

**MINUTES OF THE PLAY SMART, PLAY HARD PLAYER SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**October 27, 2015**

The Play Smart, Play Hard Player Safety Advisory Council met via conference call on Tuesday, October 27, 2015, beginning at 1:30 p.m. Committee members present were Tregg Duerson, Dustin Fink, Allison Hieb, Tory Lindley, Dennis Piron, and Cole Steward. Also in attendance were Associate Executive Director Kurt Gibson; Assistant Executive Director Matt Troha; and guest, Sports Medicine Advisory Committee member Greg Gaa. Not present were members Sara Flanigan and Senator Napoleon Harris.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**1. Policy 13. Football Policies**

**Recommendation:** Adjust IHSA Policy 13 (Football Policies) as noted below:

Beginning week 8 of the IHSA standardized calendar and through the remainder of the season, full-contact will be allowed in no more than three practices per week and full-contact is limited to no more than 90 minutes per week. For the purposes of this policy, full-contact includes live action and thud, as defined by USA Football.

**Rationale:** After reviewing the results of Football Contact Survey, the council believes that an appropriate next step for member schools to take in regards to player safety in football is to continue to look at ways to reduce the number of impacts that players are exposed to. The council believes that the pace of live action and thud are similar, and contacts in those practice formats deliver significant impacts to players so the addition of thud to over-all time limitations is expected to help in the reduction of ‘impact’ contacts players are exposed to.

*Died for Lack of Motion*

**2. Student-Athlete Clearance Form**

**Recommendation:** The creation of [IHSA Student-Athlete Clearance Form](#)

**Rationale:** The council believes it would be a benefit to member schools to have a form that schools can use to confirm student-athletes have met the necessary requirements of the IHSA and their school prior to the student’s participation in any interscholastic practice or try-out. The form could be edited as necessary by schools to add other requirements they might have in addition to those listed on the sample.

*Died for Lack of Motion*

**ITEMS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

1. The council reviewed the results of the Football Contact Survey that was administered to high school varsity football coaches at three different intervals during the recently-completed season. From the council’s perspective, the results of the survey reinforce their belief that coaches are using practice formats other than live action/full-contact in order to maintain player safety. The council eventually recommended a change to the IHSA Football Policy based on the survey’s findings.
2. The council reviewed a summary report of contests this fall that were submitted by IHSA officials following contests in which student-athletes were removed from play after displaying signs, symptoms, or behaviors indicative of a possible head injury. Through October 20th, the IHSA had

received 169 reports this year, and of those, 139 student-athletes did not return to the contest from which they were removed. Although pleased with the reporting by licensed officials and implementation by schools of the NFHS rule regarding head injuries, the council did share their perception that spearing penalties are not being called enough in football. Additionally, the council did express their satisfaction that the Youth Sports Concussion Act will require IHSA officials to complete a concussion course beginning next school year that will increase officials' awareness on this injury.

3. The council reviewed a summary report from certified athletic trainers regarding concussions sustained by student-athletes at member schools so far this year. The council noted that, despite IHSA's efforts to encourage the reporting by ATC's, the response to date has been spotty, and the council brainstormed additional ways to communicate with schools to increase participation for this voluntary report.
4. The council reviewed a sample clearance form schools could use to verify that student-athletes have met all the necessary IHSA/school requirements prior to participating in any interscholastic practice or try-out at their school. The committee recommended the form be reviewed by the IHSA SMAC with the hopes it could be made available to member schools for the 2016-17 school term.
5. The council suggested that IHSA staff consider adding to the Schools Center a reporting area for schools to list their members of the school's Concussion Oversight Team. Additionally, the council suggested allowing schools to indicate who would be the school's point person regarding medical issues. In the event a certified athletic trainer is listed by a member school, the council suggested allowing the school to also identify who the athletic trainer's supervising physician is.
6. The council discussed concussion management tools and software that might be of possible use for IHSA-member schools. Council members Fink and Duerson agreed to reach out to C3 Logix and King-Devick to gather information regarding those tools and a listing of states with whom those groups are working and report back to the council at their March 2016 meeting. Additionally, IHSA staff will contact the NFHS to see if they are aware of other tools states may be using concerning concussion management.
7. The council discussed ways member schools could be encouraged to adopt certain 'safety' benchmarks. The council agreed to consider ways schools could be incentivized to reach developed benchmarks aimed at player safety. Development of such a program would be similar to a [Safe Sports Schools Award program](#) offered by NATA.
8. Council member Duerson discussed the challenge of having or expecting players to report themselves when noticing they may be experiencing symptoms of a head injury. He suggested a good approach may be to encourage teams to create a 'buddy' system, whereby players are responsible for a specific teammate and report to a coach or athletic trainer if their buddy seems to be disoriented.
9. IHSA Assistant Executive Director Matt Troha updated the council that the Play Smart! Play Hard! Pledge is available through the Play Smart! Play Hard! website for people to take.
10. Dustin Fink discussed the use of mouth guard sensors by football players at Mt. Zion High School. Collision impacts are reviewed by the coaching and athletic training staffs at the school to make determinations of whether or not players should be examined or removed from practices or contests.
11. The council set their next meeting for March 31, 2016.

**Clearance Form**

Athlete's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Year in School \_\_\_\_\_

**Items required to participate/try-out/practice for an interscholastic sport (required)**

Current Physical \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Permit/Insurance Waiver \_\_\_\_\_

IHSA Consent (PES/Concussion) \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Compliance \_\_\_\_\_

**Other items**

Transfer Forms \_\_\_\_\_ (for transfer students only)

Equipment sport \_\_\_\_\_

Items \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sports approved to try out \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_