

AIA Football Sports Advisory Committee
January 31, 2013
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
AIA Office Board Room

Call to order: 9:00 a.m.

1. Roll Call

Members in attendance:

All Committee members present

Visitors in Attendance:

Brian English (Ajo- Athletic Director)

Steve Belles (Hamilton- Coach)

Clif McKenzie (Scottsdale Unified Dist. Athletic Director)

Bob Wolf (Valley Lutheran-Coach)

Corey Newland (Paradise Valley Unified Dist. Athletic Director)

Marcus Williams (Chandler Unified Dist. Athletic Director)

2. Review/approval of AIA Football Sport Advisory Meeting minutes December 11, 2012

3. New Business

- a. Update from Dana Zupke and Tim Slade regarding their participation, with the AIA Sport Medicine Advisory Committee in the discussion of new safety rules for AIA Football*

Dana Zupke reported that the AIA Sport Medicine Committee is concerned with football player safety but is also concerned about preserving the game of football for AIA member schools. Committee desire is to be proactive with review of safety issues and keep AIA legislated mandated bylaws ahead of any steps state legislators might desire or act on.

Items discussed within the meeting by committee members and visitors in attendance included:

- Movement of location for kickoff back (five or ten yards)
Note: concern was raised that moving the kickoff back more than five yards would actually increase chances for injury
- Elimination of the wedge on kickoffs
- Limiting contact time in practice
- Dislodged helmet timeout allowance so a player can remain on the field for play

At this time, the AIA Sport Medicine Advisory group desires to know what the minimum contact time in practice that football coaches can live with. Dana indicated that he thought section representative from the AZFCA could be utilized to gather that information.

b. *Roster limits for AIA State Football playoffs (basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball presently have roster size limit in their sport specific bylaw and soccer has a limit state in the state tournament guide)*

Committee and guests in attendance discussed the concept of creating roster limitations for AIA State Football playoffs, as presently exist for some sports in AIA state tournament. Discussed were:

- Some coaches want to bring all players (freshman through seniors) that are in their program
 - Gives the young players the opportunity to see what the post season experience is about
- Some only want to bring up specific players for either insurance on the depth chart or to give the player the experience of varsity game preparation
- Football is a no cut sport, so limiting rosters is contrary to the philosophy of no cut
 - Maximizing participation is a major emphasis for many school districts
- High school football programs are different than college programs that, by NCAA rules, limit football squad size
- Size of roster should be a site decision. Whoever bears the cost for the size of the roster should decide on the squad limit

The AIA Football Sport Advisory Committee agreed by consensus to recommend to the AIA Executive Board that there should no roster limits for the AIA State Football playoffs at any level.

c. Varsity football coaches limitation for AIA State Football family passes

Item was brought to the Committee to discuss who (what coaches) should receive guest passes and how many quest passes should a coach receive when their team is participating in the AIA State Football championship. In an effort to accommodate varsity level coaches desire to have family members witness their team at the championship events, schools were asked to submit a list of the varsity level coaches to receive an AIA event pass which would get the holder into the game at no charge. The school athletic director was responsible for distribution of the AIA guest passes to their coaches and were responsible for returning any unused passes to the AIA for accounting purposes.

There was a wide discrepancy, by teams participating in the AIA State Football playoffs, for who they considered as varsity coaches to receive guest passes for family members to attend the championship games free of charge. The list ranged from every coach at any level in the program to just the three to four at the school who were identified as the board approved varsity football coaches.

Following discussion, the AIA Football Sport Advisory Committee came to a consensus to recommend to the AIA Executive Board that the coaches on the roster that accompanies the varsity team photo for the AIA roster page and State Football Event program should be utilized to determine the varsity level football coaches that receive limited AIA complimentary passes for entry into their school's AIA State Football championship game for family members.

d. Discussion regarding the Arizona vs. Southern California All-star game. Specifically discuss the viability of it less the impact on Arizona athletes and winter sports. Discuss the future possibility of an Arizona all-star game or other out of state all-star games being sanctioned by the AIA Executive Board.

It was reported that there is a motion coming forward to the AIA Legislative Council to change AIA bylaw; article 14.7.1 and AIA bylaw; article 14.7.2.

