

Publication: Irvine World News;Date: May 17, 2007;Section: News;Page: 1



Lacrosse in the crossfire

School board will revisit the idea to make the sport CIF eligible.

BY JORGE BARRIENTOS IRVINE WORLD NEWS

After a nearly two-hour discussion Tuesday, the School Board asked city officials, athletic directors, coaches, parents and district administrators get together and explore ways to make lacrosse a California Interscholastic Federation sport in the high schools.

The decision came in front of a standing-room-only crowd of school lacrosse players, coaches and parents in favor of making the sport CIF eligible on one side, and athletic directors and principals on the other side.

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.

Those in favor of making the sport CIF eligible said local teams are traveling long distances to play against other club teams because nearby districts have joined CIF and cannot play club teams. Also, joining CIF would give students more scholarship and college recruitment possibilities and Irvine is being left behind because lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports.

Opponents said there are not enough playing fields to accommodate a potential 16 teams (a junior varsity and varsity boys and girls team for each high school); there is not enough staff to maintain, coach and manage a new sport; and other sports should be improved or reinstated before adding another.

The district estimated the program would cost \$196,000 for the first year, with \$96,000 in ongoing costs.

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WOODBIDGE HIGH lacrosse club team members were at Tuesday's board meeting.