

KHSAA Football Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 20, 2017

The Commissioner's Advisory Committee for Football met at the KHSAA offices in Lexington at 9:30 a.m. on February 21 2017. Members present were: Coach David Barnes, Caldwell County; Coach David Buchanan, Mercer County; Athletic Director Alan Donhoff, St. Xavier; Coach Craig Foley, Frankfort; Assigning Secretary Kevin Garris, (ex-officio); Coach Philip Haywood, Belfry; Coach Robbie Lucas, Somerset; Coach Jim McKee, Scott County; Coach Mark Peach, Anderson County; Coach Chuck Smith, Boyle County; Coach Kevin Wallace, Bowling Green; Executive Director Jimmie Reed, KFCA (ex-officio); Jerry Wyman, Jefferson County AD (ex-officio). Absent members: Athletic Director Rob Detzel, Newport Central Catholic; Athletic Director Tim Green, Kentucky Country Day; Athletic Director Mark Swift, Ashland Blazer.

The Commissioner opened the meeting with around the table introductions and the usual housekeeping items, listing of members, an update of information which included expense forms, and a review of the role and purpose of advisory committees.

The first item covered was a quick review of current Bylaw 23 Limitation of Seasons and the football Competition Rules. Mr. Tackett relayed that the football numbers are still strong with good representation from all areas of the state and classes, although Class 1A has several schools withdrawn from postseason for 2017 and 2018.

A lengthy review of the anticipated changes in the playing rules were then conducted. There was discussion of the opportunity for video review for ejections, however in light of the bylaws of the KHSAA, quality of film, and feasibility of routine review, it was consensus that it simply isn't practical. In particular, because certain fouls that are automatic ejections at other levels (i.e. targeting), are not automatic ejections at the high school level, discretion was an important component for officials. It was the consensus that staff continue to stress ejection as the very last option.

There was a discussion on the use of headsets by officials. The committee felt the positives outweighed the shortcomings and potential integrity issues, and felt that provided ONLY the game officials were able to listen and talk, it was acceptable and did not present an issue.

After a review of data from the NFHS, particularly regarding the consistent pace of play, it was unanimous consensus of the committee to request experimentation from the NFHS with the 40-second play clock rule for the coming year. Staff is to determine the costs associated for the member schools and officials and distribute that information.

At this time, the consensus of the committee was to request that staff NOT experiment with the provisions that would start the clock on the ready when a possessed ball was run out of bounds.

A lengthy discussion then ensued regarding the USA Football tackling and drill instruction techniques. Staff has been approached about statewide adoption of the USA Football parameters including the education modules for coaches, as well as many coaches being contacted individually. After the discussion, it was the unanimous consensus of the committee that if requested to adopt statewide, the KHSAA choose not to do so, primarily due to a specific fundamental regarding the placement of the head and tackling. It was felt that with the skill level of most high school players, if this was the adopted recommended technique, it could not always

be performed effectively by high school participants and would place the coaches in a libelous position by having to teach other placement techniques.

Another discussion was held regarding conduct of players, and in particular, those situations regarding teams leaving the sidelines. To a person, coaches expressed these situations as some of their biggest fears and many talked of pre-designating specific coaches with responsibility in the case of an incident. Several coaches expressed concern over the post game orchestrated "handshake" lines, and many felt that this was an invitation to problems, while other members of the committee liked the idea of the line as an easier means to supervise. The coaches all agreed however that other groups (cheerleaders, ancillary people to the team and other non participants) did not need to be involved and that this should be players and coaches only in order to allow for appropriate supervision and risk minimization.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding preseason work by teams including scrimmages. In particular, it was felt that with most all teams forced to play week 0 for a variety of reasons (fall breaks, surrounding state schedules, bowl game schedules, etc.), that those schools were at a disadvantage with one less scrimmage. Coach Smith proposed an allowance to have a modified scrimmage on the first contact weekend, limited to Levels 0, 1, 2 and 3 work for those schools. There was near unanimous consensus of the committee to ask the Designated Representatives (Athletic Directors) that are on the committee to work with the Commissioner and Coach Smith on drafting the necessary changes to Bylaw 23 to allow this to be voted on by the membership. This would be proposed for the 2017 Annual Meeting for possible effect in 2018, and would include revisions to both the 11-day phase in provisions (while maintaining compliance with NATA and NFHS and KHSAA SMAC recommendations) and the scrimmage rules. By doing the change in this way, football coaches and schools are not asking for anything additional in terms of scrimmages, just clarity on the first scrimmage for those that play in week 0. All schools not playing in week 0 would still have the option to conduct this type of scrimmage as their first scrimmage.

