

*Summary of*  
**Softball Sports Specific Meeting**  
**Friday, January 22, 2010**  
11:00 a.m., Conference Room C

A regular meeting of the Softball Sports Specific Meeting was held on January 22, 2010, located in the NMAA Conference Room C. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Gene Pino, NMAA Assistant Director. The following committee members were via teleconference: Kevin Werth; Class 4A NW, Gilbert Munoz; Class 3A SE, and Michele Ponce, South A.D.'s. Present at the NMAA were Cheryl Johnson; Central A.D.'s, Gene Pino, NMAA Staff and NMAA Administrative Assistant, Alissa McCarthy was present to take minutes for the meeting.

Gene opened up the meeting updating the committee about the 2009-2010 Rules Clinic. This clinic will be available on the NMAA website starting on February 1, 2010. Coaches have until February 28, 2010 to complete this clinic online. Section 1 of the rules clinic includes several information items. One is the universal tie breaking procedure. When a tie occurs, the NMAA now has a universal tie breaking procedure for every sport that will be used to help alleviate some potential problems that have occurred in the past. The New pitching distance is within the rules clinic. Arizona, Texas and New Mexico adopted this change early. The committee agreed that sub-varsity level will pitch at 43' as well to keep consistency on the field, and at the middle school level, the pitching distance will stay at 40'.

The first day of practice will be Monday, February 1, 2010. The softball season is defined as starting on February 1, 2010 and ending at the State Tournament which will be held on May 15-16 in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Mr. Gene Pino addressed the out of season coaching rule. He stated that the NMAA staff addressed this issue and is discussing the penalties that should follow if this rule is broken. He added that this item will be placed on the Board of Directors meeting agenda on January 27<sup>th</sup> for discussion.

Mr. Gene Pino reviewed the NFHS rule changes. The bat may not have any holes in it. The approved bat list can be found at ASA.com. Bobby pins two inches or less may be worn. Discussion about the stiffness of softballs will go into effect for the 2010-2011 season. He added there is a Trump and Dudley ball that is multi layered and that does not meet specifications. The circumference of the ball has increased to one eighth and the ball must be yellow or optic. He reinforced that if a team is participating in a fundraiser for cancer awareness, the ball may not be pink, teams may wear pink to show support. Mr. Pino stated that the first letter of the first name is needed with the last name on lineup cards now when given to the officials. There will be no penalty, the umpire will simply hand the card back to the coach to make the change. Other points of emphasis include illegal pitches the three foot running lane, nontraditional equipment such as cell phones on the field, and bat boxes that heat up the bats are prohibited. Defensive head gear is allowed and there are not any specifications of the head gear. Mr. Pino added that the NMOA Board will be discussing umpires wearing navy blue slacks however all umpires

must be wearing the same thing for consistency. Mr. Gene Pino informed the committee about two proposals regarding seeding and selection that will be going to the Board of Directors on January 27<sup>th</sup>. He stated there are two options to this proposal. One option is to keep the committee the same, with representatives throughout the state making up the committee. The other option to have the NMAA staff do the seeding and selections process to help with consistency.

The 2009-2010 State Tournament takes part in Las Cruces, May 15-16. He stated that the Board of Directors met in June to discuss problems regarding the state tournaments. He stated their goal was to limit costs for the schools, therefore they voted to make the state softball tournament a two-day single elimination tournament. The committee discussed proposing to the Board making the tournament a double elimination tournament for three days rather than two days, single elimination. Concerns of traveling a long distance to play one game, and potentially going home that same night. The committee voted a proposal to bring double elimination back and allow the tournament to play over a period of three days rather than two. This proposal will be made on behalf of the committee to the Board of Directors at the March meeting.

Mr. Gene Pino stated that this year the NMOA is having the basketball officials apply to officiate at the state tournament. He stated that there have been problems with officials getting to the state tournament and not knowing the 3-man mechanics. He will report back to the committee at the next meeting regarding umpire selection for the state softball tournament.

Graduation dates will be collected for the 2010-2011 school year this summer. He stated that many big schools have conflicts with the spring tournaments. The NMAA will be reviewing these and making adjustments as needed.

Mr. Gene Pino stated that they will be accepting bids for the location of the next state tournament. The Legislature would like to see the NMAA mixing up the tournament locations. He stated that Las Cruces and Farmington have the best facilities thus far, however Rio Rancho and Cleveland now have great facilities and this would be a more centrally located place. He stated that Rio Rancho will more than likely bid to host the next state tournament; however the need for handicap accessibility will weigh largely on the location. Mr. Pino will inform the committee when bids will be taken.

Mr. Gene Pino stated the new alignment and classification is set for the next four year block. However, if a school's enrollment drastically increases or decreases schools may petition to the NMAA and the Board of Directors and if passed, adjustments can be made after two years.

Mary Strokoff of the NFHS is conducting a survey to all 50 states regarding courtesy runners and if an athlete is a courtesy runner, does it count as a game for the athlete. He stated that eight out of the eleven people on the committee voted that if an athlete is a courtesy runner in the game and marked in the book that will count against their game limitations. Mr. Gene Pino added that currently in some states if a courtesy runner suites

out and even if they never run in the game, it still would count towards their game limitations. Mr. Gene Pino will report back to the committee once the survey results have been completed.

Pitching step back rule was discussed. Mr. Gene Pino informed the committee with the 43' pitching rule now in effect in New Mexico, the NCAA and ASA so no allow pitchers to step back when pitching. He added that the NCAA, ASA and NFHS have representatives that serve on all committees to help with consistency of the rules between the associations. Currently in high school softball the pitchers are able to take a step back at the start of their pitch. Members of the committee were concerned with consistency of the game rules between NCAA, ASA and NFHS rules. Mr. Pino discussed the fact that there are more experienced athletes at the collegiate level and the sport is played at a higher, more competitive level than in high school, which is why there is a need for variation between high school and collegiate sports.

Mr. Gene Pino reviewed the schedule for the state tournament. This year on Friday, 5A will start playing in the morning, followed by 4A, 3A and ending with A/AA. 5A would play at 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., 4A would play at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., 3A would play at noon and 6 p.m. and A/AA would play at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. On Saturday the committee decided play without any breaks, the scheduled games would start at 9:00 a.m., followed by 11:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Pino will contact all members of the next meeting date. Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.