

IHSAA tables change to 'past link' bylaw



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(Photo: Doug McSchooler / For IndyStar)

A proposal to strengthen a “past link” bylaw that the Indiana High School Athletic Association added last year was tabled for further discussion at the IHSAA board of directors meeting Monday.

IHSAA Commissioner Bobby Cox said there will be further discussion on the proposal, which was voted to be tabled by a 12-7 vote. Under the current 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.

The proposal, submitted by the Indiana Basketball Coaches Association and Indiana Football Coaches Association, would have affected incoming freshmen, too.

“Basketball coaches were concerned that they are developing kids in middle school and then an AAU coach gets them to come to a different high school,” Cox said. “That’s where that proposal started. But there are some concerns with it right now as it might impact other bylaws. We’ll take a closer look at it and talk about it further at our retreat in June.”

Cox said he expects there will be a continued push to add incoming freshmen to the “past-link” rule. He said nearly half of the three-hour meeting involved discussion on the “past-link” proposal.

“It will definitely be a topic of discussion moving forward,” he said.

Another tabled proposal involved allowing an individual of a member school coaching staff in basketball to coach and instruct in “open facilities” but only take part in summer basketball team activities under specific circumstances.

There were 21 items on the board of directors’ agenda. Here are a few of the other highlights:

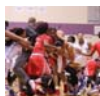
*A bylaw that would have allowed a student to transfer after freshman year without a change of residence and have immediate full athletic eligibility was voted down 19-0.

“There was concern that it would open the doors to create a ‘Wild West’ situation,” Cox said. “It didn’t have any support at this point.”

*A two-part proposal to alter the tournament success factor was passed unanimously. For schools already playing up in classification, they will now move down only one class if they do not achieve the same level of success instead of returning to their enrollment classification. Also, programs need to achieve three, four or five points to stay up in the same classification under the tournament success factor. Previously, it was four or five points.

*A proposal from the Indiana Football Coaches Association to restrict contact drills was passed unanimously. After Friday of the seventh week of the school year (to coincide with the first week of the season), football teams may participate in a maximum of two practices per week involving contact equal to the “live” level drill. It passed unanimously.

“I commend our football coaches association for having the foresight to make the proposal,” Cox said.



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*Five amendments proposed by the Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference were voted down. Most notable dealt with a situation pertaining to when a school or team is suspended from further games or the state tournament series (as happened this year with the Pike-Ben Davis girls basketball teams following an on-court fight). The proposal asked for an explanation of the charges issued, an opportunity to answer those charges and the opportunity to appeal the decision to a panel of school administrators.

“We have those measures already in place,” Cox said.

*A proposal outlining conditions that the board of directors may remove any member of the board and set basic director standards was passed by the executive committee in February and was ratified Monday.

Jennings County athletic director Mike Broughton was voted president of the 2016-17 board of directors and South Knox superintendent Tim Grove named vice president.

"I was really encouraged by the work of the board," Cox said. "There was significant discussion on many of the proposals. Some people may think we just walk in there and rubber-stamp everything, but that's not the case."

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