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CIF lacrosse coming to high schools

District board approves starting varsity sport at all four schools in spring 2008.

BY JORGE BARRIENTOS IRVINE WORLD NEWS

CIF lacrosse is coming to high schools in Irvine starting next spring.

In a vote originally not meant to take place, the school board voted 3-2 on Tuesday to make the high school club sport a California Interscholastic Federation sport starting in spring 2008.

Several dozen lacrosse players, parents and coaches cheered as the sport was approved, while principals and athletic directors sat with frowns, not expecting a vote to take place until the June 26 board meeting as stated in the agenda.

The school board decided at its May 15 board meeting to explore ways to make lacrosse a CIF sport in the high schools. Students, parents and coaches cheered at the chance to be able to play nearby districts that already are CIF certified. Athletic directors and principals didn't, wondering how they would maintain, coach and manage the new sport.

Under the new plan, all high schools in the district – Woodbridge, Northwood, Irvine and University – will have and boys and girls varsity lacrosse team the first year, followed by junior varsity the following year. The sport was estimated to cost about \$101,000 for the first year, with \$48,000 paid by the district, according to a presentation by lacrosse ad-hoc committee members and district officials.

In a presentation, representatives for the ad-hoc committee who worked with district staff, said schools can use various field spaces throughout city parks and schools and can initiate "hand-me-down" programs for sport gear, among other plans.

Representatives wanted the sport approved Tuesday to make announcements before the end of the school year, and also to establish booster club relationships to begin fundraising.

Board members Sue Kuwabara and Sharon Wallin, though not opposed to making the sport CIF eligible, voted against the action, asking for the inclusion of principals and athletic directors before voting, equity at all schools and to see more conclusive plans for implementing the sport.

"I don't have anything against lacrosse. The more sports the better as far as I'm concerned," Wallin said. "It was disrespectful to not have (principals and athletic directors) there."

Lacrosse was made a CIF sport statewide in 2006. Since then, nearby school districts, including Tustin, Newport-Mesa and Capistrano have joined, while high school teams here offer lacrosse only as a club sport. The CIF is the governing body for high school sports in the state.

The district will review dangling issues, including cost, in the months ahead. It will not be a topic at the June 26 board meeting.



BECKMAN HIGH'S Kristen Sefton takes a shot against Foothill in a recent game. In a vote originally not meant to take place, the IUSD school board voted 3-2 to make lacrosse a CIF sport starting in spring 2008.