

**MINUTES OF THE
NATIONAL FASTPITCH COACHES ASSOCIATION
DIVISION III BUSINESS MEETING**

December 11, 2008

Marco Island Marriott, Marco Island, Florida

December 12, 2008 (Business Meeting Voting Portion)

Sean Cotter, Division III representative to the NFCA Executive Board, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. with 91 Division III members in attendance.

1. Announcements and introductions.

2. Reports.

- A. NCAA – Jan Gentry, NCAA Representative, covered the NCAA committee annual report (*Supplement I*).
 - a. The question was asked whether or not the NFCA Top 25 committee could be allowed access to the NCAA score reporting data system for informational purposes only, and Ms. Gentry said she would get back to the membership with an answer.
 - b. Ms. Gentry also stated that the NCAA will now pay for up to two bags per person for championship travel in response to new airline fees.
- B. NFCA Hall of Fame Committee – Ruth Kmak, Division III Representative, strongly encouraged members to nominate; for the 2009 class, it was noted that no Division III nominations were received.
- C. NFCA All-American Committee – Kim Wilson, Chair and East Region representative, noted that it was very important to make sure you receive a confirmation of your All-Region/All-American nominations and that they are all correct and included. She also solicited any ideas or suggestions for adidas Golden Shoe award criteria.

[Note: Reports were tabled temporarily to begin discussion of legislation while waiting for NCAA representatives. The following reports were actually given during a tabling of the legislation discussion that followed.]

- D. NCAA Playing Rules – Teresa Smith, NCAA Representative, informed the group that next year's version would be the beginning of rule books that are in place for two years. Ms. Smith also encouraged members to provide feedback during the two-week comment period when new rules are being considered.
- E. Rules & Hot Topics – Dee Abrahamson, NCAA Representative, spoke on the following hot topics:

- a. The current status of the proposal to eliminate the eight-run rule; a survey is in the process of being sent out and collected.
 - b. The pitcher's lane and status – basically, this year is an informal test period, and the NCAA is not expecting any major issues.
 - c. Brief update on equipment issues.
- F. Umpires – Kathy Strahm, NCAA National Umpire Coordinator, encouraged members to provide feedback on the officials used during the regular season. She spoke about accessing a form on the NCAA website through the following links: 1) ncaa.org; 2) Spring Sports – Softball; 3) General information; 4) All Divisions – Umpire Report Form. Ms. Strahm also stated that an umpire recommendation form was mailed out in late November and very few responses were received. She encouraged members to respond.
3. Legislation. Mr. Cotter first explained the procedural changes with the elimination of the final business meeting at convention, including proposal deadlines. The purpose of discussing the items for legislation at this time was to: 1) see if the proposals would be moved and seconded; and 2) discuss each proposal so as to vote at the Friday morning Division III business meeting.

[Note: The initial proposals were discussed Thursday, but the actual voting took place at the continuation of the Division III business meeting, held Friday, December 12, at 8 a.m., with 75 in attendance, which established a quorum. The phrasing used in the proposals below is the version used for voting on Friday morning and the official wording used for any proposals that passed.]

- A. Proposal I – **Recommendation:** To establish an eight-person committee to investigate expanding the Division III All-American and Coaching Staff of the Year regional alignment from its current eight-region status. **Rationale:** There are two regions that are overloaded with schools, and this may provide for a more balanced representation. *Proposed by Sean Cotter, Plattsburgh State University. Moved by Kris Herman, Williams College, and seconded by Julie Lenhart, Cortland State. PASSED*

Discussion: 1) A suggestion was made that the NFCA committee could work with the NCAA, as realignment/expansion is also being looked at from that perspective. 2) Ms. Lenhart questioned how the committee would be selected, and Ms. Herman informally proposed that it should be formed at convention to facilitate face-to-face meetings and productivity. The initial committee was formed by volunteers from each of the eight regions, and includes the following:
 Atlantic – Dawn Simmons, Lynchburg College
 Central – Jan Forsty, Bethany College
 East – Kim Wilson, Rowan University; and Anita Kubicka, Montclair State

Great Lakes – Ruth Kmak, University of Chicago
Midwest – Elizabeth Caroscio, University of the Ozarks
New England – Diana Pepin, Eastern Connecticut
Northeast – Julie Lenhart, Cortland State
West – Rachel Hanson, University of Dallas

- B. Proposal II – **Recommendation:** To recommend that if teams wish to be ranked, that teams submit their overall record and wins vs. teams with a winning percentage to their respective representative. **Rationale:** This will give more criteria to evaluate, while placing the reporting responsibility on the schools. *Proposed by Sean Cotter, Plattsburgh State University. Moved by Amy Tenute, Carleton College, and seconded by George Wares, Central College. FAILED*

