

 December 4, 2020

Good morning Commissioners:

Can you believe it is already December and the end of the fall quarter is close at hand? We are starting month 10 of our living in the pandemic. As the Jacksons sang, “Time Waits for No One.”

**OUTSIDE THE NWAC**

**Jeff** Goodman is reported “the basketball oversight committee expected to recommend that the **NCAA** allow ALL transfers to get a waiver to play this season. This would be proposed to the **D-1 Council** — which next meets on Dec. 16. There is a chance it could be voted on prior to the 16th."

Since the pandemic altered life in the U.S. in March, the CDC has recommended that people self-quarantine for 14 days after potential exposure to coronavirus. This recommendation has been followed by several states, including New York, when instituting quarantine requirements.The **CDC** has updated and published it’s full “acceptable alternatives” to 14-day quarantines if it makes sense given local circumstances and resources, noting: “Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring. With this strategy, residual post-quarantine transmission risk is estimated to be about 1% with an upper limit of about 10%. When diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available (and has no impact on community testing) then quarantine can end after Day 7 “if a diagnostic specimen tests negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (e.g., in anticipation of testing delays), but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.” In both cases, symptom monitoring and masking must continue through Day 14. The shorter quarantine would come with an additional requirement: test negative for coronavirus during those seven to 10 days, the Wall Street Journal reported.

**Thoughts** from around the MBB world have many wondering why some teams are traveling across the country given the state of our nation. **VCU** AD McLaughlin cuts right to the chase on the importance of an **NCAA Tournament** to wrap up this season, “The future of the entire association depends on it. That’s the bigger thing. It’s the entire association and all of college sports.” An unnamed **Power 5** HC, “Us playing non-conference games is going to prevent us from playing conference games. Why can’t we figure this out?” Rick Pitino: “They see the virus spreading like wildfire, countries are shutting down and we’re trying to open up while it’s spreading. It’s going to be another season where we’re not going to play [the postseason]. It’s going to be a disaster.”

Following are key elements of the PAC-12 testing protocols.

Daily point-of-care testing on each day of full practice, higher-risk of transmission activity, travel, and games;

Minimum once weekly PCR test (in addition to daily point-of-care testing);

Any positive daily point-of-care antigen test must be followed by a PCR test within 24 hours;

Game day air ambulance service will be available in case any individual tests positive while traveling for competition;

For non-Conference opponents, a minimum of four tests the week leading up to competition, including on game day;

For multi-team events, a minimum of three tests per week leading up to the event along with a test on the day of arrival and prior to each game; and

All testing protocols continue to be subject to state, local, and campus public health requirements.

The Pac-12 has established a minimum roster count with which a team is considered available to play a scheduledbasketball game: at least seven (7) scholarship players and one (1) countable coach available to participate. If a team has fewer than the minimum roster available for a scheduled game, the impacted institution may elect to play the game with fewer than the minimum roster seven (7) scholarship players. Otherwise, upon review and approval by the Commissioner, the game may be rescheduled or declared a no contest. In all cases cancellation, postponement and rescheduling of a contest will be decided by the Conference in consultation with the participating teams and the Pac-12 medical advisory group.

The Big 12 states that games will be played as long as teams have six scholarship players are able to compete from both teams. According to one Big 12 AD, “Even if you have just F and C available, you're playing.”

The **Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** (SCIAC) Presidents have unanimously agreed to cancel conference competition, including championships, for all fall and winter sports during the 2020-21 academic year. The following sports are included in this recent decision: men's and women's soccer, men's water polo, football, women's volleyball, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's swimming & diving, and men's and women's basketball. Institutions have the autonomy to decide whether they wish to permit conditioning, practicing, and other forms of competition as it relates to fall and winter sports during this spring semester.

The **Colonial States Athletic Conference** (CSAC) Board of Directors have agreed that winter sports will not resume at least through the month of January. While no formal schedules have been adopted at this time, the Board does intend to resume intercollegiate competition during the spring semester and has advised the conference office to incorporate all available data into developing appropriate schedules for each conference-sponsored sport as allowable.

The **California College Athletic Association** (CCAA) Board of Presidents, in conjunction with conference and institution athletics administrators, has made the tough decision to forgo formalized 2020-21 CCAA conference schedules and championships for all sports. While this decision confirms no mandated competitive CCAA schedule will be produced for this academic year, opportunities for team activities, practice and training will be determined and defined by each member institution with the approval of the University president and the Cal State system, and shall adhere to local and state public health regulations.

