

Key Legislative Topics for the 2008 Convention:

- **Male Practice Players**

- a. **Recommendation.** Sponsor legislation for the 2008 Convention to limit the use of male practice players as follows: male practice players shall only be permitted to practice in the traditional segment; use is limited to one practice per week, and the number of male practice players for each team sport shall not exceed half of the number of student-athletes required to field a starting unit in that sport (rounded up).
- b. **Effective date.** August 1, 2008.
- c. **Rationale.** The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is committed to providing equitable practice opportunities for female student-athletes as part of its philosophy. The use of male practice players has the potential to reduce practice opportunities for women as female student-athletes are relegated to the bench in favor of scrimmaging against males. Should a women's athletic team be unable to field a number of female players appropriate for adequate competition during practice, the use of male practice players could be used as a remedy to this problem. Division III institutions might be unable to have enough female players to make two full-size squads to scrimmage in practice, and male practice players could assist in filling in these numbers. Should individual conferences or campuses not see this as a problem, it is still at their discretion whether or not to permit their use.

Additionally, the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee discussed a numerical limit on male practice players on the one day during the traditional season but did not reach consensus on this issue. The Management Council included the limit on the number of male practice players, noting the support for that concept shown by the Division III membership in the spring 2007 male practice player survey. Finally, the Management Council conducted a straw poll to test support for total elimination of male practice players. The Management Council supported elimination by a margin of 10-4.

- d. **Estimated Budget Impact.** None.
- e. **Student-Athlete Impact.** Opportunities for female student-athletes to practice against male practice players one day week.

MALE PRACTICE PLAYERS IN DIVISION III WOMEN'S SPORTS: SURVEY FINDINGS

March 26, 2007

Introduction

At its April 2006 meeting, the Division III Management Council received a report from the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics in which the committee recommended that the structure examine the use of male practice players in women's intercollegiate athletics. On receiving this request, the Management Council referred the matter to the Division III sports committees and the Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) for specific written feedback. The Council also solicited feedback from its Virtual Focus Groups and via the National Association of Division III Athletics Administrators (NADIII AA) list serve.

Based on this feedback, the Division III SAAC recommended and the Division III Presidents Council approved sponsorship of a proposal to limit the use of male practice players for the 2007 Convention. The Massachusetts State College Athletic Association (MASCAC) sponsored an amendment to amendment that lessened the restrictions proposed by the SAAC and Presidents Council. Convention floor discussion revealed the need for greater data to be gathered about the use of male practice players. The male practice player proposal and its related amendment-to-amendment were both forwarded back to the Management Council with a request to gather further data.

The survey was sent to four primary contacts (athletics administrators & FAR). The cabinet asked that each institution use the survey as an opportunity for campus education and dialogue and requested that each institution's directors of athletics submit only one survey to the NCAA reflecting the institution's response. To accurately ensure that your institution's position is reflected in the survey response, the cabinet asked that institutions engage coaches, student-athletes, faculty and administrators in a conversation regarding the prevalence and use of male practice players.

Definition of a Male Practice Player

A male practice player is defined as any male engaged in activities with a women's varsity or junior varsity athletics squad (including a male student-athlete, manager or student-coach) held at the direction of or supervised by a member of an institution's coaching staff. Participation by a male practice player includes a designated role for the male during the female team's practice. The male practice player's involvement is distinct from the athletics participation of male student-athletes in joint practice sessions with female student-athletes.

