

EXCLUSIVE: WIAA To Consider Steps To Prevent Felons From Playing High School Sports

I have learned that the executive director of the organization that governs high school sports in Wisconsin will raise the issue at tomorrow's annual meeting of the organization of the eligibility of convicted felons. WIAA Executive Director Dave Anderson tells me no action will be taken but he wants to put the issue on the table for further discussion. Anderson is reacting to the enormous controversy created by Milwaukee Public Schools decision to allow star Washington basketball player Deontay Long to participate on the team and in the recent state tournament despite his conviction of charges of being party to an armed robbery.

Sources tell me Anderson is reacting after negative feedback from some WIAA corporate sponsors about Long's participation in the recent state Division 2 tournament. Washington lost the title in a thriller to Kaukauna. The WIAA has a lot of rules on athlete eligibility but code of conduct rules are generally left to individual school districts. Long was sentenced last week to six months at the Milwaukee House of Correction after pleading guilty to charges stemming from an armed robbery spree last June in which three people were targeted in separate incidents. The sentence from Judge Pedro Colon was constructed in a way that will allow Long to play for Washington again next season. He will be a senior next year.

Anderson told me he may suggest allowing individual school districts to allow convicted criminals to play during the regular season but that the WIAA ought to bar them from state tournament play.

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