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Publish date: Oct 27, 2010

Commissioners ask Board to nix summer recruiting

By **Michelle Brutlag Hosick**
NCAA.org

The Division I Board of Directors will consider tomorrow a proposal from the Collegiate Commissioners Association to sponsor legislation in the current cycle that would eliminate the July recruiting period for men's basketball starting in 2011. The CCA will also ask the Board to order a thorough study of the entire recruiting model in the sport with the goal of reducing the influence of third parties.

The Board, composed of presidents from all Division I subdivisions, is the only Division I governance body that can sponsor legislation this late in the cycle.

If the presidents agree with the request for legislation, the first Legislative Council vote would come on the proposal in January. The Council could adopt or defeat the proposal at that time, or it could wait to hear more membership feedback before casting a final vote in April. The Board could also decide to sponsor legislation in the next legislative cycle, which would mean the first votes would not be cast until January 2012, or the presidents could decline to sponsor a proposal, leaving it to a conference to come forward with the legislation in the next cycle.

Last month, the CCA voted 27-2-2 to ask the Board to sponsor legislation in the 2010-11 cycle that would eliminate the July recruiting period for men's basketball with the aim of reducing third-party influence in the sport. The CCA vote also included a recommendation that the entire recruiting model be studied.

"I think that people recognize that we're paying a price culturally for the summer recruiting activity," said Greg Sankey, associate commissioner of the Southeastern Conference. "There may be a more efficient way to learn about prospects."

The summer events have long been viewed by some schools as a cost-efficient way for coaches at less-resourced schools to recruit, but Sankey argued with that characterization. He cited high fees – running into the hundreds of dollars – for coaches to obtain packets of information required to enter a single summer event.

Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe said the hope would be to drive recruiting back to the scholastic ranks as much as possible, and getting out of the summer recruiting period could provide an opportunity to do that. Also, he said the summer recruiting period conflicts with a proposal in the current legislative cycle that would bring at-risk prospects to campus the summer before full-time enrollment in part to begin building a better relationship with the coach. Beebe said the Big 12 supports that proposal.

"It's important to get these youngsters on campus and away from influences that may not be very healthy," he said. He believes that having head coaches on campus in the summer, when support for the student-athletes may be reduced, is more important than having them around throughout the season.

"There's going to be something you give up," he acknowledged.

The commissioners wanted the proposal to go forward immediately so the membership could consider what was best for the youth basketball environment as soon as possible.

"Each summer is another summer we have to deal with these issues and not have our coaches on campus to help acclimate their incoming students to the campus," Beebe said.

Despite the original vote among Division I commissioners, several later expressed doubts about eliminating the summer, both because of the timing (it was viewed as too soon) and the substance of the proposal.

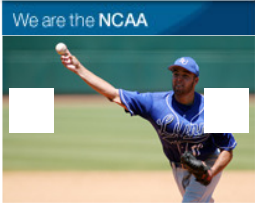
Ivy League Executive Director Robin Harris, one of the initial "no" votes at the CCA meeting, said she initially voted against it because the timing was too quick. But on further consultation with coaches in her league, she now opposes the proposal overall.

"Summer recruiting is something (the coaches) need. It doesn't have to be in July, but it needs to be at a time where they can see a concentrated number of prospects at one location," Harris said.

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College basketball recruiting to undergo comprehensive review: The Division I Board of Directors declined Thursday to sponsor legislation in the current cycle that would have eliminated the summer recruiting period in men's basketball, but the presidents directed the Division I governance structure to take on a holistic study of recruiting and recommend changes within the next year that could be implemented by the summer of 2012. [Read more »](#)

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The NABC also sent an urgent email to its membership delineating the reasons for its opposition.

NABC Executive Director Jim Haney noted that eliminating the summer period could lead to a scenario in which a coach must offer an official visit or even a scholarship during the November signing period, and the last time he saw the prospect was in February. Such a system would only compound uncertainty about the character and academic and athletic abilities of recruits.

Haney also theorized that taking the coach out of the summer would actually create the opposite effect intended by the commissioners: It could force coaches to become more involved with third parties in order to get information about how a prospect is progressing.

"When you dig below the surface, it could be a catalyst for more problems, not fewer problems," Haney said.

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