Sports Medicine Advisory Committee

June 7, 2023

The IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee met virtually on Wednesday, June 7, 2023. Members present included Eric Benson, Mark Bacys, Dr. Darren Hancock, Dr. Preston Wolin, Greg Garofalo, Dustin Fink, along with IHSA Assistant Executive Director Stacey Lambert. Absent was Ashley Long, Dr. Darr Leutz. IHSA Guest, Dr. Karan Rai was also in attendance.

1. The committee heard a report from Kelley Altom, IHSA body fat certification instructor, about rethinking the 12% minimum female wrestling weight and adjustments to the weight certification program that may come in the future.
2. The Committee heard from Susie Knoblauch, IHSA Assistant Executive Director, who oversees sideline and competitive cheerleading about coaching certification.
   1. The Committee discussed a comprehensive plan that includes but is not limited to:
      1. Ship every IHSA member school an NFHS Spirit Rules Book annually
      2. Mandate sideline and competitive cheer to view the annual NFHS/IHSA rules video focusing on risk minimization (*the coach cannot participate until IHSA/NFHS safety rules are reviewed*)
      3. Schools can purchase a USA Cheer Safety Training Manual - $85.  <https://usacheer.org/safety/usa-cheer-cheerleading-safety-manual>
      4. Recommend additional training resources via USA Cheer and NFHS Learn
      5. Recommend USA Cheer Safety & Risk Management Course - $88. <https://usacheer.org/safety/usa-cheer-safety-risk-management>
   2. This plan will create,
      * 1. A Philosophy of Safety Awareness
        2. Understanding & Assessing Legal Liability in Cheerleading
        3. Medical Responsibilities in Cheerleading
3. The Committee talked about summer contact days:
   1. The committee talked about allowing athletes to rest lagging injuries, mental health issues, and physical exhaustion. Students aren’t required to attend summer contact days, but we all know it’s “encouraged”.
      1. Teams are going into the season already banged up because of their summer contact days and lack of rest.

**Recommendation:**

The Committee plans to put forward a by-law recommendation to adjust IHSA By-Law 3.150

Starting in the 2024-25 school year and following the progression as listed:

3.153 Persons who coach a sport at a member school may have a maximum of 15 days of contact (starting in 2026-27) in that sport with students from that school during the period between ~~the last day of classes on~~ Monday of Week 49 in the IHSA Standardized calendar ~~(whichever date is earlier)~~ in the spring of each year and Sunday of Week 5 in the IHSA Standardized Calendar. The students have a maximum of 21 days of contact starting in 2024-25; 18 days of contact starting in 2025-26, and 15 days of contact starting in 2026-27 (and moving forward) per sport with persons who coach that sport at the school they attend during the same time period. A day of contact is defined as any date on which any coaching or instruction in the skills and technique of any sport or any organization of sport related activities or competition outside of weights and conditioning takes place. These limitations apply to all sports except Baseball and Softball. An exception may be made by the Executive Director under the guidelines adopted by the Board of Directors for competitions sponsored and conducted directly by the National Governing Body for the sport.

**Rationale:** The committee feels this recommendation will help with the physical and mental health of athletes by reducing the number of contact days our high school athletes can have. Right now many multi-sport athletes go year round from sport to sport, this is weighing on our athletes to a point where we’re more beat up coming out of summer than they are at the end of the season. Weightlifting and conditioning will still be allowed through this by-law amendment as long as no sport specific training is taking place. This will keep our kids active in our schools but hopefully also give them the break they need over the summer to rest, relax, and enjoy their breaks from school.