It was noted that the history of these bylaws, regarding all-star games, is that they were approved by the AIA representatives that serve on the AIA Legislative Council. It was also noted by AIA staff that a coach, if selected to coach in a national level all-star game, can request permission from the AIA Executive Board approval to coach in said all-star game. Language in the bylaw is known and the schools, through their agreement of membership, have an obligation to abide by the Associations bylaws.

The option for a specific during the school year special all-star event to be sanctioned by the AIA Executive Board always exists, such as occurred with the Sonoran Football Bowl event that was requested several years ago and was approved by the AIA Executive Board in place at that time. When the present AIA Executive Board were presented with the proposed Arizona vs. Southern California All-star game, they did not choose to see the game as needing emergency legislative action on their part.

The committee was reminded that all member schools are required to investigate any potential bylaw infraction and self report to the AIA Executive Board if a violation is discovered.

It was recommended by Mike Sivertson, 5A Administrative representative on the AIA Football Sport Advisory Committee, that Dana Zupke request to be on the agenda for the 5A Conference Committee meeting to present the football coaches desired legislative proposal related to all-star games. There is a process in place for AIA legislative change.

e. Discuss scheduling and freedom games impact on various AIA teams.

It was reported that getting freedom games is an issue for a team that is a perennial powerhouse. Yuma Catholic can't get schools to schedule them including the Yuma Union High Schools in their own community. Mountain Pointe is also experiencing the same difficulty.

Dr. Slemmer discussed the history of scheduling going back to when the region chairs scheduled all schedules. He reminded the committee about the concerns related to politics that effected scheduling during that process. He indicated that the AIA Scheduling Committee recommended to the AIA Executive Board that the local school (the school's coaches and administrators) be empowered to schedule what have come to be known as the freedom games on their schedule. He indicated that the AIA Executive Board has given the conference committees the responsibility to assist schools that are struggling to get complete varsity level schedules in any sport.

Dr. Slemmer indicated that section appeals affected some early verbal freedom game agreements by creating sections that were not all equal in size. He indicated that the Executive Board has given the conference committees the authority to break agreements between schools as necessary to insure that all member schools have full varsity level schedules. The region chairs will have to break up the standoff refusals by some schools to schedule specific schools.

It was noted, by Nathan Slater, that the new scheduling process (schools being responsible to find their own opponents for their freedom games) did not make scheduling less work for the local school administrator.

Dr. Slemmer indicated the computer can do whatever we (the Association) ask it to do. Schools then must be willing to accept the schedules that are created. Four years ago, reducing travel was the mandated charge given to the AIA staff by the membership. Schools were not happy with the competitive (or lack thereof) nature of those schedules. The mandate then became competitive schedules against teams in your section and division. Thus came the section schedule games created by the computer and the concept of schools creating their freedom game schedule so that the local school could control their travel and competition level.

3. Other-

The AIA Football Committee was given a copy of the consensus recommendations that were sent to the AIA Executive Board regarding state football brackets and automatic qualifiers for the AIA State Football Playoffs (see below).

The AIA Football Advisory Committee recommends the following items to the AIA Executive Board:

- *For AIA State Football, do not constrict the state brackets from their present bracket format of sixteen teams for Division I/II/III/IV/V and twelve teams for Division VI and request that the AIA Executive Board continue further study on the equity issue as it relates to the size of divisions and the number of teams on the state bracket.*
- *For AIA State football, at all divisions, the section champion will automatically qualify for the state tournament with the remaining teams gaining entry to the bracket as at-large qualifiers.*

4. Consensus recommendations for the AIA Executive Board

The following consensus recommendations will be sent to the AIA Executive Board:

- The AIA Football Sport Advisory Committee agreed by consensus to recommend to the AIA Executive Board that there should no roster limits for the AIA State Football playoffs at any level.
- The AIA Football Sport Advisory Committee agreed by consensus to recommend to the AIA Executive Board that the coaches on the roster that accompanies the varsity team photo for the AIA roster page and State Football Event program should be utilized to determine the varsity level football coaches that receive limited AIA complimentary passes for entry into their school's AIA State Football championship game for family members.

5. Meeting adjourned