

NMAA Baseball Sports Specific Committee Meeting
Thursday May 15th, 2014
7:00 A.M. – Weck's



Agenda

A. Welcome/Introductory Comments

B. Current Issues at Hand

1. Future State Tournament
 - a. Format
 - b. Qualifying Process
 - c. Seeding/Selection
2. Officials (state tournament selections, evaluations, coach's feedback, etc.)
3. Game Limitations/Participation
4. Pitching Restrictions
5. Wood Bats

C. Other Issues from Committee Members

D. Final Comments

E. Adjournment

Baseball Sports Specific Committee Meeting
Notes for Thursday May 15, 2014
7:00 AM – Weck’s Restaurant

The baseball sports specific committee met on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at the Weck’s Restaurant in Albuquerque. Those present as members of the committee were as follows: Dusty Young, NMAA; Kenny, Barreras, APS A.D.; James Weems, Capitan HS, 1A; David Naylor, East Mountain HS, 2A; Claudie Thompson, Silver HS, 3A; Mike McGaha, Piedra Vista HS, 4A; Gil Padilla, Las Cruces HS, 5A; Tom Litchfield, NMOA Umpire.

1. Mr. Young stated that with the new Classification & Alignment system in place for the next two year block, the NMAA would now be looking at qualifying procedures and formats for each sport’s state tournament. Although the committee felt that the current system was good, some felt it may be exciting to look at potential adjustments for the future. Mr. Young explained a possible format that he and Coach McGaha discussed regarding “pool play” which would be similar to current NCAA regionals. This particular format would have only 12 teams qualify, however, instead of the current 16 that do so in Class 2A-5A. Although the format received positive feedback, some felt that four pools of three could pose difficulties in the case of a “tie” where each team went 1-1. A second possible format change would be to move to some sort of double elimination format. After much discussion, it was felt that keeping the first round of 16 at a 2 of 3 series, and then conducting a double elimination tournament for the final 8 would be optimal. Mr. Young explained that this could prove difficult on the NMAA staff in terms of finding state tournament quality facilities to accommodate the additional games. Coach Weems also stated that this format probably would not be optimal at the small school level due to the fact that pitching is limited within these programs. Although much needs to be discussed and researched in this area, Mr. Young explained that he would take this back to the NMAA staff and solicit feedback from the entire membership to look at this as a possibility moving forward.

The qualifying process was also discussed by the committee and the group felt that 16 teams were probably too many for the state tournament. Although there have been times where a 13-16 seed has been a quality time, it is very rare and the best of three series eliminates the possibility of one of these teams advancing because of one strong pitcher. Because of this, shrinking the field down to 12 would be positive. However, a first round bye for the top four seeds would not be positive as baseball is not a sport where a team wants extended time off from games. The committee then stated again that if 12 teams did qualify, a new format would have to be looked at like pool play or double elimination to make sure teams did not have a week off.

Finally, seeding/selection was discussed. The committee felt that the NMAA was doing a good job with this process. But, some committee members felt head to head should come in to play as a more heavily weighted criteria point. Mr. Young stated that with the new C & A block would come minor changes to the criteria which would be discussed over the summer months.

2. Mr. Young explained how official's were selected for the state tournament and also how the first year of coach evaluations went. Much feedback was sent in, but from a small number of coaches that did so almost every game. Mr. Young pushed the process and asked that the committee take part in the feedback option and that they also spread the word to do so because it has proven vital for official's training and state tournament selections. The committee did feel that there was an overall improvement across the state with umpires during the regular season, but that there is a definite need to recruit new blood and create mentor programs outside of the central region to ensure new, younger umpires stick with it for years to come.

3. Mr. Young asked the committee how they felt with regards to current game limitations and participation restrictions throughout the year. This stemmed from discussions in the past regarding courtesy runners and if playing in this minor capacity should count as a game towards an athlete's participation limits. The consensus of the committee was that although it may be something to continue to look at moving forward, no changes need to be made at this time. Coaches have the discretion to play "floaters" between JV and Varsity as starters, pinch hitters, courtesy runners, etc. and thus it is up to them as to how each athlete is handled.

4. Mr. Young asked the committee how they felt with the NMAA's current pitching regulations which state a player cannot throw more than 12 innings during a 72-hour period. The committee felt that the current regulation was fine, and that the major issue was still during the summer and fall months when club coaches overuse their best pitchers. Mr. Young explained that he felt the 12-inning restriction was fine during the regular season as coaches rarely use one guy that much during a 3-day period, but was more concerned about the fact that at least one pitcher meets the 12-inning restriction from just about every team that makes it to the championship game during the state tournament. The committee also talked about adjusting these regulations for state so that pitching in day 2 and/or 3 of the tournament would depend upon the amount pitched the day before. This is an option that will be researched and discussed more moving forward.

5. Mr. Young mentioned that the current baseball bylaws regarding bats would be up at the end of the 2016 season. As that date approached, the committee was again asked how it felt about the continued use of wood bats vs. BBCOR metal bats. The group was still overwhelmingly in favor of keeping things the way they are. Everyone feels that the wood bats have made the game better for all kids and programs across the state. It has allowed for more participation, especially on the mound where kids are not afraid to pitch now because of the bat situation. Mr. Young stated that this issue would be reviewed throughout the next year to ensure the entire membership was still in favor of using wood bats before a new proposal was placed on the SSC/Commission/Board agendas in 2016.

Overall, the Sports Specific Committee felt that baseball in New Mexico is in a good place. Mr. Young thanked each member for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 930am.