**NEPSAC PROPOSAL**

As someone who has grown up with and been involved with prep school athletics for most of my life, it pains me to propose this. I have been in denial that the system needs to be changed for quite a few years. I know the landscape has to change for prep school to be an attractive option for any young person who has athletic talent and wants a value-added education. I grew up living and breathing the three athletic seasons and the summer (which was a needed extension of the prep baseball season). I have coached all of the seasons and been an AD for 13 years, so this proposal is not coming from an alien planet. It is based on my observations and involvement with prep school athletics for almost a lifetime.

**SPORTS SPECIALIZATION**

* A Proposal to change the NEPSAC Three Season Rule and allow for longer seasons that overlap – not in NEPSAC games but in preparation.
* Start fall Baseball, Lacrosse, Golf, and Tennis – practice, training; participate in fall showcases – Teams/Individuals start – Beginning of school year to October 15.
* Begin Winter Sports October 15, for Basketball, Hockey, Squash-- practice, train and participate in fall showcases until Thanksgiving. Play games as usual from Thanksgiving on.
* Allow Spring Football and Soccer practice. In the Erickson Football League increase the number of PG football players allowed or eliminate the limit totally.

**REASON FOR CHANGE:**

Admissions a.) Most candidates are specialized athletes through youth sports – Soccer, Hockey, Lacrosse, and Baseball.

b.) Most candidates want and expect extended seasons during their development.

c.) College admissions improve with more exposure for each athlete. We need to increase their chances in a difficult, competitive admission to college.

d.) Competitors are ripping us - $50,000 for prep school and short athletic season – why go? We have to offer something that plays to our strengths.

e.) Why not celebrate and tout our successes and use our facilities to our advantage as school.

f) Change is not always bad. Technology is changing the way students learn. Athletics are evolving as well.

g.) Very few students in our school are playing more than 1 or 2 traditional team sports in a skilled sport.

h.) There are some 3 sport athletes left but very few do those sports that involve skill development. Most do “endurance sports”.

i.) This changing of the terrain is due to the habits of childhood. Most play an organized sport almost year round – climate sensitive as well.

j.) If we prep schools don’t do it, we will cease to become relevant as a serious athletic option. Certain teams will become composed of “hired guns”.

k) The “less than 3 sports” athlete model can become an effective one if we work to embrace and refine it. It is not the end of the world, but rather an adjustment to the surrounding environment.

l.) Concussion factor – most athletes do not want to play a second sport and take the risk of getting hurt in their non-favorite sport.

m.) Division 1 and 3 college athletics have evolved and prep school athletics needs to recognize trends and evolve as well or, risk being a dinosaur.

n.) Most NESCAC colleges recruit athletes by early decision. We need to be involved and recommend our students by the middle of November.

o.) Students leaving campus every weekend to play for club teams in baseball, lacrosse, basketball, hockey, soccer, etc., would stay on campus more often if we changed our stance on on-campus sports during the “off season”.

p.) School spirit and morale of students would improve by having students on campus. The prep school experience of the student would be better and it also would be easier for their parents, who are often pressed into driving to and from school on most weekends so their children can play outside the school.

q.) In football, as far as admissions are concerned, it will allow schools in the league to take advantage of the PG market and admit more full-pay post-grads and improve the level of play.

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F:Provost/Gardner/Hockey/NEPSAC/NEPSACPROPOSAL.DOC