

**NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**  
1161 Route 130 North Robbinsville, NJ 08691

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
September 16, 2020

**In compliance with Executive Order 107, the Executive Committee meeting was held remotely via Cisco's WebEx Meetings platform.**

**Roll Call** - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, at the NJSIAA Administration Building in Robbinsville, New Jersey, was called to order by the President, Steve Shohfi, at 11:05 am.

The following members were present: Mohammed Abdelaziz, Greg Bailey, Jeff Baldino, Tom Berrios, Maureen Bilda, Joseph Bollendorf, Dr. Brian Brotschul, Kevin Carty, Jr., Ed Chmiel, Jason Corley, Joanne Dzama, Derek England, Judy Finch-Johnson, James Gaffney, Edward Grande, Robert Grauso, Dr. G. Kennedy Greene, Dr. Kimberly Gruccio, Geoff Haines, Robert Haraka, Mary Liz Ivins, Kurt Karcich, Monsignor Michael Kelly, Raymond Kiem, Howard Krieger, Timothy McElhinney, Thomas Mullahey, Sean Olson, Leon Owen, Christopher Penna, Jeff Pierro, Scott Ridley, Danny Robertozzi, Senator Paul Sarlo, Daniel Sinclair, Frank Torcasio, Beverly Torok, Bill Vacca, Paul Vizzuso, Kathy Whalen, Denis Williams, and Dr. Brian Zychowski. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Chief Operating Officer; Kim DeGraw-Cole, Jack DuBois, Bill Bruno, Al Stumpf and Tony Maselli, Assistant Directors; and Steven P. Goodell, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Brian Deakyne, *nj.com*; Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*, Jane Havsy, *Daily Record*; and Greg Tufaro, *MyCentralJersey.com*. Also present: Paul Anzano of Pringle, Quinn, Anzano, P.C.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Mary Liz Ivins, seconded by Tom Mullahey, to accept the minutes of the June 3, 2020 Executive Committee meeting. Motion passed unanimously. A motion was then made by Tom Mullahey, seconded by Mary Liz Ivins, to accept the minutes of the June 5, 2020 Reorganization meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

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**Chief Operating Officer Update – Colleen Maguire**

**Welcome to New Members** – Ms. Maguire will host a virtual meet and greet for new Executive Committee members. This will be a brief overview of NJSIAA executive staff and the role of the Executive Committee and how it works.

**Return-to-Play Plan** – The return to play transpired because of many different people, all of whom Ms. Maguire wanted to recognize and thank. Since April, NJSIAA senior staff, attorneys, public relations and Executive Committee officers met weekly. A Medical Advisory Task Force made up of Tony Maselli, Mary Liz Ivins, Kathy Whalen, Dr. Jack Kripsak, Dr. Rob Franks and Dr. Damion Martins, met weekly from early June through early September, to create COVID-19 summer recess guidelines, a daily screening protocols/participation questionnaire, and fall season COVID-19 protocols based on the NJ DOH school guidelines. A Sports Advisory Task Force made up of Tom Mullahey and his AD colleagues met every Wednesday since mid-June to establish a plan, and then multiple back up plans to ensure that every student-athlete this school year has a participation opportunity. This committee is continuing their efforts now as they work on guidelines for the winter season. Ms. Maguire participated in NFHS weekly roundtable meetings (Section 1 and nationally) and had countless conversations with many principals and superintendents over the summer months, some of which are on the Executive Committee. Their feedback, questions and concerns were essential in helping find the balance necessary to pull this plan

together. Meeting with Governor Murphy on Thursday, August 13th, proved very valuable as he is a tremendous supporter of high school athletics and provided the necessary guidance the NJSIAA needed to finalize its plan. Last, Ms. Maguire thanked both Senator Sarlo and Assemblyman Wimberly for their continued public support of NJSIAA and high school athletics during the summer months. Finally, a special thank you was given to current President, Steve Shohfi, for his commitment to the whole process and going above and beyond.

