

University Athletic Committee
March 20, 2013
3:30 PM
Bowman Room, Cassell Coliseum

- Members Present:** Fred Benfield, Richard Benson, Kirsten Blue, Robena Hughes, Art Keown, Bijan Peters, Glenn Reynolds, Susanna Rinehart, Holly Scoggins, , Don Shoemaker, Susan Short, Terry Swecker, Bevlee Watford, Jim Weaver.
- Members Absent:** Kelsey Brunton, Richard Ferraro, Larry Killough, Margarita McGrath, Lu Merritt, Jacqueline Nottingham, Stephen Schoenholtz, Joe Tront.
- Representatives:** Debbie Greer for Dwight Shelton.
- Guest Present:** Chris Helms, Associate A. D., Olympic Sports, Jermaine Holmes, Director of Student Athlete Academic Support Services, Tim Parker, Associate A.D. for Compliance.
- Recorder:** Joyce Wynn, Athletics

Art Keown, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.
The agenda was accepted as presented (motion was proposed, seconded and approved).
Minutes for the January 2013 meeting were approved (motion was proposed, seconded and approved).

BUSINESS

Future Meeting Schedule – Art Keown

Tuesday, April 23, 2013 will be the last one of this academic year. We will have the three subcommittee reports.

NCAA Update – Tim Parker
Handout

- Important to remember that any changes to NCAA legislation are not made by NCAA Office employees in Indianapolis, but rather are made by groups that are comprised of people employed at NCAA member-schools (colleges and universities). The media often gets this wrong, or creates a false impression.
- We have a representative form of government. We vote through our conference (ACC) representatives. This has been in effect now for more than 10 years. The previous system was one-school, one-vote. We would go to a convention every year and vote on proposals. This new structure was supposed to be more responsive and able to address problem situations more quickly. Instead it has evolved into a feeling of disfranchisement for a lot of schools, particularly over the last 18 months. There is a feeling that we here at the individual schools -- and the coaches in particular -- have less input than would be most beneficial for the association.
- The current president, Dr. Mark Emmert, this is his second academic year in office. He and other members of his staff – working with university presidents and chancellors – have started several initiatives.

The newest academic initiative is due to start in 2016. This is going to strengthen the initial-eligibility standards for student-athletes. Student-athletes will have to present a stronger academic record in order to be able to compete in their freshman year. Beginning August 1, 2016 an incoming freshman can receive

one of three designations: Full Qualifier (receive a scholarship, practice, and compete); Academic Redshirt (receive scholarship and practice); Nonqualifier.

The academic initiative is now under review on several fronts. There are individuals both within and outside the NCAA membership who believe that the movement to more stringent requirements has gone too far and moved too quickly. They advocate for some middle ground between where we are now and the proposal that will take effect in 2016.

There are also many who believe that the notification of these pending changes has not gotten out quickly enough and comprehensively enough to high school counselors and high school coaches, so that these students can prepare for what they are going to have to face.

A 2.3 core-course GPA will be the new minimum qualifying standard for competition in 2016.

Q: If you are unable to compete your freshman year because of your GPA would that count as your redshirt year?

A: In most cases, it would simply function as a redshirt year, yes.

Q: What is the standard for sophomores once they get past the first year?

A: Once you are in school for two semesters, then what we call continuing-eligibility standards kick in. A student-athlete has to show a total of 24 hours of collegiate credit at that point. Also, six credit hours in the most recent semester, and 18 in the most recent fall/spring. All three of those requirements must be met.

Q: Out of our current population, how many would have been between the 2.0 and the 2.3 core-course GPA coming out of high school? In other words, who would have been classified as an academic redshirt?

A: The calculation is not a simple one, because along with these 2016 standards there's also a stipulation that 10 of the 16 core courses must be earned by the end of the junior year of high school. Because of that, it would be very research-intensive to get those numbers. I can tell you that it would not affect us in a large way. We would lose a few – especially from the larger teams – but not many.

Q: What about the changes in terms of contact rules with prospective student-athletes?

A: The NCAA Rules Working Group sent up a package of 26 proposals that were voted on at the NCAA Convention in January. The overall goal of this group was good, in terms of reducing the size and complexity of the NCAA Manual, and focusing on legislating in areas that are truly important. 25 of the 26 proposals were adopted by the NCAA Board of Directors. The one that would have allowed college coaches earlier access to prospects was tabled. Two of the 25 were pulled back by the board on Monday of this week before the 60-day override period expired. They have been suspended because there was significant displeasure among the membership. This “pulling back” of an adopted amendment has never happened before. We have, in fact, been dealing with a lot of things – from the standpoint of NCAA governance – in the past 18 months that are unprecedented. Two more of the 25 adopted proposals reached the override threshold (75 schools), so they are now going to be reviewed again by the board.

Q: Do you know if one of them was that unlimited contact?

A: If you mean unlimited phone calls, then yes, that proposal reached the override threshold about two hours ago. The proposal would permit text messaging, and unlimited phone calls to prospects beginning August 1, 2013. The only sport currently allowed this privilege is Men's Basketball. Women's Basketball will begin that at the end of the summer. This proposal would have extended the ability to all sports.

