

# FACULTY BOARD ON ATHLETICS

## UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

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Meeting of April 10, 2003

5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Main Building

**Members Present:** Prof. Fernand Dutile (chair); Prof. Matthew Barrett; Prof. Harvey Bender; Prof. William Berry; Ms. Emily Bienko; Prof. John Borkowski; Dr. Matthew Cullinan; Prof. Stephen Fallon; Mr. Patrick Holmes; (Rev.) Mark Poorman, C.S.C.; Prof. Donald Pope-Davis; Prof. Katherine Spiess; Dr. Kevin White.

**Members Absent:** Prof. Umesh Garg; Prof. John Weber.

**Observers Present:** Ms. Sandy Barbour, Mr. Bernard Muir, and Mr. William Scholl (all of the Department of Athletics); Ms. Diane Wilson (recorder).

**1. Call to order and prayer:** The chair called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. Father Poorman led the group in prayer.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting:** A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 18, 2003, was made by Father Poorman; Prof. Barrett seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

**3. Announcements:** The chair introduced and thanked Ms. Diane Wilson, assistant dean of the Graduate School, who generously agreed to serve as recorder for this meeting. On behalf of the Board, the chair congratulated Mr. Holmes on being appointed permanent director of the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes. A hearty round of applause ensued.

The chair announced an amendment to the spring 2003 schedule for men's lacrosse. Thursday, March 20, has been added as an excused-absence day. That schedule remains within University guidelines.

The chair announced an amendment to the spring 2003 schedule for men's and women's outdoor track. Friday, March 21, and Friday, April 11, become additional excused-absence days. The chair noted that although the team now lists four days in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday sequence as excused-absence days, no individual student-athlete will miss more than three.

In women's lacrosse for spring 2003, Thursday, April 10, becomes a full excused-absence day rather than a half. The schedule remains within University guidelines.

The women's soccer schedule for fall 2003 has added a half-day excused absence on September 10. That schedule also remains within University guidelines.

For the record, the chair noted that the Board, in three separate e-mail votes relating to softball, had 1) approved games on April 9 (Pittsburgh) and April 21 (Virginia Tech), with April 9 constituting an additional excused-absence day (these games replaced earlier weather-postponed competition); 2) denied a request for an additional game during study days of the spring 2003 semester; and 3) approved the substitution of a double-header against Providence on April 15 for previously scheduled competition against the University of Nebraska (due to travel complications, this substitution will require two student-athletes to miss one-half of a class on April 16).

The chair announced that he had approved, on the Board's behalf, the following team captains for the academic year 2003-04: Aaron Gill (hockey); Josh Dermott and Matt Obringer (men's swimming); and Luis Haddock, Matthew Scott, and Brent D'Amico (men's tennis).

Finally, the chair noted that two items appearing on the agenda would not require discussion. The proposed schedule adjustment for women's soccer did not, as it turns out, require a waiver of the University's guidelines. The second item, the proposed captains for women's soccer, has become moot in light of the head coach's amended proposal.

**4. Baseball schedule and study days revisited:** Mr. Scholl, administrator for the baseball team, brought to the Board a proposal regarding the last week before examinations. Earlier, the Board had asked the team to reduce its number of games from five to four during that week. Under that arrangement, the team would play one weekday game against Michigan, the annual fund raiser, and three weekend games against a Big East opponent. The annual "bye" weekend occurs earlier in the season. Under the proposal brought to the Board, the Big East would assign the study-day weekend as the "bye" weekend most years; an exception would arise every four or five years when Pittsburgh travels to South Bend since, at the time of Notre Dame's study days, Pittsburgh's semester has already ended. Under the proposal, the baseball team would play four single games that week: two during the week, on Tuesday and Wednesday, and two on the weekend. The proposal would allow Notre Dame to schedule high-profile non-conference teams that week, teams that would refuse to play here much earlier in the season. Moreover, beyond the advantage of single games over double-headers, we would always play at home. Mr. Scholl recognized the concern the proposal might engender: setting a precedent for non-conference games on study days. Prof. Barrett, concurring, noted that the University guidelines provide for "limited" competition during study days. If we grant this request for baseball – thus granting a permanent, not a one-time, exemption – what do we tell other sports should they make similar requests? Mr. Scholl: Maybe it would be good to consider those proposals that actually reduce the number of games played during study days. Prof. Barrett suggested that exemptions for Big East games made sense since that scheduling fell beyond University control. Prof. Borkowski warned against making too much of the proposed reduction; most of us, he said, are unhappy even with the reduced number. What is the difference in time and energy levels expended by the student-athletes? Mr. Scholl: Practices that week are voluntary; games are less voluntary, though student-athletes have