The full plan was distributed but below are the highlights:

1. Outdoor sports will have a condensed season with modified playoffs.
2. All competition will remain local, there will be no state-wide championships. The first message loud and clear is this season is about re-engaging our student-athletes and providing participation, not about competition and state championships.
  - a. Health recommendations indicate stay local for as long as possible.
  - b. Out of state competition is prohibited, unless a waiver is granted for exceptional circumstances. *A waiver was granted to Phillipsburg HS to play their rival Easton (located five minutes away from them in PA), who they've played for the past 100 years. The waiver was granted with the understanding that the game must be played as the last event of the season, once the school has completed their NJ schedule.*
  - c. Schools are not on a level playing field, state-wide championships will be tainted.
3. Four seasons were created to condense/modify the fall and winter sports.
  - a. Health circumstances warrant less games, less travel, etc.
  - b. Back-up plans should a season be suspended for health reasons
  - c. Minimize potential for student-athletes to have to choose between sports/seasons
    - i. Importance of multi-sport athletes in NJ – other states not a priority
4. Postpone indoor fall sports until later in the school year (Girls Volleyball and Gymnastics)
  - a. Track record of sports being played outdoor on a large scale all summer.
  - b. Need more information on the potential for transmission of the virus indoors.
  - c. Concerns with inadequate ventilation/air flows, especially with older buildings.
  - d. Strict limitations on indoor crowds of 25 make it difficult to properly host competitions for these sports in a meaningful way.

NJSIAA is continuing to communicate with the NJ Department of Health on some of these concerns as we start planning for a winter sports season.

5. Dates for spring sports will be announced at a later date
  - a. Many variables will affect the start of the spring season – status of the virus, sports being played in season 3.
  - b. Most likely will push back the start dates and post-season dates will most likely be later as well.
  - c. Dates may be staggered by sport – Task Force is striving to get each sport started as timely as possible.
  - d. Task Force recognizes the need to maximize the spring season due to the loss of their season last Spring

Over the summer months, Ms. Maguire ran a Friday weekly update series that highlighted all pertinent updates and information for Athletic Directors and asked them to share with their Principals. This was a valuable resource to ADs to not only be kept up to date on what was going on within NJSIAA, but also to keep everyone on the same page as to plans, timing, expectations, etc. There was already plenty of speculation and rumors floating around. Ms. Maguire then thanked both Steve Goodell and Scott Miccio

for always being on call late Thursday evenings and early Friday mornings to provide their editorial expertise.

Lastly, Ms. Maguire felt it was important to have direct communications with our student-athletes. Their lives were turned upside down overnight, many were becoming socially isolated and they were witnessing a lot of stress around them – conversations surrounding the start of the school year were emotional, Black Lives Matter protests were all over the news and they were not sure when they were going to play their sports or see their teammates again. Ms. Maguire recorded three different video messages directed at our student-athletes over the summer. The first one in late June addressed what NJSIAA was doing over the summer to return to HS sports, the second in late July explained the rationale for why their fall season was going to start later and look different but that is going to be OK, and the most recent reminded them of what that they can do to play a major role in their team's success this season by keeping each other healthy. Recent video messaging from some Senior Student Ambassadors was also shared, asking everyone to wear a mask so he/she can wear their uniform this fall. NJSIAA also ran a special video message last week from Coach Greg Schiano wishing all fall student-athletes the best of luck, and the importance of keeping their family (both at home and on the field) healthy.

**Finance Committee Update** – The association must monitor its cash balances and expenditures. The virtual audit went well, and the final report should be presented to the Executive Committee in October. Ms. Maguire anticipates a net loss due to the state basketball tournament being cancelled and the loss of spring season revenues.

**NJSIAA/NFL Officials Training Workshop** – As part of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Division of Civil Rights, it was agreed that NJSIAA would provide implicit bias training to all sport officials. Next the same will be offered to coaches. To do in a meaningful way, especially with current climate of Black Lives Matter, Ms. Maguire reached out to the NFL who were very receptive to helping NJSIAA. Ms. Maguire worked with Al Riveron, head of NFL officials, to set up a virtual training workshop on 9/22 and 9/23, that will focus on three areas: 1-why diversity matters; 2-implicit bias and disruption and 3-the art of cultural competence. The goal is to give this type of training in every sport. The NFL has provided the content and been very supportive. This is a chance for NJ to be on the forefront and extend this important training beyond NJ's boundaries.

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**Executive Committee Officers – Summary of Emergency Powers Resolution Actions - Steve Shohfi** – Last spring, the Executive Committee granted emergency powers to the Executive Committee officers to make decisions on behalf of the Executive Committee when necessary. A summary of actions done by the officers was distributed. No questions were asked.

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**Legislative Update (Paul Anzano)** – A list of pending bills in the legislature was distributed. Mr. Anzano has been busy communicating between Ms. Maguire, Mr. Goodell, NJSIAA staff and the Department of Health and Department of Education as well as in constant communication with the Governor's office. Senator Sarlo has been instrumental in these communications. All legislators received a copy of the Return-to play guidelines with little questions or concerns. Mr. Anzano has asked the Governor to level the playing field with youth sports and make it the same as high school sports. He has also requested funding for NJSIAA to get through the year. On 9/30, the budget committee will vote on a one-time stipend for NJSIAA to offset financial losses incurred from the loss of tournament fees due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## **Reports of the Assistant Directors**

**Kim DeGraw-Cole**

**Eligibility & Eligibility Appeals Committees** – Both committees have been busy and active. The Eligibility Committee convened on 8/20 to review 8 cases based on age/credit/semester. The Eligibility Appeal Committee met to hear an athletic advantage case last week and will meet again later this afternoon to determine another. There have been 21 COVID compliance credit reviews with more to come.

**Status Report on Transfers** – Summer was busy processing transfers. Since the report that was distributed to the committee was formulated, there have been approximately 50 additional transfers. 149 COVID-19 compliance transfers were deemed immediately eligible. Details distributed to the committee are below:

- Transfers in the system: 943
- Pending Former school response: 283
- Affidavit issues: 191
- Under Review: additional information requested (athletic advantage or missing key item): 10
- Immediately Eligible Bona Fide Change of Residence: 53
- Immediately Eligible No Varsity at former school: 231
- Ineligibility Period Applies: 5
- Immediately Eligible (COVID-19 compliance transfers): 149
  - Transfers Non-Public to Non-Public: 36
  - Transfers Non-Public to Public: 30
  - Transfers Public to Public: 25
  - Transfers Public to Non-Public: 58
  - Football only 38; Football & Wrestling 7; Football & Basketball 9
  - Soccer Boys-16; Girls 10
  - Basketball Boys 20; Girls 13
  - Wrestling 14
  - Track & XC 10
  - Swim 4
  - Ice Hockey 4
  - Girls Tennis 4
  - Girls Volleyball 4
  - School closed Marist and Cristo Rey 13

**Field Hockey COVID-19 Modifications/Post Season Plans** – This fall will be a 14-game regular season. Teams may play 2 three-game weeks, as long as they do not exceed the 14-game total. Season dates are as follows:

- Sept. 11 - Heat acclimatization begins
- Sept. 14 - Practice begins
- Oct. 1 - Games begin
- Oct. 26 – Schools must opt out of post season by notifying the NJSIAA
- Nov. 2 – Cutoff/Pull Records
- Nov. 5 - Seeding
- Nov. 13 - Post Season begins

Goggles are no longer mandatory, this rule change is not in the 2020 NFHS Rules Book. This year corner masks/protective face masks are permitted, see explanation on the website under sports/fall/field hockey. Players may wear face coverings and/or gloves while playing in the game. All sideline personnel,

including players and coaches must wear face coverings and maintain social distancing while on the sidelines. No pre or post game handshakes are permitted. Teams will be placed based on six geographic regions for seeding purposes for the state post season games. Please see COVID-19 Field Hockey Tournament Modifications for more details.

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### **Bill Bruno**

**Cross Country COVID-19 Modifications/Post Season Plans** – Normally non-publics do not have a sectional tournament and begin right at the Group Meets since there are so few non-public schools. This year the tournament is restructured for COVID, so there will be no Group Meets or Meet of Champions, only sectionals, including a non-public A & B sectional, which will take place on 11/15 (Rain Date: 11/22.) The North Jersey non-public A & B section will compete at Garret Mountain (Passaic County) while the South Jersey non-public A & B section will compete at Oak Ridge Park (Union County).

Public school sectionals will compete on 11/14 (Rain Date: 11/21) at the following four sites:

- North I - Garret Mountain, Passaic County
- North II - Oak Ridge Park, Union County
- Central - Thompson Park, Monmouth County
- South - Delsea Regional, Gloucester County

**NJSCA Hall of Fame/NFHS NJ Coach of the Year Honorees** – The NJSCA HOF Committee, which includes Executive Committee member Bev Torok and Kevin Carty, reviewed 66 resumes and selected 34 coaches to be inducted in this year's NJSCA HOF. A final list of inductees was distributed. Mr. Bruno also shared the 2019-2020 NJ Coach of the Year honorees, who will receive certificates from the NFHS. These honorees were selected by NJSIAA's Assistant Directors.

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### **Jack DuBois**

**Football COVID-19 Modifications/Post Season Plans** – All schools wishing to participate in the football Post Season Grouping will be seeded by their respective conference on November 8, 2020 with oversight by the NJSIAA. NJSIAA will assign and have oversight for all week 7 and 8 games.

Dates:

- Oct. 26 - NJSIAA Intent card will be posted on the NJSIAA website
- Nov. 2 - NJSIAA intent card due date
- Nov. 8 - NJSIAA Post Season Groupings will be finalized, approved by NJSIAA and published

There will be no awards, titles, championships this year and Opponents Strength Index (OSI) and Power Points will not be calculated during the COVID-19 season. Time outs may be extended for hydration purposes. One assistant coach may be outside of the coaches box for supervisory purposes. All Hudl games should be available for the entire covid-19 season. In-person scouting will be determined by individual conferences. Media/Press must have a designated location two (2) yards behind each end zone. Press Box occupants to be determined by home school with social distancing.

