

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF BRADLEY R. CASHMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
PENNSYLVANIA INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC. (PIAA)**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2007**

Good afternoon! Thank you for inviting me to appear today at the Committee on Children and Youth Hearing into House Bill No. 1482, which, if passed, would prohibit the use of non-wood bats in the sports of baseball and softball by individuals under 18 years of age. Before I provide you with reasons why PIAA opposes the passage of this Bill, I believe that some background information about PIAA is appropriate.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (PIAA) is a non-profit corporation and a voluntary membership organization. The members of PIAA consist of almost all of the public and many of the private junior high/middle schools and senior high schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Generally stated, the function of PIAA is to develop and enforce rules regulating interscholastic athletic competition, which are authorized or adopted by the member schools.

The purposes of PIAA, as set forth in ARTICLE II, PURPOSES, Section 1, Charitable Purposes, of its Constitution, are to:

- Organize, develop, and direct an interscholastic athletic program which will promote, protect, and conserve the health and physical welfare of all participants.
- Formulate and maintain policies that will safeguard the educational values of interscholastic athletics and cultivate the high ideals of good sportsmanship.
- Promote uniformity of standards in all interscholastic athletic competition.

PIAA believes that a system that best serves the student-athlete emphasizes the amateur, educational, and character-building aspects of high school sports and recognizes that athletics is not the driving force. Students are in school primarily to obtain an education.

The membership of PIAA consists of more than 1,470 schools, divided almost equally between senior high schools and junior high/middle schools. Of that membership, approximately 200 are private schools. Nearly 350,000 students participate in interscholastic athletics at all levels (varsity, junior varsity, or otherwise) of competition under PIAA jurisdiction, which placed Pennsylvania seventh among the states for 2006-2007.

PIAA is divided for administrative purposes into 12 geographic districts, each of which has a District Committee elected by the member schools within the District. Each District Committee elects a chairman, who becomes the district's representative on the Board of Directors, the statewide governing body of the organization.

Other members of the Board of Directors include representatives of the member junior high/middle schools, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA), the Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals (PASSP), the Pennsylvania State Athletic Directors Association (PSADA), the Pennsylvania Coaches' Association (PCA), the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), one female and one male PIAA-registered sports' official, the chairpersons of the Girls' Athletics and Private Schools' Steering Committees, and one female and one male representative from the Parents'

Advisory Committee. With the sometime exception of the officials' and parents' representatives, members of the Board of Directors are experienced professional educators who have background and experience in dealing with high school athletics.

As with the Board of Directors, nearly all members of the District Committees are experienced professional educators with background and experience in dealing with high school athletics.

The Principal of each member school is responsible to PIAA in all matters pertaining to the interscholastic athletic relations of the Principal's school. PIAA deals with individual coaches, students, and their parents through its member schools.

The four major areas in which PIAA currently operates are:

1. Establishing and enforcing rules governing the eligibility of high school athletes to participate in interscholastic athletics, including rules for academic performance and attendance, age, amateur status, and transfers.
2. Adopting the Contest rules for each sport under its jurisdiction. With the exception of bowling, golf, girls' lacrosse, rifle, and tennis, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), of which PIAA has been a member since 1925, publishes all other Contest rules adopted by PIAA. As NFHS does not have rules in these five sports, PIAA adopts those published by their respective national governing bodies.
3. Registering and providing training opportunities for officials to officiate at Contests in which PIAA-member schools participate. Approximately 13,500 officials are currently PIAA-registered. PIAA requires its officials to be involved in continuing education and provides classes for them to attend on a local basis throughout the state.
4. Organizing and operating Inter-District Championship Contests in 11 girls' sports and 11 boys' sports.

All of this is accomplished without any federal or state funds. PIAA's principal source of revenue is the sale of tickets to its Inter-District Championship Contests. Operating these Inter-District Championship Contests is also PIAA's largest expense. Junior high/middle schools pay annual dues of \$150; senior high schools pay annual dues ranging from a low of \$350 to a high of \$500, based on school size. Those dues constitute less than 5% of PIAA's gross revenue, and are paid by many of the schools from their athletic budgets, which come from ticket sales to their own Regular Season Contests. Gate receipts enable PIAA to operate without taxpayer financing.

In addition to these specific categories of operations, PIAA also provides numerous services to its members on a day-to-day basis through its headquarters near Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County.

