



NFHCA releases statement regarding Saturday's Division I contest at Kent State University

Posted: Sep 09, 2019

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The National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) has been made aware of the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the field hockey match between Temple University and the University of Maine played at Kent State University on Saturday, September 7, 2019. After going into double overtime in a scoreless game, Kent State officials entered the field prior to the second overtime and informed the coaches that play must be stopped.

The NFHCA Office was informed of the situation shortly after it occurred and has spent the last 48 hours gathering facts to ensure that our response is both accurate and impactful.

It is our understanding that while both programs were made aware of the 10:30 a.m. stoppage of play via a May 2019 email, Kent State University failed to communicate the steps that would be taken should the 10:30 a.m. hard stop be reached. The NFHCA Office has reviewed the game contract and cannot find any reference to the 10:30 a.m. hard stop nor can we find any information regarding what would happen if the game was not completed prior to reaching the "drop dead" time. While we are aware of the fact that Kent State officials offered to complete the game at 5:30 p.m. and pay hotel costs for the Temple team, we find their lack of preparedness and the timing of their response to be unacceptable.

We have been informed that the decision to require the hard stop was solely due to fire marshall regulations as they apply to the fireworks that were to be part of the 12:00 p.m. football game. While we understand that the fireworks were deemed to be an important part of Kent State University's Family Weekend festivities which featured the home football contest, we cannot understand why the university would seemingly prioritize a daytime fireworks display over the completion of a Division I Women's Field Hockey contest. The optics and the messaging to every field hockey program and to every field hockey player are that while they matter, they don't matter more than pre-game football festivities. We see this as a terrible message being communicated to female student-athletes in this year of 2019. This decision was extremely damaging not only for the participating athletes, their coaches, and their families but for all female student-athletes.

We ask those in administrative and leadership positions at Kent State University to do some soul searching and to take responsibility for the lack of judgment and poor decision-making that was displayed on September 7. Putting pregame fireworks ahead of the completion of an NCAA Division I contest seems shortsighted at best and harmful to the development of female student-

athletes at worst. We hope that Kent State University will do all it can to not only assist officials at Temple and Maine in their efforts to complete the suspended contest as per NCAA Rules but also to compensate them for any expenses incurred.

Respectfully,

Andy Whitcomb, NFHCA President

Jenn Goodrich, NFHCA Executive Director

Kent State University, Class of 1994 (M.B.A.)

Kent State University, Head Field Hockey Coach, 1994–1996



NATIONAL FIELD HOCKEY COACHES ASSOCIATION

3352 E. Virgil Drive

Gilbert, AZ 85298

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