



Centennial Conference Men's Soccer Coaches Meeting
Tuesday, November 11, 2008
Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA

Meeting notes

Meeting started with roll-call at 9:45 a.m.

Attendance: Interim Chair – Eric Wagner, Swarthmore College; Administrator – Les Poolman, Dickinson College; Brian Redding, Dickinson College; Kyle Rush, Ursinus College; Craig Appleby, Johns Hopkins University; Drew Hoffman, Washington College; Devin O’Neill, Gettysburg College; Sean Topping, Muhlenberg College; Joe Amorim, Haverford College; Dan Wagner, Franklin & Marshall College

1. **Discussion of kick-off times** for conference matches. (O’Neill). For the sake of environment, atmosphere, and long travel on weekends, it is better to have no matches kick off before 1:00 p.m.

(Poolman) Because of facilities, personnel, and support during double-headers and multiple-sport dates (football, field hockey, soccer, etc.), it is sometimes necessary to have earlier start times. C.C. rules currently stipulate that no matches start before noon, and at the latest at 2:00 for schools without lights.

(E. Wagner) Can we not put in an option that allows the two teams to work out problems with this rule mutually if there is a case when this will not work?

(O’Neill) **Motion:** that we change the wording of the 1st sentence in the handbook, page 86, Section 6a., to read: “no earlier than 1:00 p.m.” for start times of conference matches.

Second: Hoffman.

Motion adopted unanimously (9-0).

2. **Discussion of kick-off times in Centennial Conference tournament.** (D. Wagner). Why do we have 11:00 a.m. kick-off for semifinal matches?

(O’Neill) What about going Friday & Sunday?

(E. Wagner) Can host institution have option to set kick-off time (like in NCAA tourney) as long as it is 1:00 or later?

(Redding) Can we have a choice to host Tuesday, Friday & Saturday instead?

(Poolman) We run into trouble if the host has no lights because of daylight savings time. We cannot start Friday matches early enough if there are not lights.

(Appleby) Playing Friday & Saturday will enable us to finish the tournament on Sunday if there is bad weather on one of the days.

(Redding/Topping) We should make the play-in game a Tuesday no matter what – for recovery and consistency. Then we can change the weekend back to Saturday-Sunday if need be to accommodate hosts that have multiple matches on the same weekend.

(D. Wagner) **Motion:** that we change the Centennial Conference tournament format to the following:
 Tuesday (following the last weekend of the regular season) – play-in match between #4 & #5 seed.

Friday & Saturday – semifinals at the top seed (if host has lights), or Saturday & Sunday (if host has no lights.)

Second: O’Neill.

Motion adopted unanimously (9-0).

3. **Clarification of number of contests** allowable in Centennial Conference. (Hoffman). We are allowed not more than 18 dates of competition in the traditional portion of the season. There can be any number of scrimmages, with the usual exemptions (Alumni match, foreign teams, post-season tournaments, etc.) per NCAA rules.

4. **Discussion of NCAA rules** stipulating that teams **clear the field ten minutes prior to the appointed kick-off time**. (Hoffman). We need a standardized routine that all teams in our conference follow, so that everyone knows what to expect at every match. The NCAA rules state it, yet we do not follow it uniformly.

(Rush/Topping) It helps everyone time their warm-ups accordingly.

(O’Neill) Sometimes we struggle when there are different people setting up the clock on different days. At least making it uniform will give us something to tell all our game management people.

(D. Wagner) So do we count the clock down to zero, or stop it at ten minutes?

(Several) We should have it count down to ten minutes, like it states in the NCAA manual.

(Hoffman) **Motion:** that all Centennial Conference matches adhere strictly to the NCAA pre-match time-sheet (page 39, Rule 6.3.5 of the NCAA soccer rules manual).

Second: Rush.

Motion adopted unanimously (9-0).

5. **Discussion of ball chasers** at conference matches. (Hoffman). Ball chasers must be at least 12 years old.

(O’Neill) **Motion:** that host institution is required to have a minimum of 2 work-study students to be ball chasers at all conference matches. These paid ball chasers will either run the lines and chase the balls, or supervise youth soccer players who are helping if there are any.

Second: Topping.

Motion adopted unanimously (9-0).

6. **Discussion of match balls**. (Hoffman). Can we use good balls (other than the terrible new Brine balls?)

(E. Wagner) We said we wanted to use Brine balls for the conference tournament to prepare us for the NCAA tournament.

(Poolman) Conference handbook stipulates only that a hand-stitched ball be used for conference regular season matches. Also, would this not be a discussion that is more appropriate at the NSCAA convention in the Division III meeting?

(O’Neill) Motion: that we scratch the requirement for the use of the NCAA ball for the conference tournament. Only stipulation is that the ball must be hand-stitched and FIFA- or NCAA-approved.

Second: Hoffman.

Motion adopted unanimously (9-0).

7. **Discussion of ECAC participation.** (E. Wagner). It is more soccer, good post-season opportunity and experience for our athletes, and it is yet another chance for us to prove that the Centennial is the strongest conference in the region (helps in recruiting, scheduling, and for the reputation of the conference year-in and year-out.) It is also a great experience for our seniors to have a chance to finish on an “up” if we do not make it to the NCAAs.

(O’Neill) Gettysburg will not allow any teams other than football (and track?) to go to the ECACs. The school considers the conference tournament our post-season opportunity (other than NCAAs).

Five coaches indicated that their schools are not members of the ECAC.

8. **Discussion of scheduling and strength of schedule index.** (E. Wagner) From the perspective of Eric & Devin, both of whom sat on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Advisory Committee this fall, there are several things we should be considering when we schedule. First, the strength of schedule in the conference puts us in the top-level in the region right off the bat. Second, because we tend to beat each other up in the conference, we tend to take more losses (or “blemishes,” which includes ties) than other teams in our region. So the SOS index is strong, but the winning percentage can sometimes take a hit because of that. So we need to schedule with that in mind, and try to get teams outside the conference that are strong, but not TOO strong.

Balance is a key component to scheduling. Do not dumb-down the schedule too much, because, as Drew noted, playing really weak teams out of conf. does not prepare us for the conference matches. However, losing most of our non-conference matches does not help our chances of earning an at-large bid, either. Therefore, pick up some out-of-region non-conference big-shots, or look for teams in-region that are strong on winning percentage (top-tier in other conferences), but against which we have a 70% chance or so of getting a positive result.

Finally, it was discussed that it would be helpful for conference coaches to know more about the relative strength of teams in our region so we can schedule accordingly. As the new NCAA regional information is objective, numbers-based info, Eric will pursue the possibility of sharing some or all of that objective data with the conference coaches prior to scheduling (i.e. at the end of each season in prep. for the following year’s scheduling.) Devin talked about whether or not there are “RPI” indexes, like there are in Division I, and if not, how we can create or factor that for Division III.

9. Kim Wenger from the Centennial Conference Office stopped in to answer our question:

Can the Conference not have a uniform start date at the beginning of the season, rather than the NCAA “count-back” situation? (Hoffman).

Answer: yes, we could, but it is not likely to fly with the conference at the upper levels.

10. Kim asked us if we were happy with the host institutions bearing the responsibility for the assigning officials. With the exception of the CC semifinal between Gettysburg and Johns Hopkins, there were no major concerns about the way things went this year. We all agreed to keep it the way it is – with the hosts assigning officials.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.