**Program Review – Football Rule Modification – One Reading Only** – NFHS Rule 1.5 on uniform adornments currently prohibits the use of neck gaiters in the sport of football. However, NFHS is allowing states to adopt a one-year modification to this rule due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A motion was made by Jason Corley, seconded by Mohammed Abdelaziz, to approve a one-year modification to NFHS Rule 1.5 and allow the use of neck gaiters in the sport of football. The neck gaiter is considered a

part of the uniform; therefore, the officials will assess a horse collar penalty if any player is tackled by pulling the gaiter. The gaiters can be any color – they do not need to be the school's colors.

Christopher Penna mentioned that at his conference meeting there was discussion that some health departments are not allowing the use of gaiters. What does a school do in that situation? Mr. Goodell responded that he understands why health departments don't view gaiters as a substitution for masks, but this rule is for a specialized setting. Gaiters are only recommended for games and it gives some measure of protection versus having none otherwise because it's too hard in a football game to keep taking a mask off and then putting back on. This can be dealt with on a county by county basis. Mr. DuBois added that this rule is optional, not mandated. The Medical Advisory Task Force does not recommend masks when playing football because it's high aerobic activity so if they don't wear gaiters, they will most likely not wear anything. Something is better than nothing.

Mr. Torcasio then asked if a school opts out of week 7 and 8, can they schedule their own games. Answer-no. With the exception of Thanksgiving Day games, NJSIAA oversees the matchups of all games beginning with Week 7. Monsignor Kelly then asked if there is any movement with the Governor allowing more than 500 people at an outdoor event. Mr. DuBois hasn't heard anything.

Motion carried unanimously.

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### **Al Stumpf**

**Boys/Girls Soccer COVID-19 Modifications/Post Season Plans** – Regular season will be 14 games. Teams are allowed to play 2 three-game weeks as long as they do not exceed the 14-game total. Players may wear facemasks and/or gloves while playing in the game. All sideline personnel, including players and coaches must wear facemasks while on the sideline. They must also maintain social distancing while on the sideline. It is recommended that, if possible, team benches be set up on opposite sides of the field. No pre or post game handshakes allowed. Schools must opt out of the post season by notifying the NJSIAA by October 26, 2020. Teams will be placed based on six geographic regions for seeding purposes for the state post season games. Depending on numbers, Groups 1 & 2 or non-publics may be combined.

**International Student Transfers** – Since Mike Zopicchi retired, Mr. Stumpf will be handling all international transfers. All international transfers are to be completed using the Home Campus Portal. There are two additions this year.

1. Host Family must complete the Student Residency Affidavit – does not need to be notarized.
2. Since F1/J1 status is not always on passports, a copy of the Student Visa must also be uploaded onto Home Campus.

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### **Tony Maselli**

**Girls Tennis COVID-19 Modifications/Post Season Plans** – The big modification in tennis is that NJSIAA will not run the state individual/doubles tournament this fall season, only a team tournament. Tennis will follow the USTA Covid-19 Playing Tennis Safely Procedures. The team tournament will follow a regional approach and will be determined based on the number of teams that want to enter. All matches will be played at the higher seed. There are no neutral sites this year.

**Officials Rules Interpreter Meetings** – All rules interpreter meetings went to virtual and all are completed with exception of the NFL virtual training next week. Most chapters will be doing virtual chapter meetings as well.

**ZebraWeb Transition** - The transition to this new assignment platform is going smooth. All officials are assigned and ZebraWeb has been doing a great job teaching schools and helping them transition. 10/1 will be the real test when games begin.

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**Finance Committee Update – Steve Shohfi**

**Approval of Monthly Checks** – The June through September 2020 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Paul Vizzuso made a motion, seconded by Denis Williams, to approve the June 2 through September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

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**Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell)** – There have been no lawsuits or litigation to report on since the last meeting. Mr. Goodell surmises this is due to the relaxation of the transfer rule. Mr. Goodell and Mr. Miccio have been supporting NJSIAA staff and the various committees and task forces all summer.

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**Old Business / New Business** – Monsignor Kelly was unaware that Michael Zapicchi retired, so he wanted to thank him for his service.

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**Adjournment** - There being no further business, a motion was made by Mary Liz Ivins, seconded by Tom Mullahey at 11:57am, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire  
Chief Operating Officer

CEM: In