Q: I was wondering what the connection between the university sports programs and the general high school population is? Does the NCAA staff connect directly with guidance offices in high schools? How would high school freshmen know about these initial-eligibility changes?

A: That age group will argue that that information does not get to them very well. The premier publication that the NCAA puts out to accomplish communication of their standards and their protocol is called “The Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete,” and is now only available electronically. It used to exist in hard-copy form, but now does not. At individual high schools, it depends largely on the guidance counselors and the sport coaches . . . how active they are on your behalf in getting that information.

The NCAA office has staff members that go out and meet with national counselors' groups and national coaches' groups. But I think you have to be at a high school that produces a large number of Division I and Division II prospects to confidently say that all of these standards are understood well and known well throughout the high school.

Q: The NCAA investigation of Miami was a botched affair and they are trying to right the ship. Are there going to be changes as a result of that? And with respect in what happens to Miami, are they restarting this investigation or purging what information that was gathered inappropriately?

A: My understanding is that they are not going to start again, but are simply going to delete the information that was gained inappropriately. Personnel changes were made within the NCAA staff. The head of enforcement, Julie Roe, lost her job. A couple of other staff members involved also lost their jobs. Regarding any changes to the way these investigations occur in the future, President Emmert has convened a special group to review the investigation and develop protocols to avoid these kinds of problems in the future.

APR Academic Update – Chris Helms (Handout)

Tim talked about the initiatives that started in 2003 that really tried to tackle and bring reform academically all the way from the high school level.

- Initial-eligibility standards
- Continuing eligibility
- Accountability
 - All Division I Members are required to report term-by-term data on the academic success of their student athletes – APR comes out in the Spring.
- All Division I members are required to report six year student athlete graduation information – GSR comes out in the Fall.
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What is the APR?

- The Academic Progress Rate (APR) comes out each spring and is a multi-year measurement of a team's student athlete academic progress and their retention. The APR is designed to track student athletes who receive athletics financial aid and are enrolled full time. The report is based on two factors: eligibility and retention.

The Formula

- During each regular academic semester of full time enrollment a student athlete can earn two points toward his/her team's APR score.
- Each of the two factors (eligibility and retention) is worth one point
 - A student athlete will receive one point if, at the end of the semester, he/she is academically eligible to compete in the following regular academic semester or has graduated. This is known as an E point.
 - Additional, a student athlete can earn one point if he/she returns to the institution (retained) as a full time student in the next regular academic semester or graduates. This is known as an R point.
- The same point system is applied every semester thereafter. So potentially, in one academic year (fall semester and spring semester) a student athlete can earn a total of four points.
- At the end of each academic year, the earned points of each student athlete are added with the earned points of his/her teammates. That number is divided by the total number of points that team could have earned. The result is then multiplied by 1,000, giving an individual sport its APR score.

Incentives-Disincentives

- The NCAA has developed an incentives-disincentives program that rewards those sports teams that do well academically and penalizes those that do not.

- Contemporaneous Penalties
 - If a school or sports program has below a 925 APR number and has a student athlete in that year is 0 for 2. Then that school couldn't reward that student's scholarship the next year.
- Historical Penalties was 900 now moved to 930 for the 2015-2016 year.
 - Penalties are progressive and cumulative
 - The first level of the new structure limits teams to 16 hours of practice a week over five days, with the lost four hours to be replaced with academic activities. This represents a reduction of four hours and one day per week of practice time.
 - The second level adds competition reductions, either in the traditional or nontraditional season, to the first-level penalties.
- The third level, where teams could remain until their rate improves, provides for a menu of penalty options, including coaching suspensions, financial aid reductions and restricted NCAA membership. The Committee on Academic Performance has the discretion to apply appropriate penalties once teams have fallen below the benchmark for three consecutive years.

There is a coaches' portfolio that you can go in and track their APR history. It is public information. The Office of the University Registrar is responsible for the compilation and submission of this information to the NCAA. I work as a liaison to the Office of the University Registrar and the University Scholarships and Financial Aid office is heavily involved. Student Athlete Academic Support Services is also a resource as we pull information together. The information is due to the NCAA six weeks after the first day of school in the fall. There is a rush as you cannot award the spring retention point for the spring until you know that they full time the following fall which has to happen after the census date. If you miss the six weeks target date your teams are immediately ineligible for competition until that data has been received.

Q: This is only full scholarship students. How do you deal with partial scholarship students? Does the NCAA have a rule that they get counted if they are a certain percentage?

A: They are a scholarship athlete no matter if they get books only or a full scholarship. Any student that gets any level of aid is captured in this.

Q: When you get a sport that has a low score is there anything that you do different at that point?

A: Yes. What I try to do is forecast as much as respond. What I do is a simple spreadsheet and I try and forecast what their team is going to be this year and decisions that they make and what that does to their 4 year total. We do look at it and have conversations with that sport.