Another lengthy discussion ensued regarding the competition rules and interpretations for interrupted games. Following discussion, it was the unanimous consensus of the committee to ask for approval to revise the interrupted game procedure as follows:

- Schools could mutually agree to wait any length of time agreeable to both schools to resume or complete any interrupted game (current);
- Schools could mutually agree to complete any interrupted game at any date provided such date was established prior to leaving the facility (current);
- Schools could mutually agree to complete any interrupted game, and if there was disagreement on the date, the next legal playing date becomes the date (current);
- Schools could mutually agree to end any interrupted game with the current score at any point in the game (current);
- Without agreement to resume the interrupted game that night or at a later date, schools could agree to terminate the game with no score recorded if such interruption occurred prior to the start of the second half and the game could not be replaced on the future schedule. Statistics and other marks would need to be included in the interrupted game rules;
- Without agreement to resume the interrupted game at a later date or agreement on a length of time to wait to resume on game night, a game interrupted after the start of the second half would be terminated with its existing score, including if the game were tied at that time, after a delay of 90 minutes.

A discussion regarding Hudl was then conducted. It was the unanimous recommendation of the committee that all coaches be reminded to include only their team members in the Hudl database

for the school, and that the local associations who have purchased Hudl be given some direction with regard to sharing video and the obligation of protecting the integrity of the exchange. It was recommended that the video standards be revised to include emphasis on the required exchange, the lack of officials being listed as players or coaches on a school, the exchanging of video with the KHSAA for training purposes and the integrity of the entire process. It was also recommended that this be distributed as part of the rules clinics for emphasis.

The last option for which there was lengthy discussion and consensus regarded playoff officials. It was the unanimous consensus of the committee (including the Athletic Directors on the committee) that for playoff rounds 3 through 5, 7 officials be assigned to the playoff games. In addition, the Commissioner, working with participating teams, should have the latitude to assign 7 officials to specific first and second round games at the discretion of the office. The fee for these officials would be set by the Board of Control, and schools would be encouraged where possible to use 7 officials on regular season contests to ensure smooth adaptation by officials. Staff was also asked to distribute information from other states that have successfully implemented this transition to help with the phase-in.

A brief review of the middle school regulations was then conducted by Associate Commissioner Cope, including the changes in season restrictions and contact restrictions for coaches at the middle school level and the dead period implementation. It was the strong recommendation of the committee that Mr. Cope and Mr. Tackett ask the Middle School Advisory Committee to implement a quarters per week restriction on middle school players. This discussion centered around player safety and the high burnout rate for middle school players and aggressive scheduling done within the middle school football playoff system conducted by an outside organization.

The next segment following a break, was a lengthy review of options with the playoff system as work begins on 2019. Consideration was given to two primary options, playing 11 regular season games and only qualifying two teams in each district to the playoffs, and playing 10 regular season games and continuing to qualify four teams. Many other sidebar items were mentioned during this lengthy discussion. While there was a desire on the part of at least one member to start the season a week later, there was little or no sentiment to supporting a proposal to eliminate the 11 weeks to play 10 games scheduling system. With this in mind, it was the near unanimous consensus of the committee to leave the current playoff and schedule system in place with 11 regular season weeks to play 10 games, and four teams from each district qualifying.

Off of that lengthy discussion, two other items emerged as action items for the committee. First, there was considerable discussion about playoff bracketing. The committee, while recognizing some of the unique nuances to Class 1A and its geographic team distribution, was pleased that a survey is being done for Classes 2, 3 and 4A regarding rotating the cross bracket pairings. It was felt by some members that consistency between 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6A was necessary. There was also a concern about the initial rotating cross bracketing setup in class 5A, and if rotating cross bracketing is continued, a long term listing of the cross bracketing should be published so that there is as much equity in east-west pairings as geographically feasible and possible. There was also concern about semifinal pairings in the current 6A cross bracketing and the committee asked staff to review to attempt to ensure that the same regions are not traveling or staying home for multiple consecutive years.

The second piece to the bracketing discussion was a desire to look at seeding the playoffs at some point. While first round seeding may be problematic due to geography, it was mentioned by several members that as the Board looks to 2019, alternatives should be explored to determine if seeding is a better playoff plan than simply regional bracketing. It was the strong desire to

continue NOT playing within district for playoffs, and as such, it has already been recognized that travel issues may not be a primary concern with the football playoffs. Staff reported of an impending deal with the third-party company (MaxPreps) that may allow for more seeding options to be considered.

A brief update on KFCA activities and on the state finals was given. Staff reported to the committee the problems that have occurred with the required movement of games at the host facility, and the Commissioner reported that other options will have to be considered. The committee unanimously felt that the games should remain at one site.

The committee adjourned at 1:20 p.m.