

I-AAA ADA



Bill Maher

Canisius College
Director of Athletics

As we move into our first “post COVID-19” summer, one of the things we learned over the past year is the importance a break from the daily grind has on our performance. The summer of 2020 will be known for the “lost” vacation period. As we worked through the past academic year, it became clear to all of us in intercollegiate athletics the importance of taking some time to be off campus and find your own way to relax. Wherever that may take you, I hope you all find that time this summer!

What are the other things we learned over the past 18 months that may have staying power and benefit the enterprise? Identifying those changes made locally on a campus or nationally across the association are important and we should resist the urge to simply “go back to the way it was” if we have identified a better way.

Virtual recruiting – I would never suggest

that Zoom can, or should, completely replace in-person recruiting contacts or evaluations, but it certainly has value. We all became more adept at virtual meetings/discussions and the recruiting event operators became entrepreneurial in providing recruiting content via web stream. Using this technology can have a meaningful impact on the number of days our coaching staffs are on the road – a positive development both financially and in the quality of life for our staffs.

Online classes – While not a new development, the shift to an almost complete online course delivery mechanism happened on every campus across the nation. Faculty improved their online instruction and our student-athletes adapted to this new format that provided flexibility around practice, travel and competition. The vast majority of our student-athletes expressed a preference for in-person learning. However, when they did have to miss class for an athletics reason, the access to recorded course content – delivered by the professor – was far superior to the previous approach of getting the notes from a classmate.

Remote work – Intercollegiate athletics by design requires in-person, face-to-face interaction. Our industry is not one that can consider a fully remote work environment. What we have learned is that remote work and virtual

staff meetings do have a place and may actually maximize direct communication. Just think... Coaches no longer have to miss staff meetings or rules education sessions when they are on the road recruiting.

Being nimble – The speed and frequency that we made changes during the past year demonstrated that we can adjust when necessary. Shifting a game day or start time is possible and our broadcast partners, officials and travel providers were able to move with us. Whether it is practice, a game or a meeting, if we all approach the next year with the same level of cooperation we had this year, we will be much better off.

As we look forward to the fall of 2021, we should work to retain those things that can have lasting effect. Whether it is a new campus policy, conference guideline or NCAA recruiting legislation, our experience in working through the pandemic should help structure some of our future decisions. We owe that to each other, having come through the challenges of COVID-19.

“It's all right there. It's made my life easier, especially on those busy Saturdays.”

Chad Grubbs, Director of Athletic Communications, Hardin-Simmons University

Build Your Brand. Ignite Your Fans. Fund Your Program.

See how an integrated all-in-one platform makes it possible.

<http://go.prestosports.com/NACDA>

PRESTOSPORTS