Eastern Washington
Women's Softball

Board of Trustees Update
January 2013
Bill Chaves, Athletic Director
Eastern Washington University Softball Update – January 2013

Background:
The addition of a women’s sport was borne out of the 1997 NCAA first cycle certification process in response to increasing women’s athletic scholarship opportunities. When the NCAA second cycle certification occurred in 2007, the institution had not yet addressed the goal of adding a women’s sport within the previous 10-year period (1998-2007). So, in order for Eastern to assist in attaining second cycle certification by the NCAA and to continue to maintain its certification for the third cycle in 2017, the institution through its 2009-2011 budgetary cycle committed to adding another women’s program by 2017.

Process:
The athletic department was then tasked to study all of the potential options as well as make a recommendation to the President as to what women’s sport should be added. The department collaborated with the President’s Advisory Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics (PACIA) to accomplish this task. So with that, the following occurred:

2010-11
A sport interest survey was designed with the anticipation of distributing during the fall of 2011.

2011-12
As planned, 3,300 surveys were dispersed to a cross section of area junior high, high school and EWU students with 1,978 returned valid. From these results, the top three sports emerged which were softball, swimming and diving and rowing. PACIA then generated criteria by which each of the three sports would be filtered through so that a final recommendation could be made to the President. The criteria included elements such as: annual costs, start-up costs, conference sponsorship/championship opportunities, number of scholarships, local/regional competition opportunities, and ability to recruit Washington High School student-athletes, facilities to name a few.
After much debate and discussion, the group overwhelmingly supported softball as the recommended addition to our sports sponsorship offerings. The chair of PACIA then moved the recommendation to the President. Further, PACIA recommended that the sport not be added until 2017 (’17-19) due to the fiscal climate of the state and country.
President Arevalo approved the recommendation in March 2012 with the following time line as a guide:

Time line by biennium:

’11-13
  2011-12  Determine Sport
  2012-13  Identify resources that will be needed both annually and one-time including facility considerations

’13-15
  2013-14  Begin to allocate resources while continuing facility planning
  2014-15  Continue to allocate resources

’15-17
  2015-16  Officially notify Big Sky of our intentions to join the league in softball at the Spring ’16 Big Sky Meetings – begin play Fall of 2017 also hire Head Coach January 2016
  2016-17  Hire Assistant Coaches July 2016

’17-19
  2017-18  Begin competition–non-traditional portion in Fall ’17 with first Big Sky season Spring ’18
  2018-19  Begin season two

Final Thoughts:

There is a file full of back-up documentation that supports this report. In short, softball was primarily chosen based on the fact that it was indeed the most popular survey choice among all respondents. In addition, when the Big Sky expanded to include the University of North Dakota and Southern Utah University, the conference now had enough schools offering softball to sponsor it as a conference sport beginning in 2013-14. This provides Eastern with a built in schedule along with the opportunity for our student-athletes to participate in championship play as well as be honored by the conference for both their academic and athletic prowess.