

Minutes of Liberty League Fall Meeting September 12, 2017 – Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Present: Kris Hall, David Lindholm, Stephanie Bianco (Bard); Steve Yianoukos, Laurel Kane (Clarkson); Brian Miller (Hobart & William Smith), Will Rothermel (Ithaca), Lee McElroy, Karen Hansen (RPI); George VanderZwaag, Andrea Golden (Rochester); Lou Spiotti, Amy Reed (RIT); Bob Durocher, Randy LaBrake (St. Lawrence); Gail Cummings-Danson, Megan Buchanan (Skidmore); Jim McLaughlin, Joanne Little, Beth Tiffany (Union); Michelle Walsh, JoAnn Acquarulo, Kaitlin Leach (Vassar); Deb Steward (William Smith); Tracy King, Katie Meline (Liberty League).

Guests: Anthony Simonetti, Jake Levin, Brandon Thompson (ADgreements)

I. Call to Order

Steve Yianoukos (Liberty League President) called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m.

II. ADgreements Presentation

Anthony Simonetti, Jake Levin and Brandon Thompson of ADgreements made a presentation to the group regarding their scheduling/contract software that is currently in development. The software is intended to streamline the process of handling contracts and scheduling agreements. Currently, Clarkson and RIT are considering piloting the software, which the developers expect to launch in the coming months. The opportunity still exists for additional institutions to join the pilot program.

III. Review of Minutes

The minutes of the May 30-June 1, 2017 meeting at the Otesaga Resort Hotel in Cooperstown, N.Y., were reviewed. No changes or corrections were noted.

Motion: A motion (Hall, McElroy) to approve the minutes from the May 30-June 1, 2017 meeting PASSED 11-0-0.

IV. Financial Report

Tracy King provided a financial report on behalf of Treasurer Mike Hanna. FY17 has been finalized. The league had incurred a deficit of \$17,768.15 for the fiscal year, which was expected since the funding for the assistant commissioner position through the NCAA Strategic Alliance Matching Grant had expired. King also noted that the recent banner project (\$7,206.98), which included the purchase of institutional banners with Ithaca joining the league, is being charged to the FY17 budget because it was paid in July (the league's fiscal year ends July 31). The funds for this project are being taken from Tier III of the NCAA Conference Grant for 2017-18 since the grant spending includes any

expenditures from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. As a result, the actual deficit for FY17 is closer to \$10,000. With full-member dues increasing to \$20,000 for FY18 and FY19, Hanna has projected a surplus of approximately \$21,000. King also noted that the league had agreed to dues of \$20,000 for a period of two years, so dues for FY20 and beyond will have to be revisited next year. Kris Hall asked if the league had previously established a multi-year budget forecast. Steve Yianoukos noted that it had not been done in prior years, but he and King could discuss with Hanna on an upcoming conference call.

Motion: A motion (McElroy, Hall) to approve the financial report, including the proposed FY18 budget as presented PASSED 11-0-0.

V. Commissioner's Report

- A. Conference Self-Study Guide - Timeline:** The Liberty League's NCAA Conference Self-Study Guide (CSSG) must be completed by June 1, 2018. Tracy King reviewed a proposed timetable for completing the CSSG. King will complete an initial draft of the CSSG by the end of October. By the end of November, the initial draft will be forwarded to the administrators with committees assigned to review and make recommendations on different sections. The second draft will be reviewed at the league meeting at the NCAA Convention. Campus constituents will have an opportunity to review the CSSG in February and March with the final draft scheduled to be submitted to the NCAA in the spring.
- B. Empire 8 Football Update:** After the league had approved football schedules at the May meeting for 2019 and 2020 that included crossover games with the Empire 8 – per Buffalo State's condition for joining the Liberty League as an associate member – King reported that he contacted Buffalo State athletic director and football coach Jerry Boyes to extend a membership offer. Boyes had indicated that he would like to see the schedules extended out to 2021 and 2022 before agreeing to move from the Empire 8 to the Liberty League. King had been working with Empire 8 colleague Chuck Mitrano during the summer to draft schedules for the two additional seasons. Feedback was shared on the draft schedules King compiled. George Vanderzwaag recommended that the Liberty League establish a framework for a scheduling agreement and then build a schedule that fits with the framework. Specifically, the Liberty League would agree to schedule a minimum of 14 games per season against Empire 8 institutions where each Empire 8 team would receive two games. This would compensate each Empire 8 school for the loss of Buffalo State and would provide one additional game. King will revise the draft schedules based on the feedback and will follow up with Mitrano regarding the framework.
- C. Championship Medals Update:** King indicated that he had solicited awards companies to produce championship medals for the Liberty League swimming and diving, track and field, and rowing championships as voted

upon at the spring meeting. At the recommendation of the SUNYAC, King selected Championship Award Guys based in North Attleboro, Mass. The league previously paid approximately \$8 per medal for the rowing championship medals through Recognition Experts. The Championship Award Guys will produce customized Liberty League medals for each event at a cost of approximately \$5 per medal.