Proposal III - **Recommendation:** For score reporting, to recommend that after the third coaches poll, coaches would include wins and losses vs. nationally ranked opponents. Each regional rep would then discuss which tier (Top 10, Top 20 or Top 25) their regional teams should be considered for ranking. **Rationale:** There should be more discussion by committee members before voting occurs. *Proposed by Sean Cotter, Plattsburgh State University. FAILED*

Discussion: 1) According to committee members speaking on behalf of other committee members not present, it was noted that the amount of work to prepare for ranking is overwhelming. The responsibility should be put back on coaches. 2) It was questioned why the NFCA Top 25 committee could not be allowed access to NCAA score reporting database system, and Ms. Gentry again stated that the NCAA was aware and it would be considered. 3) Could the submitting of this information be facilitated by the NFCA through its website? 4) The question was asked whether or not it should be required of schools to submit this information in order to be ranked.

- C. Proposal III – **Recommendation:** To propose that the final poll for Division III reflect the results from the NCAA Division III Women’s Softball Championship. **Rationale:** The eight teams that are playing for the Division III title should be recognized as the top eight teams as determined by order of finish. *Proposed by Sean Cotter, Plattsburgh State University. Moved by Damian Williams, Willamette University, and seconded by Julie Lenhart, Cortland State. FAILED*

Discussion: Is the purpose of the final poll to rank based on the season as a whole or on the final finish? The poll is subjective all year; why should we make the final poll objective? The difference in Division III versus other levels is that because of limitations on travel for NCAA first rounds, it is feasible that the top three teams in the nation could end up at the same first-round site.

- D. Proposal IV – **Recommendation:** To change the format of the Division III Leadoff Classic from a pool play and bracket format to a strictly pool play

format for the entire event, in addition to adding four more teams. **Rationale:** This would allow for more regional play and a set time for all games. *Proposed by Sean Cotter, Plattsburgh State University. Moved by Jen Williams, Smith College, and seconded by Hallie Cohen, William Paterson. FAILED*

Discussion: Concerns included whether or not a champion would still be named and whether or not this would reduce the prestige associated with this tournament.

- E. Proposal V – To establish a set of criteria for the National Coaching Staff of the Year award. *Not moved.*
- F. Proposal VI – **Recommendation:** To recommend that a Division III head coaches conference call be held twice a year — after the season in June and one month before the NFCA National Convention. **Rationale:** This would allow a good sharing of information and would be a step toward a Head Coaches Committee for Division III. *Proposed by Sean Cotter, Plattsburgh State University. Moved by Heather Bruder, Bluffton University, and seconded by Deb Pallozzi, Ithaca College. PASSED*

Discussion: General discussion focused on the timing, which was deemed appropriate.

- 4. Hot topic discussion. Mr. Cotter introduced a variety of topics, asking for input. The following notes reflect the general direction/consensus of each of the discussions.
 - A. Bat standards/ NCAA/ASA – Do we like where the game is at offensively?
No discussion.
 - B. Run rule: Do we do away with it, or is it time to just increase it. Or should it be 10/12 runs instead of 8? General feeling was to keep it as-is.
 - C. New pitching lanes – What do coaches think, and what umpires are saying?
General feeling was that this was not a good rule.
 - D. Are determined sites for NCAA first rounds good or bad? Even though there were several opinions on both sides of this argument, the general consensus was that it was good for the Division III level, but there is definitely possibility for adjustments to improve the process.
 - E. In the non-traditional segment: To allow a six-week window (with still no more than four days a week of practice) to get 16 dates of practice, and one date of competition in. This would still follow the intent of the original rule, but would allow for more flexibility for inclement weather. Many schools in the North can not use their indoor facilities in the fall for multiple reasons. This would allow a little more flexibility to use the allotted dates. The general

consensus was that this is something that is definitely wanted by coaches, but the issue is out of their control. The only action to take is to encourage college presidents and Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) members to move in this direction.

- F. With the rising costs of travel, and other concerns, what do people do for spring break? Share some ideas, in regards to late or early break, no or little funding, coach friendly places to play, and good competition. Very little discussion.

[Note: The Thursday meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m. with the continuation following Friday morning. After the voting on the above legislation, the meeting continued.]

- 5. Special presentation. Ms. Herman presented a video on the Friends of Jaclyn Foundation, a charity with which she and her program have been involved. The non-profit foundation matches children suffering from pediatric brain tumors with college or high school athletic teams. Ms. Herman encouraged members to consider getting involved in the foundation and provided the following website for further information: www.friendsofjaclyn.org.
- 6. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m.