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Jo Auch
Assistant Executive Director

2023-2024 Softball Advisory Minutes September 13, 2023 Zoom meeting

“AA” Coach:	Cassidy Neer, Aberdeen Central	2025 (1)
“A” Coach:	TC Weinandt, Dakota Valley	2025 (1)
“B” Coach:	Amber Sayler, Freeman	2025 (1)
Athletic Director:	Bill Freking, Brandon Valley	2025 (1)
Principal:	Pete Wilson, Sturgis	2025 (1)
Official:	Brett Distel, Box Elder	2025 (1)
Native Am. Rep:	TBD	2025 (2)

1. Welcome- Auch opened the meeting with a welcome and thanked the committee for their diligence in making softball a better sport.
2. Motion by Distel, Second by Weinandt to approve the agenda as submitted. Passed unanimously.
3. Auch went over the procedure for the meeting.
4. Cassidy Neer volunteered to help record notes from the meeting.
5. Auch reviewed the Advisory Committee membership, terms, duties and responsibilities.
6. State Tournament Review- Everyone enjoyed the State Tourney in Aberdeen and wanted to thank Aberdeen and Dawn Seiler for the great job of putting on a great event for all three classes. The facilities were amazing and aside from the lightening/rain delays, everyone felt the tournament was a great success.
7. Committee Reports
 - a. AA Coach- Cassidy Neer- Cassidy reported on the following:
 - i. Time schedule - AA felt the 2.5 hours for the time between contests was good and wanted to keep that time frame for next year to ensure that teams had proper time to get warmups in before the contest and plate meeting completed. Concern about what if games get over early, do we want to be sitting around waiting for the next contest to start. It was suggested that we stay with the 2.5 hour time schedule for the games with the caveat that the next contest will begin 30 minutes after the completion of the last game. So if games get over early, we would not start a contest any sooner than 30 minutes after the last contest. Coaches would need to have their teams ready to play ahead of time, should the contest

conclude at an earlier time. Contests would not start earlier than 30 minutes from the scheduled time of the contest.

- ii. Fungo hitting on Football field- She mentioned that she had discussed with NSU the ability to utilize Fungo hitting and use the football field more as long as we abide by a few rules that will be sent out as we prepare for the tournament.
- iii. Seed system change: Proposal #1(attached) Only count seed points for games against teams in your class. You would only get seed points for AA schools playing AA opponents (A playing A and B playing B) for seeding into the post season. You would be allowed to play up or down, but those contests would not be counted for seed points.
 - 1. The committee felt it was a little early to be making such a huge change in the seed system with only one year under our belt. Schedules have already been made and some areas of the state do not have as many options to play within their class. The consensus of the committee was to keep an eye on this and see how it plays out, gather some data, and address it in future years, if need be. PROPOSAL 1 died for lack of a motion.
- iv. Variations of Contests, Doubleheaders, Triangulars and JV/Sub-varsity changes. We had some discussion pertaining to the duration and way varsity contests and sub-varsity contests were being administered last year. Since we were able to play tournaments with a time limit or 5-inning implementation, why can't that be considered for triangulars and sub-varsity contests?

PROPOSAL:

Motion by Weinandt, second by Distel to approve the following language change for regular season contests.

Doubleheader- defined as two varsity games on the same date against the same opponent, games may be shortened to any combination with a minimum of two 5 inning games and count as regulation games. Doubleheaders count as two games toward the allowable number of contests listed above.

Triangulars- may be played to 5 innings.

JV/sub-varsity contests- Each host school will determine the length of their sub-varsity contests. Allowable length of sub-varsity contests is 5/7 innings, or 60-90 minutes time limit (with the 10/15 run rule in place). Each host school should determine the format prior the contests and inform opponents of how the contest will be run.

Contests may be played with any of the following: free substitution, unlimited number of batters, and a run rule per inning may be implemented per mutual agreement by coaches prior to the contest. Contests should stay within the rules as much as possible with some allowances giving more players the ability to play without specific restrictions.

Motion passed unanimously.

- v. Play Varsity contests first then JV to follow- there was a lengthy discussion pertaining to the order of competition. Some felt that the Varsity should play first followed by the sub-varsity. It was agreed upon to allow the local schools to continue to play contests in the order that deem best for their facilities as some have lights, some do not, etc.
 - vi. The committee felt that it was too soon to implement limiting pitchers from throwing both JV and Varsity contests. Some schools have a small roster and need to use younger pitchers in both contest. Some felt that some coaches were putting in their varsity pitchers to close the game for the victory. The committee again felt that this was an ethical issue for AD's to visit with their coaches about and hopefully we are not throwing in our starting varsity pitcher to get the win for the sub-varsity contest. The committee will keep an eye on this and if we feel the need to implement limiting the number of inning pitchers may throw, we can do that. We hope we don't have to do that!
- b. A Coach - TC Weinandt-same concerns as others with the exception of the "starting practice" date which will be discussed later.

