

NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
1161 Route 130, P O Box 487 Robbinsville, NJ 08691

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 10, 2021

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, February 10, 2021, at the NJSIAA Administration Building in Robbinsville, New Jersey, was called to order by the President, Steve Shohfi, at 11:02 am.

The following members were present: Mohammed Abdelaziz, 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 Guccio, Geoff Haines, Robert Haraka, Mary Liz Ivins, Todd Jorgenson, Kurt Karcich, Monsignor Michael Kelly, Raymond Kiem, Timothy McElhinney, Thomas Mullahey, Sean Olson, Leon Owen, