

Insider: IHSAA to consider bylaw changes



Kyle Neddenriep, kyle.neddenriep@indystar.com 7:08 p.m. EDT May 1, 2016



(Photo: Provided)

The Indiana High School Athletic Association will consider 21 items at its annual board of directors meeting Monday.

One of the potential changes is a strengthening of the “past link” rule that the IHSAA added at last year’s meeting. Under the current “past link” rule, a transfer student who received instruction from a coach, manager or trainer who was a coach, manager or trainer at the receiving school in the 12 months prior to the transfer or 90 days after the transfer is ineligible for competition for 365 days.

Several coaches and administrators with whom I spoke liked the new rule but were concerned that it might not have enough “bite.” The Indiana Basketball Coaches Association and Indiana Football Coaches Association submitted a proposal that would affect incoming freshmen, a group that is not included under the current “past link” rule.

The proposed bylaw states that an incoming freshman from a non-feeder school who has a past link at the school of enrollment shall be ineligible for 365 days after enrollment. In other words, if a freshman who is coached in a middle school by a coach who is then hired at a non-feeder school, that athlete is ineligible at the non-feeder school for one year. That “past link” would had to have occurred in the 12 months prior to the student’s enrollment or in the 90 days after.

The proposal stemmed from concerns over those who coach grass-roots (AAU) teams at the middle school level and also double as high school assistants. Athletes who played on those grass-roots teams could play at non-feeder schools as freshmen previously as long as there was no evidence of undue influence. This proposal would make it a black-and-white rule.

Here are some of the more interesting potential bylaw changes also on the table:

*Provided there is not undue influence or a transfer for athletic reasons, a student would be allowed to transfer prior to their sophomore year without a change of residence and have immediate full athletic eligibility.

*A tweaking of the tournament success factor. The crux of the rule would remain the same — a program with six points over a two-year cycle (four for a state championship, three for a semistate, two for regional and one for sectional) would move up a class the next realignment cycle.

The proposal states that a program would stay in that class if it achieves between three and five points in the next two-year cycle. Currently, a program must achieve four or five points. If it accumulates six points, it moves up another class.

Also, if a program is playing two or more classes above its enrollment classification and doesn’t achieve three points in a two-year cycle, it would be placed immediately below the enrollment classification previously occupied. For example, Cathedral football is a Class 4A program currently playing 6A due to the success factor. If it doesn’t accumulate three points over a two-year cycle, it would return to 5A and not 4A for the next cycle.

*The Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference submitted a proposal to clarify the process when a school or team is suspended for the season as happened after the Ben Davis and Pike girls basketball teams got into an on-court fight this season. The proposal asks for a due process, including an explanation of the charges leading to the suspension, an opportunity to answer the charges and an opportunity to appeal the decision to a panel of school administrators.

Josh Speidel on the move: It was great to see Josh Speidel and his family at our inaugural IndyStar Indiana Sports Awards banquet Thursday night at Lucas Oil Stadium. Speidel was a perfect choice to present our Courage Award to Brebeuf Jesuit soccer player Lauren Turner, whose mother, Stephanie, died 40 hours after Brebeuf won the Class 2A soccer title.

Speidel, a former Columbus North basketball standout, has reached the next step on his ongoing journey stemming from a car accident Feb. 1, 2015 — he’s heading to college.

Speidel said he’ll leave for Vermont in June. He’d signed a letter of intent in the fall of 2014 and was set to go last year prior to the accident.

“It’s time,” Speidel said Thursday.

His parents, Dave and Lisa Speidel, had hoped all along that Josh would be able to eventually get to Vermont but never put a timeline on it. His parents shared a story of a recent trip to a bowling alley in Columbus that symbolized Josh's recovery. In his first game, Josh bowled a 28. His second game, a 48. And the third game, a 98.

"He figured it out," Lisa said. "That's kind of been the way it's been all along. He'll just figure it out. I'm standing there in the bowling alley crying like a baby. But that's the way he's done it ever since the accident."

One chapter of Josh's story closes and another begins.

Mr. Basketball memory: The 1946 IndyStar Indiana Mr. Basketball, Anderson's "Jumpin" Johnny Wilson, was in attendance Thursday to see Lawrence Central's Kyle Guy named the 2016 Mr. Basketball.

I asked Wilson what he remembered about his Mr. Basketball announcement.

"They came up and took a picture of me after track practice," Wilson said. "I didn't even know what it was for. I thought it was for track. The next day I saw in the paper that I was Mr. Basketball."

It was hardly a surprise, though. Wilson was named on 56 of the 61 ballots.

Call IndyStar reporter Kyle Neddenriep at (317) 444-6649. Follow him on Twitter: @KyleNeddenriep.

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