Q: Teams that bring in five basketball players and they all go pro after one year. It does not seem mathematical how they could even stay in the system.

A: They would have to earning the E-point in order to not be adversely effected. If a student who is turning professional earns the E-point in the preceding semester, the retention point is removed from the denominator.

Q: Are there any other examples of adjustments to the APR?

A: Transfers who exceed a 2.6 GPA, and professional sports.

Questions for the Athletic Director – Jim Weaver

Q: I was on the committee dealing with the old-growth trees, and I remember them telling us that probably in June a decision would be made. They were talking about last June. I know that this is in the president's office not your decision on how this takes place. I think they have done a great job and they probably know all the pluses and minus. They have some ideas of what things cost and they have to make some hard decisions. Any idea when?

A: I would hope by June.

Intercollegiate athletics as an enterprise is not simply throwing the ball out and letting the athletes play. It is a complex business that has a language of its own. It becomes more complex and you need quality people like

Tim and Chris to sort through it, and go attend the various seminars and come back to campus to make sure that we are doing things the right way and to make sure we are giving our student-athletes the kind of support systems that they deserve.

Q: I reached out to the student body to come up with questions for you. One question they submitted was this: Would you ever be willing to do something similar to what Coach Johnson does with chalk talk, and host a luncheon when students could come and ask you questions? I know you are very busy, but even if it was once a semester?

A: I would not have a problem at all doing something like that. They might not like my answers. But I will tell them what the real answer is and why. Maybe that is something we can start in the fall.

Q: Why not Thursday night football?

A: Let me add one thing to the Roanoke Times article. I am for Thursday night football. Thursday night helped this football program more than any in America. And we have capitalized on it and exposed our product to the nation through that opportunity. By the same token, we needed to take a year off for a number of reasons. Unfortunately, one reason that didn't make it into the media reports is a very important one, and that is football recruiting is negatively impacted by Thursday night games in the sense that you cannot get high school prospects to campus. If you are recruiting a student in Tidewater he is either practicing for his game on Friday night or he has a game Thursday night and cannot get here. It is too far.

Q: Student tickets went on sale today for football. The largest group size is 30 people. Certain student organizations wanted to know if the group size could be increased?

A: We have engaged this discussion every two or three years for the 16 or 17 years I have been here. Our Ticket Manager and our Associate AD for External Affairs can explain that very clearly and why they do that. Send me an e-mail with your e-mail address I will make sure that you hear from them.

Q: Would it be possible to push the student section in Cassell Coliseum to the sides like Maryland?

A: We hold 9,847 in Cassell and Maryland holds 18,000. We have given great thought as to how we have divided the arena. Most of the tickets that are in the end zone to the north side are free tickets for the students. So we have got to make our money by putting our paying customers on the sides simply because we are not allowed to have state funds.

Q: Is there a time line for replacing the score boards in Cassell?

A: It is going to happen in conjunction with the new board in Lane Stadium. We are not actually paying for the new scoreboards, they are a result of the new revenue that we are recognizing from re-upping with our multimedia partner IMG. We want to keep the quality high. The scoreboard in Lane and the two in Cassell are seven years old now, and there is a lot of new technology we can take advantage of. It is something we will look to improve every time we do a new contract or re-up with the same company.

Q: I thought it was so ironic how successful our wrestling team was at the same moment that the Olympics were thinking of dropping it. What will that mean for university wrestling?

A: First you need to know that there are 81 Division I wrestling programs in the country, and actually, many have been reinstated over the last 10 years. There was a time when the number of college wrestling programs was down into the 40's, but fortunately, the numbers have bounced back. I think the necessary steps will be taken, and the sport will be reinstated for Olympic participation.

I cannot tell you how pleased we are with not only our wrestling program but all our Olympic sports. I have said many times that we are not just a football school. Our athletics administration has had a very strong interest in Virginia Tech Olympic sports since our arrival in Blacksburg. We as an administration knew that we needed to reinvest in our Olympic sports, but we didn't have the revenue until we got into the ACC. Even then, it actually took us three to five years to recognize enough revenue to reinvest. And when I say reinvest I am talking about in facilities, in coaches' salaries, and in recruiting budgets. From a scholarship perspective, we are fully-funded (to the NCAA maximum) for all of our sports. So now we see wrestling winning an ACC championship . . . we see our Women's Track program winning four championships in the short eight or nine

years we have been in the conference . . . Softball won two . . . we see this past year our Swimming/Diving programs – both Men and Women – in second place. It is exciting for us because we have been planning for that to happen. It just couldn't happen sooner because we didn't have the money available to invest. And when we were able to, our coaches have made it pay big dividends. One of the best things we did was partner to create the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. What a difference it is from the pool across campus in Memorial Gym. Our track program has won eight ACC championships and 13 individual national championships . . . all in the time period of about eight years. So I will tell you all again that we are not just a football school. But understand this: football is the engine that drives the train and we as an athletic administration have to keep that train moving down the tracks.

Art dismissed the committee at 4:55 pm