

The IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee met virtually on Tuesday, September 24th starting at 10am. Members present for the meeting were Eric Benson, Principal at Somonauk; Greg Garofalo, Athletic Trainer at Hoffman Estates (H.S.); DeVale Stubbs, Athletic Director at Calumet City (Thornton Fractional North); Chad Hohenbery, Official from Bartonville; Dr. Karan Rai from Bloomington; Mark Bacys, Athletic Director at Danville (H.S.); Tanner Krumwiede, Athletic Trainer at Jerseyville (Jersey); Andy Renner, Athletic Trainer at Alton (Sr.) High School.

Members absent from the meeting were Dr. Cynthia LaBella, Dr. Jason Robin, Heather Larson, Dr. Darr Leutx, and Dr. Darren Hancock. Other attendees were Dustin Fink, Aaron Kremmel, Stacey Lambert, IHSA Assistant Executive Director; Nicole Schaeftbauer, IESA Executive Director; and Sam Knox, IHSA Assistant Executive Director.

Administrative Recommendations:

- 1) **Recommendation:** The Committee recommends resubmitting their proposal from last year to reduce the number of summer contact days from 25 to 20.

Rationale: The Sports Medicine Advisory Committee feels this recommendation will help athletes' physical and mental health 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 they are more beat up coming out of summer than they are at the end of the season. This by-law amendment will still allow weightlifting and conditioning if no sport-specific training occurs. This by-law recommendation will keep our kids active in our schools and hopefully give them the break they need over the summer to rest, relax, and enjoy their breaks from school.

General Items of Discussion:

a) Sam Knox came to the meeting to talk about the Football Proposal the Ad Hoc Committee put together. The football proposal would adjust the start of the season as well as the playoff structure. The committee talked about the dead week impact with school contracts, the 12 days of practice requirement, the adding more football with the week zero scrimmage and the adjustment with the additional week of playoffs the preseason scrimmage needs to go and adjusting contact days from 25-20 since they're getting additional days of practice. Sam is taking the SMAC conversation back to the Football Ad Hoc Committee for additional review.

b) The Committee discussed a potential fall acclimatization proposal to increase the amount of time on the first few days of practice. The Committee talked about how schools are starting school earlier and earlier so a lot of schools are not able to get in two practices a day due to school starting. There are a lot of unique situations across the state with start days, this seems like a specific situation and does not warrant a complete rule change.

c) The Committee discussed making a soft helmet proposal for girls flag football. Unfortunately soft helmets are not NOCSAE approved, although it's smart to wear them and provide protection to skulls. Without the NOCSAE approval the IHSA or NFHS will be legally liable if we require them. Helmets can

also provide a false sense of security to the girls, that could make players more aggressive. We can continue to push for wearing the soft helmets as a best practice.

As a subtopic the Committee asked why aren't we mandating helmets in girls lacrosse. They discussed requiring girls lacrosse to wear the same helmets as boys lacrosse wears since they're NOCSAE approved. Previous feedback said it would change the sport and make it more aggressive. Stacey will discuss this further with the girls' lacrosse administrator.

d) The Committee discussed caffeine as a banned substance with the IHSA. Are we fighting a losing battle with the caffeine on banned substance list? Do we adjust our wording? How do we handle this because caffeine is in everything. The Committee determined it was best to leave caffeine on the banned substance list and work on further education. Greg and Chad will work on a paragraph for the upcoming sports medicine corner in the IHSA newsletter.

e) The Committee talked about the IHSA newsletter and the monthly SMAC corner. The Committee will continue to work on topics and content for the newsletter.

f) The Committee talked about the IHSA Heat Policy and how to apply it to marching band the same as other IHSA sponsored sports. Kids will participate in fall practice for their sport and then go straight to band practice for 4 or more hours. Marching band isn't technically under the IHSA umbrella – we need to adjust to get them under IHSA coverage, so they have some regulations.

The Committee wants to convene a special committee for band regulations – Stacey will talk to Susie about collecting a group of band directors, SMAC members, principals, AD's, to find a middle ground and set up some standards to keep kids safe. The Committee also asked about creating Q and A form for band directors for planning so they can implement best practices.

g) The Committee discussed Athletic Training coverage for offsite events and all post season events. Should we reinforce who is responsible for providing athletic training coverage and requiring a standard of coverage? Do off site locations require coverage per their insurance? Why can't we require athletic trainers to work post season events and then say if you can't find one here is a list of athletic trainers who you could call... IHSA will pay them like they do the officials, payment would come out of the host reimbursement? Wrestling schools always manage to find a body fat tester, if they're hosting a post season event, they need to have an athletic trainer available.

The SMAC is going to start with creating a pool of available ATCs and sharing that information with host sites so they know who to ask. The Committee questions if it's not required of a host to have an ATC onsite, will hosts even use the pool? At what level do we start requiring ATC coverage? What is the cost range/ compensation range?

Stacey will work with Dustin and Aaron to get numbers and a pool put together for a winter meeting. Stacey will ask Craig about state final compensation and who secures ATC's

SMAC will then review what sports will we require ATC coverage for? How many ATC's will be required for certain sports? I.e. track/ cross country

h) The Committee talked about how to report schools violating IHSA Policies: the policy creates an inconvenience to the school, the ATC is trying to enforce the policy but would have to report own boss...

becomes an issue of reporting. Do we have a whistleblower policy? Stacey reviewed the procedure for reporting.

i) The Committee talked about last spring's all sport acclimatization policy. Stacey will work with Andy to build in required number of practices for winter and spring. The Committee also discussed adding in language for baseball/softball only. During indoor practice many schools have a morning and night practice one for pitchers/catchers and one for position players. The Committee determined that players can't attend 2 sessions on one day if practice time is split during the first few days.

j) The Committee discussed week zero scrimmage and player safety. One member reported that a player tore his ACL because he holding back during scrimmage another reported, whistles were not quick enough and it was not thud. The Committee wants to research how the scrimmage went and survey injuries. Stacey will send Tanner ATC email addresses for football playing schools. The Committee may also want to track 11v11 summer scrimmages.

k) The Committee revamped their summer contact day proposal from 2023. Stacey emailed the Committee the final vote numbers. The Committee determined to resubmit the proposal with 20 days of contact, starting January 1, 2025. Mark has resubmitted the proposal

l) The Committee discussed seeing lighting at an event but not showing in the app. A new NATA position statement is coming out for next year. New NATA emergency action plan statement came out this summer- can we send out?

Another NATA report shows that there are more ATCs now than there have ever been, but they are just more in demand. How do we support and keep ATC's.

m) The Committee discussed for December- number of games soccer is allowed to play in first week(s) of the season. For example, in the suburbs teams are playing at times 5 games in 1 week. The Committee maybe wants to look to limit the number of games in a school week. Preliminarily 3 seems to be a good number.

As a part of the overuse discussion in March of '23, the Committee, talked about cheerleading schedule... The end result was putting in a mandatory 1 day of rest. The Committee would like to reexamine to determine the outcome.

The next SMAC meeting will be in December of 2025