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DII Council takes positions on membership proposals

By **David Pickle**
NCAA.org

The Division II Presidents Council staked out its positions on five pieces of membership legislation for the 2011 Convention during its fall meeting Thursday and took a different path from the Management Council in several places.

Season of competition in fall nonchampionship segment

The presidents broke from the Management Council most clearly on Proposal No. 2-17, which would not charge spring-sport student-athletes with a season of competition for competition in the nonchampionship segment, provided the student-athlete was academically eligible at the start of the academic year.

The Management Council and the Division II Legislation Committee both supported the proposal (sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference and the Northeast-10 Conference), but the presidents were concerned about potential for abuse. They also were not persuaded by the argument that the legislation was needed to create equity for fall sports and spring sports in the nonchampionship segment.

The Presidents Council voted to oppose the legislation and encouraged additional review of issues pertaining to the nonchampionship segment.

Winter break legislation

The presidents also split to a lesser degree with the Management Council on Proposal No. 2-5, a PSAC and Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference proposal that would modify the seven-day winter break legislation that was approved as part of the Life in the Balance [Phase I package](#) in January.

The Division II Legislation Committee supported the proposal earlier this year, but the Management Council hesitated, noting that the PSAC/RMAC proposal comes with complexities of its own in how the seven-day periods would match up from sport to sport, conference to conference and region to region.

The Presidents Council went a step further, voting to oppose based on the belief that all of the Phase I legislation, including the winter-break rule, should be assessed and modified after legislation has been given an opportunity to work. Since the winter-break legislation will not be applied until the break period this December, the Council considered the proposal premature.

Summer strength and conditioning training

The Presidents Council also voted to oppose No. 2-4, legislation from the Lone Star Conference and Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association that would permit voluntary strength and conditioning training in the summer under specified conditions. The Management Council had taken no position in the belief that concerns about the proposal (competitive equity, safety and time demands on student-athletes) were not so clear-cut as to recommend a negative vote. The presidents, however, noted that the proposal conflicted with the objectives of the Life in the Balance initiative and joined the Legislation Committee and Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports in opposing the proposal.

The presidents followed the lead of the Management Council in supporting No. 2-12, a Northeast-10, East Coast and Peach Belt Conference proposal that would make Division II's organized competition provisions regarding Canadian Junior A men's ice hockey players consistent with those in Division III. The presidents also joined with the Management Council in opposing No. 2-15, a Northeast-10 and Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference proposal that would establish a quiet period in the 48 hours preceding the National Letter of Intent signing date for prospects who are not eligible to sign (it would remain a dead period for those who are eligible to sign).

Other business

Otherwise, the meeting featured extensive discussion – but no action – on matters pertaining to the management of membership growth and long-range fiscal planning. Committees continue to study both issues, with legislation remaining likely for the 2012 Convention.



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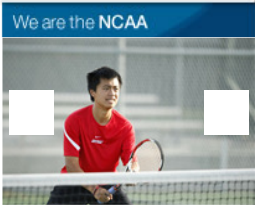
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The Presidents Council did agree to highlight membership growth in the Division II strategic plan by establishing a new priority committing the division to determine optimal size in a strategic manner. They also directed development of a web-based opportunity for member institutions and conferences to share financial best practices, similar to what Division II has done with community engagement and game environment. They also directed a review of Division II rules and policies to ensure that they don't contain unintended financial consequences.

The Presidents Council also reviewed the concerns of University of Alaska Anchorage Athletics Director Steve Cobb, who had asked the Management Council to review his concerns about the "I Chose Division II" tagline. Both the Management Council and Presidents Council reaffirmed their support for the phrase, acknowledging that Division II institutions sponsoring Division I sports face unique membership challenges. However, all of those schools have chosen to affiliate the vast majority of their athletics program varsity sports in Division II.

Both Councils noted that Division II messaging and imaging has been well received by current and potential members and that the "I Chose" slogan has received praise from the NCAA Executive Committee and is "recognized and overwhelmingly supported by presidents, chancellors, administrators, coaches, faculty and student-athletes throughout the country."

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