

## Small Colleges Seek More Control Over Athletic Teams

**College Press Service**

Much like their big-campus brethren, presidents of small colleges say they'll try to exert greater control over their sports programs later this month.

A committee of big-school presidents, of course, has been trying to wrest more power from athletic directors over the operations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for the last two years.

Now a number of presidents of relatively smaller schools that belong to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) are trying to wrest power over policy from their athletic directors.

The NAIA, when it meets later this month, will vote on reform proposals that would give more power to the presidents and, some say, eventually lead to stricter academic requirements for athletes and fewer games per season.

While critics fear the presidents may unnecessarily complicate life in the NAIA, the presidents themselves apparently fear that the grade-fixing, point shaving

and illegal payment scandals now plaguing the NCAA could filter down to the NAIA unless they act to prevent it.

In the past, the low-key NAIA largely escaped the attention of school administrators. And some NAIA executives say they like it that way.

"Presidents aren't going to be current or have expertise in athletics," says Phyllis Holmes, a NAIA Executive Committee vice president and director of women's athletics at Greenville College, Ill. "We (athletic directors) are involved every day."

The new proposal, which would relegate the Executive Committee to supervising championships, came out of the NAIA Presidents' Council, which is now only an advisory committee. The Executive Committee, though open to administrators and faculty, is composed mainly of athletic department personnel.

"Presidents need to watch over our athletic programs more closely," says Jeff Ferris, president of Central Arkansas University and a member of the Presidents'

Council. "We've felt our obligation hasn't been met."

Ferris thinks the NAIA can use the administrators' perspective. "I can make a case that those people who work so closely in sports aren't in the position to evaluate their programs objectively," he says. "Presidents are well qualified to do just that."

Ferris also says that the proposal to shift "isn't a threat" to sports personnel. "We need to find ways to talk together, to combine our expertise," he says.

While saying they welcome the presidents' input, many athletic directors fear it could bog down the NAIA in regulations. "The NCAA has regulated itself to death," says Wayne Dannehl, a vice president of the NAIA Executive Committee and the athletic director at the University of Wisconsin at Parkside.

While welcoming "honest debate" presidents have brought to the association, Dannehl hopes they will leave present rules alone. For instance, NAIA baseball teams are free to play as many games as their budget will allow.

And teams in warmer regions usually play longer seasons that those restricted by weather.

"If Arizona wants to play more than we do in Wisconsin, we shouldn't be telling them, 'you can only play 40 games,'" Dannehl says. Many presidents, however, fear such lax rules can lead to the same kind of exploitation of students that has scandalized many NCAA schools in recent years.

"If you have a kid playing 80 to 100 baseball games, when are they being student?" wonders President Thomas Feld of Mount Mercy College in Iowa and vice chairman of the NAIA's President's Council.

"You can exploit athletes whether you're at a big school or a small one," he says. If presidents direct the association's future, Feld predicts sports will take more of a back seat to studies for NAIA athletes.

"Presidents generally feel limitations are necessary to preserve the 'student status' of student athletes," he says.

But more stringent academic re-

quirements may cut some of the most needy student athletes, some athletic directors fear, echoing a recent criticism of the tougher NCAA rules.

"For the past 31 years, I've recruited players from disadvantaged families," says Dave Sisam of Grand View College in Iowa. "Many don't graduate, but they're able to go out in the world and perform, to do better than they ever could have without college."

Holmes of Greenville College hopes the delegates to this year's convention seriously debate the issue before voting to change to the NAIA is governed, "We'd rather have change come from the grassroots level, from the people we're serving," she says. "This feels like the directives from the men at the top."

"Sure we need checks and balances," says Sisam. "But I hope the pendulum doesn't swing too far and negate the good things NAIA stands for."

*Editor's note: This year Behrend became a member of the NCAA moving from the NAIA.*

# SGA ELECTIONS



**April 7 and April 8**

**Ground Floor of Reed Building**

### 17 Positions Available

- Student Government President
- Student Government Vice President
- 4 Commuter Senators
- 3 Resident Senators
- Inter-club Council President
- Inter-club Council Vice President
- Commuter Council President
- Commuter Council Vice President
- Joint Residence Council President
- Joint Residence Council Vice President
- Student Programming Council President
- Student Programming Council Vice President

**Interested in running?**

**Pick-up Petitions in SGA Office**

**DEADLINE FRIDAY, MARCH 28**

**All full time students with a VA**