- c. B Coach – Amber Sayler- all items have previously been discussed.
 - d. AD – Bill Freking
 - i. AD's just adding softball next year are concerned about how they get a schedule of contests for new teams. Suggestions were to try and get some tournaments going and it is suggested that if a team is playing someone twice, maybe they can cancel one of those contests and add the new team to your schedule.
 - ii. **Recommending breakaway bases for SDHSAA softball games** – it is in the best interest of all to think about the ability to put in breakaway bases on 2nd and 3rd base if possible. The expense of this will be a factor, but when you are planning/budgeting, it would be good to think about this for safety purposes.
 - iii. The short amount of time to get pitchers ready for the season. Maybe allowing pitchers and catchers to start practice the week before. **(SDHSAA has added a week. Practice for 2023-24 season may begin on Monday, Wk. 37- March 11 for all players)**
 - iv. Location of the state tournament – Will it continue at one site? As we move forward, it would be nice to spread it around to other communities that normally do not get to host many other events. It was noted that this is a Site Selection Committee item.
 - v. Taking all teams to state tournament and adding another week to the season. First day of state would be all teams and only the teams that win stay for day two and three. Committee thought this might be possible for Class AA but not sure it would work for Class A and B. Will have that discussion at the AD's conference.
 - vi. Is there a recommended temperature in which you cancel contests? Auch checked with the NFHS and there is nothing in the books and that is left up to the local schools as weather conditions vary with temperatures and winds.
 - e. Principal- Pete Wilson
 - i. Change in the way we qualify for state. A suggestion came from someone to have the top six automatically qualify and then have a 7 vs. 10 and 8 vs. 9 contest to see who the final two teams would be for state competition. Again, the committee feels it is really early to make such changes with only a year under our belt. We will need to see how many teams add the sport as the years progress.
 - ii. Finding another date for SoDak contests as semester tests are involved at that time- calendar committee will review all dates, but hard to find another place to put the SoDak so it is not on top of State Track in which many girls participate in both track and softball.
 - f. Official – Brett Distel- only thing to add is the shortage of officials and it is a struggle to get all contests covered with SDHSAA softball and JO softball.

Distel also informed the group of the new change to allow leaping on the mound, aligns with USA softball as well.
 - g. SDHSAA
 - i. Review Softball handbook
 - 1. **Move start date up one week- March 11**
 - 2. Classifications- next year will be a realignment year and classification year. Guessing softball numbers will remain the same.
 - 3. **Teams will need to play 10 regular season contests in order to be seeded for the SoDak contests.** If weather becomes an issue again, the SDHSAA will have the ability to adjust as we did last year.
8. State Tournament Planning- Aberdeen (Players Complex Class A and Class B; NSU- Class AA)
- a. **Schedule and Game times – We will stay with the times we had: 10:00-12:30-3:00- 5:30, noting that if a contest gets over early we will move the game time up to begin no sooner than 30 minutes of the regularly scheduled time.**
 - b. **Eliminate the coin flip. High Seed will be the home and will have the 3rd base dugout.**
 - c. Motel Rooms – SDHSAA reserves rooms for you- potential to stay on campus (dorm rooms) Auch will get pictures of rooms and cost. Concern was that we don't want to have to give coaches

another thing to worry about (soap, shampoo, etc) Cost to teams would be a great savings, but will find out more information and let AD's know.

- d. **Schedule plate umpire meeting 15 minutes before game time.** This will not interrupt warm-up time and will allow the exchange of lineups and scorekeepers ample time to get the starting lineup prior to the start of the contest.

9. Review Softball Handbook- The committee reviewed the Softball handbook and other than the things mentioned did not have any additional changes to the document.

10. Other items to be discussed

- a. Games played on regulation fields with regulation fences- There is a concern that many teams are playing softball on fields that have fences that are much deeper than 220'. **The recommendation is to play on fields with fences no more than 220'. It is suggested that school put in a snow fence or alternate fence for the contests to make it a better game for all.**

11. PROPOSALS

Motion by Weinandt, second by Distel to approve the following language change for regular season contests.

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Triangulars- may be played to 5 innings.

JV/sub-varsity contests- Each host school will determine the length of their sub-varsity contests.

Recommended length of sub-varsity contests is 5/7 innings, or 60-90 minutes time limit (with the 10/15 run rule in place). Each host school should determine the format prior to the contests and inform opponents of how the contest will be run.

Contests may be played with any of the following: free substitution, unlimited number of batters, and/or a run rule per inning if implemented per mutual agreement by coaches prior to the contest. Contests should stay within the rules as much as possible with some allowances giving more players the ability to play without specific restrictions.

Motion passed unanimously.

12. Other ITEMS TO NOTE:

- a. Practice may begin one week earlier (Monday of Wk. 37, which is March 11)
- b. Teams will need to play 10 regular season contests in order to be seeded for the SoDak contests.
- c. State Tournament implementations:
 - i. Schedule and Game times – Game time 2.5 hours apart (10:00-12:30-3:00- 5:30), noting that if a contest gets over early we will move the game time up to begin no sooner than 30 minutes from the regularly scheduled time.
 - ii. Eliminate the coin flip. High Seed will be the home and will have the 3rd base dugout.
 - iii. Schedule plate umpires meeting 15 minutes prior to the start of the contest.
- d. For safety purposes, schools should start to think about breakaway bases for 2nd and 3rd. Not required, but if you can work them into your budget, it is a great idea.
- e. Schools put up temporary fencing if your fence is over 220'.

13. Adjournment – motion by Freking, second by Wilson. Meeting was adjourned at 12:37 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Auch
Assistant Executive Director
South Dakota High School Activities Association