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Task Force on Health and Welfare of Student Athletes Issues Third Report

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Nov. 29, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- The Illinois Wesleyan Task Force on the Health and Welfare of Student Athletes has issued its third report, and its conclusions and recommendations have been endorsed by President Richard F. Wilson.

Wilson appointed the Task Force in September 2005 following the death of student-athlete Doug Schmied. The Task Force was charged with reviewing practices, policies, and procedures with regard to the health and welfare of all student athletes. While the Athletic Department has always reviewed and modified its procedures to enhance the health and welfare of student athletes, this Task Force was formed to formalize and enhance those efforts.

The first report was issued and adopted in December 2005. Recommendations in that report included increasing the number of athletic trainers, affirming in writing the head athletic trainer's existing authority to modify or cancel practice sessions for health/safety reasons, and revising the student-athlete preseason screening form.

The second report was issued and adopted in August 2006. Included in the recommendations in that report was the implementation of an enhanced hydration protocol in accordance with recommendations made by the school's athletic training department, active promotion and enhancement of awareness of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and appropriate responses, and modifications to the air conditioning and lighting in areas of the Shirk Center.

THIRD REPORT

1. The Task Force affirmed the necessity of a newly-hired cheerleading coach and of modifications to the stunts performed during games in accordance with NCAA guidelines. These are viewed as positive steps toward protecting the health and safety of cheerleaders.
2. A set of recommendations was made regarding both domestic and international travel by student athletes. These guidelines will mirror the policies and procedures developed by the Illinois Wesleyan Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students for all university travel.
3. The Task Force also considered actions regarding selected athletic events, such as pole vault, diving, and weight throw. Although no changes were made for pole vault and diving, a commercially-produced cage for use with the weight throw was endorsed and has been approved and targeted for purchase.
4. The Task Force suggests that IWU representatives to the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin continue to pursue the possibility of implementing hydration breaks during competitions when conditions warrant.

The work of the Task Force remains an on-going effort. The group will meet periodically to review any issues that arise that may impact the health and welfare of IWU student athletes. Members include Associate Provost Roger Schnaitter, Assistant Provost and Registrar Jeff Frick, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Kathy Cavins, Athletic Director Dennie Bridges, and Associate Athletic Director Kim Nelson-Brown.