

Minutes from Hot Topic Rules Discussion

2008 NFCA National Convention

December 11, 2008

Equipment Standards

--Bat Safety Issue

- HCC subcommittee wanted coaches to set standard for bats, with a specific number in the rules book vs. the ASA standard.
- Committee faced several roadblocks in moving forward. The NCAA does not want to get into bat testing business, plus the speed of the game was not shared.
- Group had no issue with speed of the game, but stressed need for level playing field
- Issues raised: (1) Who is responsible for safety of the bat? (2) Who is responsible if the bat is illegal? (3) What are the consequences for an illegal bat?
- Jacquie Joseph brought up “official bat” idea; everyone would use the same manufacturer.
- Bat safety/performance is an economic issue; not all programs can purchase more bats or a variety of bats.

--Ball

- Tory Acheson noted that every other ball you play with does not meet the standard.
- Discussed use of other balls at tournaments.
- Suggested penalty for manufacturers that do not meet the standard.

Rule Change Process

- Question raised about process of rules getting passed.
- Discussed trial period for rules proposals.
- Group took straw vote and was in favor of trial period followed by a feedback period.
- Group wondered if HCC would help with feedback on proposed rules changes; the current system is ineffective.
- It was noted that the NCAA rules book cycle is now two years (same rules book for two years).
- Trial period should apply to playing rules, not housekeeping rules.

Eight-Run Rule

- Discussion of eliminating the rule or moving it to 12 or 15 runs. The straw vote indicated that it should be moved to 15 runs.
- Support for changing current number of runs or eliminating it included professionalism of our game; selling tickets to see full game; no need to artificially end the game; with 56-game limit, every game is important.
- Support for some run-rule, but most felt that eight was too low. It’s demoralizing for team that can’t get outs.
- Eight-run rule defeats playing opportunity and is consistent with rec mentality.

- It was noted that rules couldn't be eliminated only altered. Conferences can make changes to rules.

Housekeeping Rules

- With luggage costs rising, how do we make sure equipment (screens, etc.) are provided for necessary warm-ups?
- Need a rule that visiting teams have equal access to warm-up opportunities.