

VPA SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Thursday, March 29, 2012  
VPA Office

Members Present: Todd Powers, Denise Alosa, David Lisle, Sarah Johnstone,  
Kylie McCarty, Matt Gammons, Bob Johnson

Also Present: Sean Farrell (Middlebury AD, VIFL)

Minutes:

- Motion by David, second by Matt on approval of minutes from previous meeting. Vote – approved unanimously.
- discussion on issue of VPA having defined boys/girls sports. Issue concerned a local high school girl who wanted to play boys lacrosse even though the school offered girls lacrosse. VPA practice has been to require a student to play in the designated sport for each sex. Feeling that this may be more of a legal issue than a physical issue.. No further action taken.
- discussion on hockey throat guards and BNP standards. There are no industrial standards for throat guards. USA Hockey does not require them. BNP standards are very non-specific. Consensus that we should not require any standards in regards to throat guards until further information or industrial standards come out.
- discussion on heading a soccer ball as requested by ASC. No valid research that shows improper heading causes concussions. Study that is cited (out of Mass.) is flawed. Best approach is what USA soccer recommends. Do not begin teaching heading until kids can do it appropriately. Begin with smaller, softer balls and gradually work your way up. No further action.

Discussion on NFHS position statement in regards to soccer head gear. Committee did look at this issue before and still feels that a) head gear does not necessarily prevent concussions and b) head gear make actually encourage more aggressive play and as a result more injuries. VT does allow head gear as long as it is recommended by a physician.

Discussion on clearance of athletes for play once a concussion/head injury is suspected. This is still an issue within the school community. Physicians are giving clearance with no regards to return to play protocols. This has lead to some confrontations at schools. Committee members are receiving requests for help from schools on this situation and are providing as much guidance as they can. No further action.

- discussion on the development and use of emergency plans. Denise did do

an information session for athletic directors at their Fall meeting. Many schools however, still do not have written protocols. Possible idea that colleges with sports medicine programs (Castleton, UVM, Norwich) may have students who would be willing to go to schools and help them develop an emergency plan. This would fit into the community service component of one of their classes. Matt will develop a statement on emergency plans and forward it to Bob. Denise will develop a position statement that she will also forward on. Colleges will be contacted to see if this service component might be a possibility.

- Denise stated that our current heat policy does not meet the requirements of the National Athletic Trainers Association because it does not have several statements about heat. Denise will revise our policy so that it includes the necessary information.

Also, current VT concussion legislation does not meet national standards because it does not have a remove from play component. A bill currently under consideration in the legislature would add the needed component and if approved, the state law would meet all requirements.

- discussion with Sean Farrell (VIFL). VIFL has noted that in the football guide, it states that schools must have 10 practices before its first scrimmage. Many school have not been doing this as it would mean double practices every day (the first scrimmage is usually after the first 5 days of practice). As a result, the VIFL is interested in having the policy reworded to say that schools need a minimum of 7 practices before the first scrimmage and that there be only 1 padded practice per day. Discussion. Matt and David noted that you cannot acclimate an athlete in 5-7 days of practice. It takes a much longer time to properly condition an athlete (min. 4-6 weeks). They are not aware of any medical evidence that would differentiate between 10 and 7 practices in terms of conditioning. During this time, the major issue will be an overuse injury.

Motion by Sarah, second by Matt, that the current football guide be revised to indicate that a student must have seven practices before their first scrimmage and that only 1 fully padded practice be allowed per day. Vote – approved unanimously.

Motion by David, second by Matt, to recommend to all football schools that during the first week of practice, part of one session be devoted to concussion education and prevention of spinal injuries (Heads Up video, etc.). Vote – approved unanimously.

- other business – brief discussion on the role of a schools nurse in the concussion management program. This will vary tremendously from school to school depending on the nurse and his/her willingness to get involved.

Brief discussion on the use of temporary 504 plans to deal with issues created by concussions or head injuries. Schools have the ability to do this. Schools are required to have a 504 team that periodically meets and reviews plans. How often this happens will vary from school to school. Students who have a concussion or head injury can be given temporary academic modifications through a 504 plan. Schools should be encouraged to do this as often as needed. No further action.

- adjourned.