Sprague, Kenneth

From: Sherri Booker [sbooker@atlanticsun.org]
Sent: Friday, June 17, 2011 1:56 PM
To: Judy Rose (jwrose@uncc.edu)
Cc: Ted Gumbart; Ken Kavanagh (kavanagh@fgcu.edu); Kathy Peterson (kpeterso@fgcu.edu); Sprague, Kenneth; Comstock, Joni; Reep, Carol; Schnase, Dave; Renee Carlson (renee@triplecrownsports.com)
Subject: C/SM Cabinet Teleconference - Supplement 26 Bylaw 17 Proposed Change
Attachments: 2012 Post Season WNIT-Softball-Host Version.docx

Dear Judy,

Please note that in the agenda received for the June 24 teleconference of the NCAA Championships/Sport Management Cabinet, Supplement No. 26, Bylaw 17 Proposed Change regarding allowing the exemption of a women's national invitational tournament (NIT) in the sport of softball, a document from Lacy Lee Baker of the NFCA was attached. The document references "very strong support for the idea from the teams that were contacted." Attached to this e-mail please also find a document our office received from Triple Crown Sports regarding the same proposal when we contacted Triple Crown Sports requesting information regarding the event.

This attached document was shared with our membership at the recently concluded Atlantic Sun Conference Spring Meetings. While discussing the event with our membership to obtain a conference position on the legislation, Florida Gulf Coast University stated that the document lists FGCU as an institution that "would play, desire to host, and believe their school would support legislation" regarding the proposed event. Though FGCU personnel may have voiced their approval of this event when contacted, the FGCU administration was not contacted and would like to go on record as not being in support of this event at this time.

Please contact me should you have any questions or if you require additional information.

Sherri

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2012 Postseason Women's National Invitation Tournament-Concept Sheet
Hosted by participating Schools-May 25, 2011

It is the intent of Triple Crown Sports to seek support from the NFCA, Division 1 Coaches, Athletic Directors and Conference Commissioners to introduce and pass legislation to provide a second postseason option for Women's Division 1 Softball Teams during the next legislative window. Triple Crown Sports has successfully produced the 64 team Postseason WNIT in Division 1 Women's Basketball since 1997. It is the belief that the inclusion of more teams in the postseason softball process will promote and improve the game for many colleges who have completed very successful seasons but would miss the NCAA Field. TCS will be able to create and operate this event while making it cost effective for those teams involved.

Format: **32-teams** playing in eight separate 4 team regional locations run within 3 days of the NCAA Selections. Each host would run a 4 team double elimination tournament. Regional games would be played (Wednesday/Thursday/Friday) with Friday as a rain date. The Final Eight Teams would be played that immediate Saturday/Sunday/Monday at a host site (two fields needed) from one of the eight teams. Tuesday will be used as a rain date.

Selection Process: Teams would be selected within 4 hours of the conclusion of the NCAA Selection Announcement. All potential WNIT qualifying teams would be contracted to play and/or host in the WNIT in advance of the NCAA Selection announcement. The selection committee, made up of TC's regional coordinators, at large members and a NFCA designated member (similar in Women's NIT Basketball), would use the "body of work" method (BOW) compiling information from the RPI, win-loss record above .500 (D1), key wins, conference finish and difficulty of schedule in making their final selections. Conference winners not making the NCAA Tournament would receive an automatic berth (see A).

Location-Regional Hosts: TC would put out host bid contracts to all potential participating teams for the 8 host regional sites in advance of overall team selection. Host sites would be selected based on these criteria: Potential fan attendance, fields that can meet standards, drive-ability or cost friendly access to the team population, access to a major airport within 80 miles,2 quality hotels within 15 minutes of fields, a host motivated to provide needed services and costs to the event. Host teams would be responsible for field maintenance and expenses, umpires and travel/lodging/per diem expenses, game administrators, ticket takers, scorers and other game related costs. Estimate of host costs: $12,000. Host teams will need to find acceptable lodging choices for our "required lodging program" for traveling teams. The final eight hosts would be similar but be responsible for the cost of visiting team lodging.

