

MINUTES OF THE ILLINOIS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON PLAYER SAFETY MEETING

March 30, 2017

The Illinois Advisory Council on Player Safety met on Thursday, March 30, 2017, beginning at 10:00 a.m. via conference call. Council members participating were Bailey Coffman, Tregg Duerson, Dustin Fink, Tory Lindley, Dennis Piron, and Cole Steward. Also participating were Associate Executive Director Kurt Gibson and Sports Medicine Advisory Committee member Greg Gaa. Not on the conference call were members Sara Flanigan, and Napoleon Harris.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None at this time.

ITEMS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. The council reviewed the minutes of their October 25, 2016 meeting.
2. The council reviewed a summary report of the Special Reports from licensed officials from contests in which players were removed with a possible head injury for fall and winter contests. IHSA staff pointed out that through the winter, the number of reports are greater than in 2015-16, but the percentage of players not returning to the contests remains consistent with averages since 2010-11. Council member Fink indicated that some officials indicated to him that officials may be more inclined to send someone out of a contest if they know medical personnel is present. SMAC member Gaa noticed that a large number of reports, indicating the athlete returned to game/contest, in football and boys' soccer are for the varsity level, contests where appropriate medical personnel are more likely to be in attendance. Council member Lindley suggested adding a 'yes/no' question to the report form beginning next school year that would ask if an athletic trainer was on site for the contest. IHSA staff indicated that adding the question can be done.
3. The council suggested that 'medical timeouts' be held prior to contests between contest officials and competing teams. These 'timeouts'/meetings could be held in conjunction with the pre-game sportsmanship meeting that already occurs for most interscholastic events. While more work on the specific mechanism for this concept needs to be flushed out, some of the ideas discussed by the council were:
 - a. Attendees: person responsible for implementing EAP for the contest, head coaches, contest officials, AT's
 - b. Home head coach or host administrator would become responsible person for identifying who would implement EAP (if necessary) if no AT would be present at this gathering
 - c. Topics to include: who is in charge of clearing player sent out for each school, what is the EAP (sudden cardiac event, heat breaks [if necessary], severe weather)
4. The council discussed the new Pitch Count reporting requirements that have gone into place this school year. Early anecdotal reports to IHSA staff would indicate the reporting is going well thus far in the season. The council and IHSA staff, in particular, thanked the IHSA's IT

staff for creating a very user-friendly reporting portal. Council member Fink suggested the baseball advisory committee consider whether any adjustment to the mercy rule should be made in light of the new reporting requirements to further aid player safety.

5. The council discussed the importance of allowing appropriate rest for football players between playing games and/or engaging in full contact in practices and asked that a working document be created they can use to develop ideas for future consideration. IHSA staff agreed to create the document for the council's use.
6. IHSA staff presented information concerning the staff's likely increase in credentials for an additional medical provider (from one to two) for those schools who qualify for the football and soccer state finals. Team rosters for these events are generally larger and have used more than one medical provider with the team during the season. Making this allowance when necessary will help those qualifying schools at the state finals. The additional person will still need to be approved by IHSA and be in compliance with all IHSA regulations.
7. The council discussed the importance of student-athletes serving as advocates for their teammates in all sports as it relates to player safety. In general, students are closer to their teammates and know when their teammates are in need of some assistance, whether for physical or emotional reasons. The council recognizes the importance of students feeling comfortable to go to someone (coach, teacher, AT, or administrator) when they believe a teammate needs some assistance. Council members Coffman and Steward agreed to work with IHSA staff in creating a presentation that can be used with all teams.
8. The council discussed wrestling stoppage time for head injuries. The current NFHS Wrestling Rules Book does not allow for additional stoppage time for an athlete suspected of having a head injury. Members of the council are concerned that the absence of additional time to assess an athlete suspected of having a head injury puts the AT on site in an awkward position to possibly allow the athlete to resume participation even though a full assessment may not have occurred. Members of the council expressed their concern for and knowledge of situations when AT's have been reluctant to pull athletes from wrestling matches because of the 'finality' of such a determination, particularly given the impact this can have in the post-season. The NFHS SMAC is going to discuss this concept at their up-coming meeting. As stated, the current rule does allow time for an athlete to be assessed, and if in that time an AT cannot determine if the athlete sustained a concussion, the AT should then not allow the athlete to return to competition. Council member Fink indicated he will draft some language - as an individual AT -for the IHSA Wrestling Advisory Committee to consider on this topic.
9. The council discussed whether the association should consider utilizing video surveillance/monitoring at some select state finals events. The council suggested this "eye in the sky" might offer assistance on possible injuries that coaches or team medical staffs may miss. IHSA staff indicated exploring this concept makes sense and will report back to the council in the fall concerning any other states using such an approach.
10. The council discussed whether there was a need for the association to develop a Cold Weather Policy. Currently, the lack of data of cold weather-related injuries or deaths is the reason for the absence of such a policy. IHSA staff indicated they would research whether any other states are using such a policy and report back to the council.