



WISCONSIN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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BOARD OF CONTROL ADDRESSES FOOTBALL SEASON START; OTHER FALL SPORTS RECOMMENDATIONS

STEVENS POINT, Wis. -- After reviewing recommendations from the respective sport advisory committees and the Officials Advisory Committee, as well as those of the Sports Advisory Committee and the Advisory Council, the Board of Control approved numerous changes to various fall sports at its January meeting Wednesday, including a decision to implement an eight-game schedule for the 2012 football season to avoid beginning practice on August 1.

The eight-game season will only impact the 2012 season. The current nine-game allotment is scheduled for this fall and to return in 2013. Schools currently have the option to play a 10th game if they fail to qualify for the post-season playoffs. In 2012, schools will have the option to play a ninth and 10th game if they do not qualify for the playoffs. The Board directed the Executive Staff to form an ad hoc committee to address the football season schedule beyond 2012.

Prior to the Board's vote on the eight-game season in 2012, they rejected a coaches' advisory recommendation to maintain the current nine-game schedule and start date, and extend the playoffs one week later, which would have moved the football State finals to Thanksgiving weekend.

In addition, Level 1 and 2 games will now be scheduled for Saturday between 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. with mutual agreement of participating teams. If agreement cannot be reached on the time or date, the start time will be Saturday at 4 p.m. Games may be played Friday evenings only if both schools agree. Also, a measure was approved that gives the executive staff authority to set the date and starting time of games at any level when a field without lights is the host site.

The Board also ratified a three-year, \$45,000 extension with FSN Wisconsin to produce and televise the State Football Finals live exclusively on FSN Wisconsin and stream them on foxsportswisconsin.com. The cable network has aired the State finals live since 2001 and streamed the championship games live on the Internet for the first time in 2010.

In volleyball, the Board passed three recommendations. In 2011, the entire Division 1 bracket will be seeded by sectional, including Sectional 1, which was excluded from sectional seeding last year. The change in the end of the football season prompted the Board to approve the recommendation to move the volleyball regional semifinal games from Friday to Thursday in all divisions beginning in 2011. In other volleyball action, the Molten *Pro Touch* was designated the official ball for the boys volleyball State Tournament, and face-to-face seeding meetings will no longer be required in Division 1. Divisions 2, 3 and 4 already do not require face-to-face meetings.

Two soccer coaches' recommendations were supported by the Board. Beginning next fall, the entire sectional grouping will be seeded unless 60 percent of the schools in respective sectionals oppose it, up from 25 percent approved last year. And, the pre-game captains meeting will now be held with 10 minutes on the clock prior to the start of a game.

In golf, players will now be allowed to use and share electronic measuring devices during competition with the exception of communication devices such as cell and smart phones.

A number of Officials Advisory Committee recommendations received acceptance from the Board. Among them was approval for the executive office to disseminate official ranking averages--when permission has been granted by the official--to conference commissioners only in sports they assign and only for their respective geographical region.

The Board gave final approval of a conference realignment plan that removes Horicon from the Wisconsin Flyway Conference and places the school in the Trailways Conference for all sports beginning in the fall of 2012. The move makes the Wisconsin Flyway an eight-team league and the Trailways a conference of 20 teams.

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Other subjects discussed during the meeting was a draft of the potential amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of Eligibility for the 2011 Annual Meeting in April, concerns about the membership's reluctance to host tournament events, concussion education and tentative Annual Meeting discussion topics.

The membership of the WIAA oversees interscholastic athletic programs for 506 senior high schools and 91 junior high/middle level schools in its membership. It will sponsor 25 championship tournament series in 2010-11. For more information, please contact the WIAA office at (715) 344-8580.

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