Selected Teams: Each selected team would be responsible to pay all related travel costs. **Estimated Costs** for each team would be $11,000 for drive teams and $18,000 for air teams; lodging $4,000 for 10 rooms for 4 nights (required hotels to be used), $2,400 in meals, $ 3,000 in bus costs, and a $1500 game fee. Teams advancing to the final eight host site should expect to do this twice. Lodging would be paid for a travel group of 20 people or 10 rooms per night for 3 nights for the seven traveling finalists. Host must provide this.

Umpires and Tournament Officials: TC would select a regional NCAA assignor near the event who would be responsible to select the attending umpires and manage them on site. TCS would manage and pay all event related costs during the event and will assign a Director to the Event to make all event related decisions.

Other Information: Host schools would pay all game related costs to host as per their bid. TCS would assume the all other financial risks of the event paying all non- travel expenses to produce the event and retaining all gate, souvenir and lodging revenues. TC would provide an overall media director and televise the finals.

Who is Triple Crown Sports: TCS manages the current Pre and Postseason WNIT in NCAA Division 1 Basketball, the Cancun Challenges for NCAA Men and Women's Basketball, and a number of smaller college softball tournaments for Division 1 and 2 schools in the preseason and fall window. TCS also owns and produces the Colorado Sparkler and Fireworks, Rising Stars Events, and Triple Crown Championships as well as numerous local events in girls' high end club softball. TCS produces, syndicates, and televises 10 of its major events each year. TCS is a 24 year old family owned company based in Fort Collins, Colorado. TCS is rated A+ by the Northern Colorado Business Bureau and has received numerous awards from its host cities and partners.

Potential Wording of Legislation:

17.20.5.3 Annual Exemptions. The maximum number of contests shall exclude the following.
(c)Season-Ending tournaments. Competition in one postseason softball tournament (e.g. NCAA championships, NAIA championship). A postseason tournament involves competition after the end of the regular season between teams that are not identified until the close of that regular season.
(3) Triple Crown Women's National Invitation Tournament.

NCAA Legal may want to word it wide open for other options. If so, then there would be no section (3).

Mock Draw and Conversation with 2011 Potential Team Field of 60 Universities

Note: This was highly informative as a sample phone poll.

The following schools were contacted and asked three questions with some of the summary information above like cost, format, selection process, etc. The three questions were: Would you have accepted a spot in the field? Would you have bid to host? Would you and your administration support legislation to add this event?

Schools (22) that would play, desire to host, and believe there school would support legislation: Butler, Florida Gulf Coast, Campbell, Quinnipiac, Appalachian State, Hofstra, Boston University, Radford, Pittsburgh, Hawaii, Southern Illinois, Eastern Illinois, Florida International, Florida Atlantic, Troy, Kennesaw State, St. Josephs, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, UT San Antonio, Loyola Marymount, Ball State, Northern Iowa.

Schools (7) that would play but cannot host, but support legislation. Texas Arlington, Ohio, NC State, Kansas, UM Kansas City, Wisconsin

Schools (1) that believe that they would not play but would support legislation: North Carolina

Schools (1) that would not play, host or support legislation: Drake

Schools (30) that did not return the call or e-mail after contacting: Mississippi Valley State, SC Upstate, Miami of Ohio, South Alabama, South Florida, Longwood, Fairfield, U Mass, Minnesota, Colgate, Michigan State, Robert Morris, Lipscomb, Loyola of Illinois, Purdue, Illinois, Northwestern, Boise State, Iowa, Georgia Southern, Mercer, Central Michigan, Cleveland State, Tenn-Martin, Houston Baptist, Northwestern State, Cal State Fullerton, UNLV, College of Charleston.