opted out of those as well. The energy question is a difficult one. A double-header starts at noon and ends at 6:00 p.m. A single game will run from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. But four single games will spread the time more evenly over the week. Prof. Fallon asked about the downside of not playing games during that week; would this affect our prospects with regard to the NCAA tournament? Mr. Scholl: We would then have to find room for those games earlier in the season, thus creating a need for three midweek games that would have a still more serious impact on the academic enterprise. Ms. Barbour added that dropping four games could indeed make a difference with regard to the tournament; winning forty games, for example, has a certain magic in terms of tournament selection. Prof. Borkowski suggested that a game on Tuesday of the week before exams might be more detrimental than games on study days; many courses have major papers due on their last day of class – Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. Father Poorman remarked on the difficulty of generalizing about when papers are due; but four games during one week sound like a lot. Mr. Scholl: That's the rhythm of baseball; once the season starts, the team plays a lot more than it practices. Players are used to that rhythm. Moreover, we are reducing our games from five to four. The chair expressed concern that the study-day games have been justified on the basis of conference demands; now we are discussing removing that urgency through the allocation of a "bye" week, yet seeking to replace those games with non-conference games. Doesn't the urgency justifying games during study days thus disappear? Ms. Barbour stressed the practical point of reducing demands on student-athletes during that week; the team would play four single games and would always be at home. Mr. Scholl added that a total lack of competition during that weekend would greatly disadvantage our team as it entered the Big East tournament the following week. Prof. Pope-Davis requested the team's typical schedule the weekend before study-day week. That weekend, Mr. Scholl responded, would typically involve three games, a double-header on Saturday and a single game on Sunday. Father Poorman, acknowledging that the guarantee of home competition offset other disadvantages, still wondered whether, in terms of precedent, we might not be better off staying with conference games. Dr. White, emphasizing that decisions such as this lie at the core of what the Board does, underscored that the department of athletics is trying to act responsibly here. We have to schedule fifty-six games a season, and the student-athletes want to play a full schedule. We already have to "back load" the baseball schedule because of the climate in northern Indiana. Moreover, in terms of responsibility with regard to academic impact, baseball's coaches and players reflect a strong record. If other requests came from other programs, it would be important to look at their academic records. Of course, if any individual student-athletes need to miss games or practices for academic reasons, they may certainly do that. Since weather often prevents teams from playing scheduled games, Prof. Barrett asked, could the NCAA possibly be induced to base tournament invitations on the *percentage* of games won instead of the *number* of games won? Mr. Scholl responded that the decision makers include a heavy representation of warm-climate teams that have no interest in helping teams like Notre Dame. Some southern teams have played thirty games before we play our first. Prof. Fallon stressed that the proposal meets the spirit of the Board's objectives, if not the letter; we don't want to make things more difficult for our student-athletes. Mr. Scholl then suggested scheduling this proposal for one rotation instead of making it permanent. In that way, the Board could reconsider the arrangement after four years. Father Poorman: Although I don't like the proposal from a theoretical perspective, the clear rationale of accepting it remains the reduction of athletics loads on student-athletes during the last several class days of the semester and during the study days. That must be our response should other teams make similar proposals. Prof. Barrett

included within that rationale the home-play guarantee. Father Poorman moved, with Prof. Berry seconding, that the proposal be approved. Prof. Barrett summarized the three important points of the proposal: 1) a four-year pilot program; 2) a reduction in the number of games during study days; and 3) all home games. The proposal passed unanimously.

**5. The Byron V. Kanaley Awards:** The chair presented the following background: The Byron V. Kanaley Award is bestowed on senior monogram winners who are exemplary as students, as athletes, and as leaders. The subcommittee on academic integrity had met, discussed the nominations at length, and brought to the full Board three candidates. In an e-mail vote, a majority of the Board had favored these candidates. Nonetheless, Prof. Barrett had notified the subcommittee and the chair of the Board that he intended to propose a fourth winner. [For reasons of confidentiality, these public minutes omit the identity of this fourth candidate and all discussion related directly to that candidate]. Prof. Bender, chair of the subcommittee on academic integrity, stressed the quality of all nominees; choosing among them presented a challenge. We looked at the award guidelines very seriously. Why stop at three when we could easily have added several others? The answer: We did not want to dilute the award. Also, he added, due to grade inflation, grade-point averages can look much better than they really are. Nonetheless, the subcommittee will gladly accept whatever the Board wants to do. Prof. Berry worried that the subcommittee's decisions reflected grade-point average rather than leadership; for him that presented a problem. Prof. Bender: No, GPA did not constitute the sole criterion. We looked at all three areas, scholarship, athletic achievement, and leadership. Prof. Borkowski reminded the Board that it had on previous occasions named four Kanaley winners; a strong case has been made for adding a fourth winner this year. The motion to add a fourth Byron V. Kanaley award recipient for the 2002-03 academic year passed, with two members abstaining. [The four Byron V. Kanaley Award recipients for 2003-04, in alphabetical order: Keara Coughlin (volleyball); Ashley Dryer (women's soccer); Andreas Forstner (men's soccer); and Alexis Madrid (softball)].