- D. Update on New Presidents:** Four league institutions – Hobart and William Smith, Ithaca, RIT and Vassar – have new presidents beginning this academic year. Additionally, Union College president Stephen Ainlay will be concluding his tenure at the end of the academic year. This marks the first time in at least six years that the Liberty League will have new presidential leadership. The athletic directors discussed their initial meetings with their new presidents, expressing that the presidents have each been supportive of athletics and the student-athletes.

VI. Management Council Update

Gail Cummings-Danson provided an NCAA update on behalf of the Division III Management Council. Updates include:

- The Sportsmanship and Game Environment Working Group, focused on improving the behavior of parents and fans, has been working to develop a Division III game environment program in conjunction with the Disney Institute. The goal of “Gameday the DIII Way” is to achieve a better fan decorum at Division III athletics events by providing a consistent level of expectations and guest service throughout the division. Tracy King, a member of the working group, reported that the program will be officially launched at the NCAA Convention.
- Sexual violence prevention sign-off: each institution’s president, athletics director and Title IX coordinator will be required to sign off on training for sexual violence prevention for student-athletes, coaches and staff as directed by the NCAA.
- Sports Science Institute (SSI): certifications for strength and conditioning coaches are being reviewed. SSI will be seeking to make a recommendation on best practices for the strength and conditioning position on campuses.
- Division III identity initiative: has the initiative been exhausted? The consensus was that there are new items being offered for purchase through the SourceOne Digital website and institutions will continue to take advantage of the \$500 NCAA grant.
- Alcohol at NCAA championships: the NCAA has been piloting the sales of alcohol at select championships, will wrestling, volleyball and ice hockey in 2017-18. The consensus is that the sale of alcohol at NCAA championships seems to be in contradiction to the new sportsmanship/fan behavior initiative.
- Review of proposed NCAA legislation: key 2018 Division III legislative proposals were discussed. Consensus was that the exemption of an alumni contest in each sport is viewed positively.

VII. Executive Committee Rotation

With Ithaca officially beginning full league participation in 2017-18, the Executive Committee rotation needs to be updated to include IC. The Executive Committee rotation has been based on an alphabetical listing of the member schools, meaning that Ithaca would follow Clarkson in the rotation beginning in 2018-19 (Hobart is standing treasurer and is not included in the rotation). Tracy King reported that Susan Bassett is familiar with the league and is comfortable taking on that role in 2018-19. In instances where a new athletic director is in position to serve as president in her/his first year in the league, the past practice has been to delay the rotation one year to provide the individual with an opportunity to become familiar with the league and operating structure. It was agreed that the outgoing president would remain on for an additional year.

VIII. League Committee Structure

Kim Culligan had suggested at the spring meeting that the league should consider adding committees to assist in facilitating league business. Committees might help to ensure that the league is making consistent decisions on a sport-to-sport basis. The league previously had committees prior to the hiring of a full-time office staff. The previous committee structure was eliminated because it was agreed that the committees were no longer being utilized. It was agreed that working groups or ad hoc committees could be formed to address issues as needed.

IX. Officiating Assigning Services – Baseball & Men’s Lacrosse

With the USILA no longer assigning officials in men’s lacrosse, Tracy King indicated that officials will now be assigned through a number of regional assigners. A committee consisting of commissioners, athletic directors and coaches interviewed three candidates – Steve Miller, Walt Munze, Coz DiLello – for the New York regional assigner. Miller, a former official and NILOA president, was the preferred choice based on his experience and familiarity with the pool of officials in the region. The fee structure will be similar to the fees established through the USILA.

King also indicated that Darrin Sealey has resigned as president of the Collegiate Officials Group (COG), the league’s assigner for baseball umpires, after falsely claiming to have served in the military. Chris Marshall has been named interim president and Alex Skandalis continues to serve as executive vice president. The other Division III conferences for which COG has assigned – Empire 8, SUNYAC, NEAC – will be continuing with COG for the 2018 season. The Liberty League has one year remaining (2018) on a three-year agreement with COG. To better evaluate officiating coordinators moving forward, Lou Spiotti proposed that the league should request the following information from potential assigners: costs (assigning fee, officiating fees, travel/per diem); qualifications required of their officials; roster listing; recruiting/selection process; experience of the team of officials; references (other leagues which use them); supervision process; evaluation protocol (rating); operate on a contract?; training programs.