Major Issues: Costs for travel, extra time keeping players around, administrative support

Major Support: Inclusion for more teams who have had strong achievement during the season, promotion of their program in the community, reward to players who have set team records in wins or finish in league, ability to host a regional event during the May excitement in Softball, success of Postseason Women's Basketball.

Conclusion: 30 of 31 schools contacted would support legislation to add. 30 schools did not respond. We believe this is a very positive report. We will continue to reach out to the 30 schools who did not respond and update as we go.

Attachment A: Sample wording that we could use from the Postseason WNIT Basketball bylaws to select Automatic Qualifiers from Leagues that have a team win the conference but not the NCAA berth.

We first used this in 2006 when we expanded from 32 to 40 teams. Here was the wording then:

Regular Season Ties

Single Division Conferences

In the event of a tie for the regular season conference title, the WNIT will recognize the team designated as the top seed in their conference tournament as the regular season champion that can qualify for the WNIT's automatic berth.

Multiple Division Conferences

For conferences that have multiple divisions, only one team from the conference will be able to qualify for an automatic spot. The WNIT will assume the top seed for the conference tournament is the regular season champion. If a conference designates more than one top seed (ie. a #1 seed for each division) then the conference office shall determine, before its conference tournament begins, which team would qualify for the automatic spot in the WNIT.

This is the current language for the 64 Team Field for the Post Season WNIT Basketball Selection

Selecting Teams: Automatic Berths

Thirty-one (31) spots in the Postseason WNIT will be filled automatically by the best team available in each of the nation's 31 established conferences, after the NCAA Tournament committee makes its picks.

1. A team that is offered an automatic berth by the WNIT shall be the team that is a.) the highest-finishing team in its conference's regular-season standings, and b.) is then not selected for the NCAA Tournament. It does not matter what the team's overall record is. For the automatic qualifying berth, the WNIT believes that a team's conference record is a more fair comparison among teams within their own conference, and that the conference record should pre-empt overall records among teams from the same conference. The automatic qualifying team is rewarded with the AQ spot for its in-conference play.
2. Should a conference's automatic qualifier team decline the WNIT invitation, then the conference forfeits its AQ spot and that berth goes into the at-large pool.
3. In the event of a tie among teams under consideration for the WNIT automatic berth, the WNIT will abide by conference bylaws that have been set up specifically to address a tiebreaking situation in that specific conference.
4. In the event of a tie among teams with identical conference records and there are no specific bylaws to address it, the WNIT will recognize the conference tiebreaker, and select the team with the best seed for its conference tournament.
5. Multiple-division conferences receive one WNIT automatic berth. The qualifying process is the same as that for single-division conferences. However, if a conference designates more than one top seed (i.e. a No. 1 seed for each division), then the conference office shall determine, before its conference tournament begins, a seeding order for WNIT purposes.

Selecting Teams: At-large Berths

The remaining 33 team slots in the Postseason WNIT will be filled by the top teams available. Any team from a Division I conference, or a Division I independent team, shall be considered. Any team considered for an at-large berth must have an overall record of .500 or better. Overall record includes conference tournament games.

1. The WNIT committee will utilize at least seven women's basketball ranking systems in the selection of the at-large tournament spots, such as RPI, Massey, Dolphin, and Sagarin. These rankings vary in their emphasis, which provides a good cross-ranking of factors such as win-loss record, strength of schedule, strength of opponents, strength of opponents' schedule, record at home and on the road, record against Top 25 and Top 50 teams, and margin of victory, among other factors.
2. The WNIT will consolidate the rankings, eliminate the high and the low rankings for each team, and average the remaining rankings. This will be utilized as the principle resource for at-large selections.
3. The WNIT will further look at additional factors among the teams "on the bubble" such as how well a team is currently playing, common opponents, late-season win/loss runs, games against other potential invitees, and key injuries.
4. Factors that will not be taken into consideration at any time during team selection are host bids, location of school, attendance history, WNIT history, ability to host, etc.