**6. Fifth year of eligibility:** Mr. Holmes brought to the Board the petition of Monique Hernandez, a basketball player, for a fifth year of eligibility. [For reasons of confidentiality, the Board's public minutes omit discussions related to individual petitions.] Prof. Borkowski moved that the petition of Monique Hernandez for a fifth year of eligibility be granted. Prof. Bender seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**7. Missed class in connection with tournament appearance:** The chair raised with the Board his concern with regard to the timing of teams' departures for tournament appearances. Two such departures in particular punctuated the issue. Two years ago, for the Big East men's basketball tournament, Notre Dame, due to its good record, had earned a "bye." As a result, its first game was set for the Thursday night of tournament week. Nonetheless, the Big East banquet was scheduled for Tuesday night of that week, causing the team to schedule a Monday departure. This arrangement had the team slated to leave South Bend more than three days before its first tip-off. (As a result of a snowstorm, the team in fact did not leave until Tuesday). This year, in connection with its appearance in the NCAA "Sweet Sixteen," the team arranged for excused class absences from noon Tuesday, despite not being scheduled to play until Thursday evening. Indeed, the team's charter flight was not scheduled to leave South Bend until 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday. The team sought class-miss excusal from noon on in

order to hold an on-campus practice prior to departure. The chair thought it highly problematic that student-athletes attended a basketball practice on campus instead of scheduled classes. The chair recognized that the University stands committed to excellence both in academics and in athletics. Nonetheless, he thought it difficult to justify class misses for on-campus practice sessions. In response, Mr. Muir pointed out that tournament regulations required Notre Dame to be present in California on Wednesday for both a press conference and an open practice session. This of course required the team to leave on Tuesday. Moreover, the practice session in California, open as it is to the public, allows no serious preparation for the particular opponent. Also, the University had little flexibility in scheduling the charter flight, since the NCAA uses only one travel agency for all teams and for all games. Agreeing, Dr. White emphasized the difficulty of scheduling so many teams to fly on a small number of charters. Indeed, our associate athletics director, Jim Phillips, was “up all night” making arrangements. In response to Prof. Barrett’s question, Mr. Holmes stated that on Tuesdays no basketball player has a class extending beyond 1:45 p.m. Coach Brey, very sensitive to class attendance, told the six players affected to meet with the professor at the beginning of class to explain the situation and to make arrangements for making up any missed work. This was especially important since, as the post-season developed, these student-athletes missed three consecutive Tuesday-Thursday classes. Prof. Barrett: With regard to the big picture, shouldn’t first-round games be played on Saturday and Sunday, with second-round games on Monday and Tuesday? This would allow one-half of all student-athletes competing (because half will lose during those first two days) to be home Sunday night, with virtually no class time missed. Mr. Muir answered that the billions of dollars paid by CBS drives the scheduling; CBS wants prime-time slots. Mr. White added that prime-time television not only provides additional financial resources, but also gives visibility to many teams that don’t ordinarily get it. The chair found it troubling that CBS exerted such control over class attendance; perhaps the only thing we can do is work on conferences to minimize missed classes. Father Poorman: Couldn’t head coaches in these situations at least send a memo to the chair of the Faculty Board setting out both the schedule and the rationale for it? Dr. White: That’s fair; we’ll make that happen.

**8. Subcommittee reports:** Prof. Barrett, on behalf of the subcommittee on student welfare, reported that Dr. Eileen Kolman, dean of the First Year of Studies, reacted very positively to the Board’s resolution of the Orientation-weekend issue. She understands that exceptions might be needed from time to time. Prof. Barrett plans to invite Mr. Kevin Rooney, academic advisor in the First Year of Studies, to meet with the subcommittee in connection with other issues related to Orientation and, as well, in connection with academic advising for first-year student-athletes. Other matters raised by the subcommittee at the beginning of this academic year, including the multi-cultural experience and the residence-hall life of student-athletes, cannot be dealt with until next year. Prof. Bender, for the subcommittee on academic integrity, informed the Board that the subcommittee continues its work on improving the process for petitioning for a fifth year of eligibility. Providing for significant academic advising with regard to a fifth year of eligibility seems crucial. The subcommittee seeks to implement this goal without significantly encumbering the process.

**9. New Business:** Prof. Borkowski raised what he called a “sensitive but important” issue. A faculty member had called him to report that still another faculty member had alleged that a coach had advised a student-athlete to abandon a particular major because of its rigor. The coach dissuaded this student-

athlete from that major, the account continued, because of the prospect of missed practice time. Of course, Prof. Borkowski acknowledged, this “dissuading” might reflect the student’s perception more than a direct statement of the coach. Nonetheless, Prof. Borkowski stressed, head coaches should encourage students to pursue difficult majors, not discourage them from so doing. Dr. White responded that this information, if true, struck him as very troubling. Of course, we cannot pursue it without more specific information. Prof. Borkowski replied that the student-athlete involved cannot be identified until after he graduates.

**10. Adjournment:** The chair adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.