**NWAC NEWS**

Each Monday I attend a meeting with a representative from the Governor Inslee’s office and representatives from the Independent Colleges of the State of Washington. Following is information that was shared from the governor’s representative:

* Last week the state of Washington set the record for the highest amount of COVID-19 cases in one day with over 4000, thus making it the worst week in the state.
* WADOH says it is too early to see the fallout from Thanksgiving, though they are anticipating it to not be good.
* Governor Inslee had a press conference today to talk about a new anonymous app that will be available he believes may help to stop the spread of COVID-19.
* They are concerned about the increase in pressure that hospitals are experiencing with the rise in numbers with so few beds available.
* “Situation is getting worse.”
* His office reviewed plans from CCC and WCC and he mentioned that there were not a lot of requirements and a lot of you should do….. which does not sit well.
* He did not see much reference to heart health in the aforementioned conference plans.
* Not a fan of language that references the NCAA.  Believes NCAA plans are to general and vague.

I asked him the following:  “With things getting worse and WADOH still not knowing what the consequences will because of Thanksgiving, and with Christmas and New Year’s right around the corner, where does the rubber hit the road with things going south and our RTP plans.”  His answer:

* Indoor athletic activities are the big concern.
* Too early to see if the mandates laid out last week show any benefits.
* School districts may be the best indicator when it comes to indoor activity/education.
* As just seen in Santa Clara, counties do have the power to pull the plug.
* Could not give any more insight.

December 14 is the end of the Governor’s mandate.   He was asked, “Will the mandate be extended?”  According to Jon, “It will be hard to imagine as things are today the governor not extending the mandates.”

Next week Duncan and I will attend a meeting with representatives from CCCAA and the NJCAA to work on language regarding transfer student-athletes. The language will be presented to the NCAA for review. There are concerns about transfer standards, waiver issues, and other items. In all honestly, not sure how much what we put together will really make a difference, but the three associations believe that if we work together, it is more beneficial than working independently.

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter the CDC has released new quarantine guidelines. Yesterday the Washington State Department of Health is adopted the new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to reduce quarantine for people who have been exposed to COVID-19. Here is the link with more information:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Newsroom/Articles/ID/2488/Washington-state-adopting-CDCs-new-quarantine-guidelines>

The Executive Board meets on Thursday to discuss some rather challenging issues. Obviously what was just mentioned in the above paragraph will be discussed. NWAC needs to see how these new quarantine guidelines play a role in our return to play plans. The EB will also review and hopefully approve the updated Return to Play Manual. That document is 40 pages and quite comprehensive. Once the manual is reviewed, it will be sent to you for you to use to update your protocols. The document will be sent to the WADOH with fingers crossed.

As we look to the future the board will take a look at a number of options regarding returning to play in January. Those options range from continuing as planned to cancel the season, and or some versions in between that range. There is a lot on the table and there are pros and cons to each potential option. Whatever and whenever something is decided, there is no right or wrong answer and NWAC people from commissioners to student-athletes need to understand this. I have no idea if a final decision will emanate from the meeting, but I do know there will be some tough discussions had.

The board will also look at the possibility of part-time enrollment for winter and spring quarters as well essential personnel for NWAC contests.

In the last newsletter I asked you to respond to two questions, **1)** Has your institution announced the mode of class delivery for spring 21? **2)** Is your institution committed to bringing S-A’s back on campus for winter quarter? Based on what has been turned in to me as of yesterday the results for Q1 are 14-Yes; 22-No. Results for Q2 are 28-Yes; 3-No; 3-Undecided; 2 Hopeful.

Earlier this week we sent a nine question survey to your presidents with the intent to gauge their thoughts on what has transpired this past fall, and see what they are thinking for winter and spring quarters. Trust me, I am fully aware that the survey sent to the presidents that some will have you fill it out. Regardless, we have given them the opportunity to have input. Please remind your presidents that we would like their survey results turned in to me by Monday afternoon.

**Conclusion**

Typically when people use the phrase, “This has been a historic year” it usually is used when something good/great has happened unexpectedly. What transpired was not necessarily expected to happen, whether good or bad. Sound familiar? Throughout these 10 months I have concluded there are two concepts that are bound together, expectation and disappointment. What causes us to experience disappointment? Someone or something has failed to fulfill our expectations. We have it all set up in our mind how a certain situation should play out or how someone is to act. But it never materialized. Your wish fell hard and fast against the concrete wall of reality.

I would like to suggest that what is at the core of our disappointment is that expectation blurs our vision and formulates our disappointments. We develop mental images that are either unrealistic, unfair, or biased. These false images become our focus, rigidly and traditionally maintained. Leaving no room for flexibility on the part of others, allowing no place for circumstantial change or surprise, (sound familiar), we set in stone the way things must go. When they don’t we chirp, fall apart, get angry, almost like a disgruntled sophomore who is not getting playing time. This mentality is exposes our core.

Our depth to tolerate is reduced, our willingness to accept others’ thoughts, imperfections, or less than ideal circumstances is fractured. Worse than all, relationships and the ability to work together become strained. The links of expectation confines us to the prison of disappointment.

As we move forward let’s commit to stop anticipating the ideal and start focusing on the real which is lined with imperfection, failure, and change. This doesn’t mean we don’t press on. Doesn’t mean we will agree. What it means is that taking care and being wise with our expectations will limit our disappointments. There has been enough disappointment in 2020.

Marco