X. 2017-18 Championship Schedule / Coverage

With the move of the track & field and swimming & diving championships to the end of the season, the league will now have six championships on the same weekend in the winter (m/w indoor track; m/w swimming and diving; m/w basketball) and nine championships on the same weekend in the spring (m/w rowing; m/w lacrosse; m/w outdoor track; m/w tennis; softball). While the league office has always attempted to attend as many league championships as possible, the compact schedule will require greater coordination and assistance with the host schools. This will especially be the case in the spring as the league is responsible for running the tennis tournament and being on site for the duration of the three-day event.

XI. Women's Squash Championship

JoAnn Acquarulo shared that the women's squash coaches held a conference call on August 24 to discuss options for a Liberty League championship in 2017-18. While schedules for 2017-18 are nearly finalized, the coaches feel that it is important to re-establish Liberty League women's squash. The coaches discussed a possible date of January 27-28 at Vassar and Bard, incorporating the tournament into a round-robin event that Vassar is already scheduled to host that weekend. David Ames (Vassar) and Craig Thorpe-Clark (Bard) are working to develop a schedule for the championship.

Motion: A motion (Steward, Golden) to approve a Liberty League women's squash championship, Jan. 27-28, co-hosted by Vassar and Bard PASSED 4-0-7.

Follow-up is needed with the coaches prior to the January meeting to determine if they would like to hold the men's and women's squash championships on the same weekend in the future. Since Vassar currently participates in the Seven Sisters Championship the same weekend as the Liberty League men's squash championship, a new date may need to be identified for the Seven Sisters event.

XII. Tennis Championship Format

With the move to a 6-team tournament for tennis (Friday-Saturday-Sunday schedule), Tracy King indicated that four matches would need to be played on both Friday and Saturday – two matches each for women and men. Since the Reis Tennis Center at Cornell does not have lighted outdoor courts, some matches would need to be played indoors if all matches were to be played at Cornell. In order to play all matches outdoors – weather permitting – the coaches suggested playing one gender at Ithaca and one at Cornell. Ithaca indicated a willingness to host one gender. In the event of inclement weather, the indoor courts at Reis would be utilized as the backup. There were no concerns expressed with Ithaca hosting one gender.

The tennis guidelines had previously permitted on-site practices on Friday at the championship venue when the format was Saturday-Sunday. Under the new format, the top two seeds would not play until Saturday meaning that it would be unlikely that they would be able to practice on Friday during the quarterfinals. On-site practices for quarterfinal

teams would need to be conducted on Thursday. Since the league eliminated the practice opportunity for men's golf on Thursday prior to the championship due primarily to academic concerns, it was agreed that on-site practice opportunities should also be eliminated for tennis.

Motion: A motion (Cummings-Danson, McElroy) to eliminate on-site practice opportunities prior to the Liberty League men's and women's tennis championships PASSED 8-0-3.

XIII. Conference Digital Network

Tracy King reported that the Centennial Conference announced a partnership with Stretch Internet to become the conference's digital network provider. The Centennial Digital Network will also have over-the-top (OTT) applications to make broadcasts available on Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire and Android TV. Stretch Internet has inquired as to the interest of the Liberty League in such a partnership. Stretch would provide the conference with a free portal as long as at least half of the members are Stretch Internet clients. Liberty League schools currently utilize a number of different web streaming providers including SIDEARM, BoxCast, Backlight TV, etc. Cost per member institution is approximately \$3,000 annually. It was recommended that a webinar be coordinated with Stretch Internet and the Liberty League SIDs to evaluate the product. The SIDs could then offer a recommendation to the administrators. King will work with Stretch to coordinate a webinar

XIV. Video Exchange and Editing Applications

Bob Durocher inquired as to the feasibility of consolidating the number of video exchange services utilized by the league. Currently, the Liberty League utilizes at least four different providers for video exchange services – Synergy (basketball), Hudl (football), Krossover (soccer, lacrosse, volleyball), TeamXStream (field hockey). In some cases, coaches have selected particular assigners because their national coaches associations have agreements with particular companies. Other companies, such as Synergy and Hudl, specialize in particular sports. As long as the coaches are left to choose video exchange providers, the league will likely utilize a number of different providers.

XV. Single-Site Championship Working Group

Tracy King proposed the formation of a working group to review and evaluate the funding and staffing of the league's single-site championships in order to ensure consistency. Volunteers for the working group include: David Lindholm (Bard), Karen Hansen and Lee McElroy (RPI), Andrea Golden (Rochester), Jim McLaughlin (Union) and JoAnn Acquarulo (Vassar). King will organize a conference call with the working group.

XVI. Future Meeting Sites / Dates

Meeting dates for 2017-18 were reviewed.

A. Winter Meeting: Friday, Jan. 19 at NCAA Convention (Indianapolis, Ind.).

NCAA Convention dates: Jan. 17-20, 2018.

B. Spring Meeting: May 30-31 at Cooperstown, N.Y. (Otesaga Resort Hotel).

XVII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.