

**MINUTES OF THE
NATIONAL FASTPITCH COACHES ASSOCIATION
DIVISION II CAUCUS MEETING**

November 29, 2007

Las Vegas Hilton, Las Vegas, Nevada

Chair Kelley Green, Division II representative to the NFCA Executive Board, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. with 100 Division II members in attendance.

I. Announcements.

II. NCAA Report.

a. Dee Abrahamson, NCAA secretary rules editor, discussed the upcoming rules issues for the 2008 season.

i. Abrahamson encouraged coaches to read the rulebook.

ii. Flow of the game. This is one of the major points of emphasis this season.

1. After the last batter, the next batter and the pitcher have 10 seconds to get in position. The pitcher and catcher then have 10 seconds to prepare for the pitch, and once the hands are set, the pitcher has five seconds to deliver the pitch.

iii. Strike zone. The strike zone will be the bottom of the sternum. This will lower the zone a ball's distance.

iv. Sportsmanship. Once again a major emphasis. An all-time high of 217 incidents were reported in 2007.

v. Scoring. Twenty-four additions were made to the rulebook concerning scoring.

vi. Abrahamson mentioned that a recommendation has been made concerning raising the fence height from four feet to six feet.

vii. Injury Surveillance. One of the lowest. Studies show 17 athletes/year injured by a hit or batted ball.

1. Sample size was low. Need for trainers to participate in the study.

viii. Bats. This is an on-going technological process. Testing has taken a giant step forward.

1. Tested bats at the championship this year. Results were very disappointing.
 - a. More bats exceeded the 98 mph standard than anticipated.
 2. Some bats will be added to the non-approved list. Not sure when it will come out, but composite bats get better with age.
- b. Kathy Strahm. Strahm is the coordinator of the softball improvement program for umpires. She said that they need help in selecting umpires for championship play.
- i. Coaches need to get to the NCAA recommendations of umpires for postseason play.
 1. Regional chairs on the NCAA Softball Committee were sent letters.
 2. Asked attendees to encourage umpires to attend regional clinics. Five clinics will be held in January, and they are as follows: Jan. 5, Burbank, Calif.; Jan. 12, Hartford, Conn.; Jan. 13, Atlanta, Ga.; Jan 26, Chicago, Ill.; and Jan. 27, Dallas, TX.
 - c. Teresa Smith. Smith discussed playing rules, and mentioned to attendees that proposal forms are available on the NCAA Web site and they are considered in July.
- III. Division II Head Coaches Committee. Green presented a recommendation to the attendees that Division II forms a Head Coaches Committee to discuss issues and concerns pertinent to Division II on a regular basis throughout the year.
- a. Discussion included statement that it could bring the conferences together on issues and encourage non-member schools to join the NFCA
 - b. Vote on whether to write this up as a formal proposal was taken. PASSED with 53 votes (one vote per institution).
 - c. Volunteers were obtained to assist in writing the proposal.
- IV. Division II Championship Information. Steve Johnson from the NCAA Softball Committee addressed the attendees on some issues for the upcoming season.
- a. Johnson re-emphasized recommending umpires for postseason play.

- b. Regional re-alignment. This issue has been re-affirmed by the university presidents, and will start in 2009.
 - i. Johnson said that a school's in-region opponents would be other in-state schools, schools in adjacent states and conference opponents.
- c. Selection criteria. Johnson said that this would stay the same with a focus on in-region play.
 - i. There is no more grid system.
 - ii. The first regional poll will be released the end of March. It will be numerical instead of alphabetical. A ranking will be added in place of the week that has been previously skipped.
- d. Site selections. The format from 2007 received a positive response as it allowed more time to get details in place.
- e. Postseason format. The dates for regionals will be moved up this year, with all locations having to be done on Sunday.
 - i. National tournament begins on Wednesday and has to be finished Saturday afternoon.
 - ii. May 6 will be the practice day, with May 5 the travel day.
 - iii. Johnson mentioned that selections for regionals would be on Saturday. Encouraged attendees to suggest that conference tournaments end on Saturday. If the conference tournaments end on Sunday, the committee will have to develop what-if scenarios.
 - iv. National tournament will go to a one-game championship since it was dictated to the committee that the tournament has to be done by 7 p.m. on Saturday.
 - 1. New format will use the Women's College World Series bracket, with the two final teams playing in a one-game championship game.
 - a. The rationale for this was that a double-elimination championship game would open the possibility of one team playing three games in one day.
 - b. Johnson said that working with the NCAA on this would give Division II a possibility of implementing the super regional format beginning in 2009.

i. Sharon Cessna of the NCAA said that the super regional format had been approved, but is waiting on budget approval.

c. Cessna said CSTV is scheduled to televise the semifinals on Friday and Saturday's championship game.

V. Division I Hot Topics.

a. Mercy rule. Division I has discussed wanting to eliminate the mercy rule.

i. With Division I, most teams charge admission and have television, and they believe that it hurts when only five innings are played.

b. Early Verbal Commitments. Discussion has been made wanting to lessen this in some way.

c. Recruiting Calendar. Discussion in Division I about limiting evaluation dates to 50.

d. Start of Play Date. Division I has discussed the possibility of trying to move the start of the season back to mid-February.

VI. Life/Work Balance Summit.

a. Green stated that she attended this and from the survey, received 170 responses from Division II members, with 61% being male and 39% female.

b. One problem was the limit of four student-athletes in individual workouts.

i. Thought is to increase the number to six, with two coaches being able to work out athletes in separate places.

c. Change the recruiting calendar to implement additional dead periods. Sixty-four percent of those surveyed were in favor of this.

VII. NFCA Top 25 Poll.

a. Brock Turnipseed, NFCA Director of Media Relations and Division II group liaison, asked for feedback on the weekly top 25 polls and encouraged attendees to send results to their region representatives.

VIII. NFCA All-American Process.

a. Turnipseed went through some of the online changes to the nominating forms and ballots.

- b. Johnson, all-America committee chair, presented some changes to the procedures that were discussed by the committee.
 - i. Johnson said that the committee wanted to break down the utility position to utility/pitcher and utility/non-pitcher.
 - 1. The procedures would change to state, “Players who play 33% of the team’s total games at another line-up position are eligible.” This would allow players who play designated player to be eligible for utility.
 - ii. Johnson also mentioned the committee’s desire to lower the minimums for defensive positions and raise the minimums for designated player.
 - 1. Sixty percent was proposed, but discussion prompted the committee to discuss further.

IX. Other business. No other business was brought to the floor.

X. Adjournment. Green adjourned the meeting at 11 a.m.