

MINUTES OF THE IHSA SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 19, 2018

The IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee met at the IHSA office in Bloomington, Illinois on Thursday, April 19, 2018, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were: Amanda Baugher; Dustin Fink, Mt. Zion; Sara Flanigan, Wauconda; Greg Gaa; Dr. Darren Hancock; Dr. Cynthia LaBella; Dr. Dar Lutz; Chris Murphy, Lombard (Glenbard East); and Dennis Piron, Batavia. Also present were Associate Executive Director Kurt Gibson; Assistant Executive Director Stacey Lambert; and guests Joe Cunnane, Lockport (Twp.) and Greg Garofalo, Hoffman Estates (H.S.). Not present were members Todd Wilson, Rantoul and Dr. Preston Wolin.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Recommendation:** The committee recommends the following language be added to IHSA Policy 13 for full implementation in the 2019-20 school year.

Weekly Player Limitations for Football

1. A player shall not play in more than 2 games in any one week, and shall not play in more than one game in a single day. For the purposes of this section, a week is defined as the seven-day period running from Sunday through the following Saturday. (It is recommended that if a player does play in 2 games in a given week, one of those games is only as a one-way player. [i.e., only plays on offense or defense or special teams])
2. Players cannot play in games on consecutive days or be involved in live contact/thud in practice the day after playing in a game.
3. 1 play in a game equals a game played.

NOTE: If a player plays in a game that is stopped due to weather or other circumstances and completed the next day, the player can participate in the resumed game the following day.

Rationale: After considerable discussion at the committee level and with the high school football coaching community in Illinois, the IHSA SMAC believes the adoption of the above guidelines for game play by high school players in Illinois is necessary. Of greatest concern to the committee is exposure to full contact in a game setting on consecutive days, and it is this concern that serves as the main motivation behind this recommendation. Current ‘best practices thinking’ by experts in the field seems to indicate repeated exposure to live contact on successive days, particularly when the contact is at “game speed”, is something that should be avoided. Providing appropriate rest between live game play will offer protection to players that does not currently exist now, in Illinois and nationally. Football is a physical game, and the committee firmly believes the body needs time to properly recover from the impact of live contact, and this recommendation addresses that basic concern. In making this recommendation, the committee thoughtfully and thoroughly considered a number of factors and opinions. The committee realizes this recommendation can, in the short term, create scheduling challenges for schools, particularly for the 2018 season so the committee modified its January recommendation to not require implementation of this change until the 2019 season. Allowing a one-year phase in before requiring implementation will provide schools the necessary time to adjust their schedules. However, the committee strongly encourages schools and/or conferences to informally implement this recommendation for the 2018 season if and where circumstances allow. In making this recommendation, the committee also expressed

their understanding for and appreciation of football coaches, who have made a number of adjustments in their teaching, practicing, and coaching philosophies over the past decade. Football is a great game that provides participants with an important avenue to develop individually and to work as part of a larger group in pursuit of common goals, and it is the opinion of the committee that this recommendation is best not only for those students who play football, but also in the best long-term interests of the game itself.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

None

ITEMS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. The committee reviewed the minutes from its January 2018 meeting.
2. The committee heard an update from IHSA staff on the development of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) information for the SMAC website. It is expected that information on SCA will be available for the start of the 2018-19 school year.
3. The committee heard updates on pending legislation on sports-medicine topics that could have an impact on IHSA member schools.
4. The committee heard a presentation from IATA members concerning a “Safety in Football” initiative IATA will roll out in the fall. A select number of schools will participate in the program, and schools interested in participating in the program will be able to register through IATA. IHSA staff agreed to help get the word out in support of this program, which is aimed at highlighting the many steps taken by schools to minimize as much risk as possible for those students playing interscholastic sports.
5. The committee began a robust discussion on what an acclimatization plan could look like for sports besides football. The committee believes the time has come to develop acclimatization for other high school sports and agreed to continue this discussion next year. The committee agreed to work on a draft for submission to the IHSA Board in February of 2019.
6. The committee discussed ways they can leverage their position in the sport-medicine community to raise awareness among student-athletes on the opioid crisis facing the United States. During their discussion, the committee reviewed a presentation from committee member Fink on the topic. IHSA staff will work on gathering resources on the issue for distribution on the IHSA website.
7. The committee heard a report from IHSA staff concerning the new concussion education cycle (Cycle 2) being available for coaches and officials. IHSA staff highlighted a new feature of the cycle that focuses on the importance of coaches developing the proper culture within their teams so that athletes feel comfortable reporting to coaches or other adults when they think they might be injured. Committee members shared their observations that players seem to feel more comfortable in general reporting injuries, and that coaching staffs have continued to work with their school’s medical staff and others (like a school’s Concussion Oversight Team) who work to help injured students recover and return to play and the classroom.

8. Committee member Baugher reported back to the committee with feedback from her attendance at the IHSA Wrestling Advisory Committee meeting on April 18th. During that meeting, the Wrestling Advisory Committee and Committee Member Baugher discussed the possibility of creating a rule proposal to develop an additional period of time for approved medical personnel to assess an athlete who has sustained a possible head injury. Committee Member Baugher agreed to continue to work on drafting a proposal for the committee to review next year with the anticipated goal of submitting said proposal to the NFHS in 2019.
9. The committee met with IHSA Football Administrator Sam Knox, who shared with the committee some additional feedback on the player limitation proposal from the Football Advisory Committee. Among the ideas shared were:
 - a. A suggestion to change the definition of a week to cover the seven-day period beginning Friday and ending the following Thursday
 - b. A suggestion to establish the player limitation to 8 quarters max in a given week that would include a four-quarter limit per day.
 - c. The challenges faced in schools with fewer football participants who may play multiple levels. Fewer players playing multiple levels can create challenges to fill the schedules of three or more levels of play at a school.
 - d. A statement that a large, but unspecified, number of football-playing schools are not tackling to the ground as the season progresses, which may result in fewer over-all exposures.
10. The committee reviewed the IHSA PPE and suggested to IHSA staff that the form be updated for the 2018-19 school year to clarify the specific individuals who can sign off on a student's PPE.
11. The committee reviewed a report from IHSA staff that listed concussions reported by schools during the current year. The committee requested IHSA staff to try and break out the reported information to reflect concussions reported by school size as another analysis point.
12. The committee set September 12, 2018, as the date of their next meeting. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and be held at the IHSA Office.