On a national comparative basis, PIAA has a small staff for such a large state. The organization operates with a full-time staff of 12 and approximately 200 volunteers. Most of those volunteers are professional educators in Pennsylvania schools. Without substantial volunteer assistance from people concerned about student-athletes and their experiences, PIAA could not operate as it does.

## **ADOPTION OF CONTEST RULES**

It is the second major area of PIAA's operation, adopting the Contest rules for each sport under its jurisdiction, which I would like to address today; specifically, the Contest rules as they pertain to baseball and softball bats.

As I mentioned above, PIAA, along with all other state high school associations, adopts the rules for each sport as established by NFHS. This is a condition for membership in NFHS and is intended to ensure uniformity of rules, at least on the competition surface, for interscholastic sports throughout the country.

Consistent with this requirement, PIAA has adopted the NFHS Baseball and Softball Rules Books, and the "Bat Rules", as set forth in both publications. The types of bats which are available for use at the high school level have been a subject of considerable study through the years. NFHS has long been aware of the issues which this Committee has been asked to address and has adopted standards to provide safeguards to high school baseball and softball players.

### **BASEBALL BAT RULE**

NFHS Baseball Rule 3-2 provides, in relevant part, "All non-wood bats shall meet the Ball Exit Speed Ratio (BESR) performance standard, and such bats shall be labeled with a silk screen or other permanent certification mark." The concept of BESR is discussed in the "White Paper" from the Baseball Research Center (BRC) at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, which is set forth in Attachment 1 of my presentation.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has taken the lead on restricting the "liveliness" of bats. NCAA requires that all non-wood bats be certified such that the BESR of the bat must fall at or below a predetermined value. BRC tests all manufacturers' non-wood bats to see if they meet the standard established by NCAA. The NCAA standard has also been adopted by NFHS.

In addition, NFHS Baseball Rules provide restrictions on the size of the bats. NFHS Baseball Rule 3-4 provides for wood bats to have a diameter at its thickest part of 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches or less and non-wood bats to have a diameter at its thickest part of 2 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches or less. Rule 3-4 also requires that "A bat shall not weigh, numerically, more than three ounces less than the length of the bat (e.g., a 33-inch long bat cannot be less than 30 ounces)." The NFHS Baseball Rules Committee adopted the non-wood 2 $\frac{5}{8}$  inch bat barrel diameter and the -3 weight to length ratio to restrict the performance of non-wood bats to that comparable to wood bats.

### **SOFTBALL BALL AND BAT RULE**

The NFHS Softball rules are comparable to the baseball ones. NFHS Softball Rule 1-3-3 relevantly provides the specifications for a ball to be used in fast pitch play shall be 12-inches in size and have .47 maximum coefficient of restitution (COR).

NFHS Softball Rule 1-5-4 relevantly provides that "All bats shall meet the 2004 [Amateur Softball Association] Bat Performance Standard (certified bats meeting this standard can be found at [www.asasoftball.com](http://www.asasoftball.com))."

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) "White Paper" from the Sports Science Laboratory, School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering, Washington State University, Pullman, WA, which is set forth in Attachment 2 of my presentation, describes in great detail the test methods that were used to regulate both ball and bat performance in the sport of softball.

As in baseball, the NFHS Softball Rules Committee adopted the aforementioned standards to restrict the performance of non-wood bats to that comparable to wood bats.

### **UNDER THE AGE OF 18**

On a subject somewhat unrelated to NFHS rules and the restrictions which already exist relating to bats, it must be pointed out that House Bill No. 1482, as currently drafted, creates an possible inequity between high school baseball and softball players 18 or 19 years of age, which would be limited mostly to high school seniors, and those under the age of 18. Under the Bill, those senior student-athletes could use a non-wood bat against field players that are under the age of 18. If there is indeed evidence that metal bats, even if restricted as they are by the existing rules, are superior to wood bats, this Bill would provide for an unintended competitive advantage to those 18- or 19-year old high school baseball and softball players.

### **SUMMARY**

In conclusion, PIAA opposes the passage of House Bill No. 1482, as we believe that the National Federation of State High School Associations Baseball and Softball Rules Committees have properly reviewed and studied the issue, and that they and the National Collegiate Athletic Association have adequately addressed the issue by adopting uniform rules that provide for flexibility in the use of either wood or non-wood bats, while promoting the health and safety of student-athletes that participate in the sports of baseball and softball.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. If you have any questions, I will be more than glad to answer them at this time.