and 8th graders be allowed to play on high school teams. He understood that this was a constitutional item. Marcy Thurwachter added that this was allowed several years ago, but was changed by the membership and it was highly unlikely that it would be changed back.

2. Baseball Batter's Box

Kris Saylor noticed that the baseball batter's box was incorrectly marked on many fields. Marcy will make this a Point of Emphasis. Also, there is a lack of enforcement of batter's removing lines in the batter's box, especially if they are a bunting team. This will also be a Point of Emphasis.

3. Pitchers and Catchers Report to Practice Early

Wade Labecki notified the committee that baseball would be recommending that pitchers and catchers be allowed to report for practice early. Rich Frost and Kris Saylor see no use for it. Players may already throw in open gym. Glenda Smith felt that her players needed a break between basketball and softball. She also sees too much pressure on kids' time. There was also concern regarding baseball now overlapping more with softball and how this would impact gym time. The committee does not support this recommendation.

B. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.