

## **Board suspends two recruiting proposals**

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The Division I Board of Directors Monday suspended two of the 25 pieces of legislation it adopted in January, responding to extensive membership feedback that despite the benefits of the proposals, the new rules could have a negative impact on prospects and their families, college coaches and administrators.

### **Override process continues**

The override process for Prop. No. RWG-13-3 continues, with a deadline of 5 p.m. March 20. As of Monday afternoon, 48 schools had requested an override of that proposal, which deregulated communication with recruits.

If 75 schools request an override, the Board must review the proposal in question. If 125 schools request an override the proposals are suspended until the Board review. If the Board declines to change its position on the proposals, the full membership votes on them through an online process.

Monday's Board action initiates another 60-day override period of the two rules that were suspended . As of Monday afternoon, 66 schools had requested an override of the proposal that eliminated the definition of recruiting coordination functions that must be performed only by a head or assistant coach, and 70 schools had requested an override of the proposal that eliminated restrictions on printed materials sent to prospects.

Schools have until May 17 to request an override of the Board's March 18 action.

The Board postponed new rules deregulating who can perform recruiting tasks and what printed materials can be sent to prospects. Board members also considered suspending a third proposal that eliminated restrictions on modes and numerical limitations of recruiting contacts, but they ultimately agreed to let the membership decide that rule's future through the override process.

Suspending the rules means they will not become effective unless and until appropriate modifications are made. The Rules Working Group, which proposed the changes as part of a package of legislation the Board adopted in January, will continue to study the concepts.

The Board's action came about 10 days after the Rules Working Group recommended the presidents suspend the printed materials deregulation and the removal of restrictions on who can perform recruiting tasks. The working group considered the deregulation of recruiting communication as well, but it wanted to let the membership decide the rule's future through the

override process.

Board chair Nathan Hatch, president at Wake Forest, convened the presidents to respond to the Rules Working Group and membership feedback as quickly as possible.

“We are listening to our member schools and hope that continued discussion of these issues will enable us to reach a decision that helps our student-athletes and their institutions. We look forward to reviewing the result of further collaboration between coaches, administrators and student-athletes and members of the Rules Working Group,” Hatch said. “The other presidents on the Board and I had a strong desire to be responsive to the concerns expressed by our colleagues.”

Of the 25 proposals adopted by the Board in January, the three reviewed by the Board Monday generated immediate discussion among the membership. However, the majority of measures proposed by the Rules Working Group and adopted by the Board were supported.

“We are committed to the reform effort. We will move forward with these concepts with collaboration from all interested parties,” said NCAA President Mark Emmert. “Suspending these proposals for continued review will provide our coaches, administrators and student-athletes the additional opportunity to have their voices heard.”

Some coaches and administrators expressed concern that deregulation in this area might lead to a recruiting arms race that could overwhelm prospects, college coaches and athletics department budgets. Much of the tension is specific to football, though the concerns could translate to any sport.

The Board suspended the rules to give the Rules Working Group and the membership more time to determine the best course of action on the concepts presented in the proposals. For example, the working group will determine if there is middle ground between banning schools from sending any printed materials to prospects and allowing schools to send whatever they want to prospects.

### **Board keeps texting rule**

The Board decided to leave in place the rule that eliminated restrictions governing modes and numerical limitations on recruiting communication because it felt that many concerns were addressed through the suspension of Prop. No. RWG-11-2.

Suspending RWG-11-2 eliminated the fears about having an unlimited number of staff members contacting prospects an unlimited number of times. When it initially proposed the rule change, the Rules Working Group believed the measure acknowledged both the increased use of text-messaging by prospects over the last several years and the growing difficulty of distinguishing between text messages, email and messages sent through social media. The rule also is expected to relieve a significant monitoring burden from the shoulders of compliance administrators.

Before making its decision, the Board discussed that football coaches are currently permitted to

make an unlimited number of telephone calls to prospects during the fall contact period, which runs from late November until the Saturday prior to the National Letter of Intent signing day in February. Given this, the practical impact of RWG-13-3 will be to permit unlimited calls for only a few additional months.

The Board members also noted that coaches are already permitted to send an unlimited number of emails or other direct messages on various social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook), so deregulation in this area provides consistency and simplifies the legislation.

Men's basketball has operated without numerical or mode restrictions on recruiting contacts for nearly a year, and feedback has been positive.

As with all proposals adopted as part of the reform effort, RWG-13-3 will undergo a review after two years.

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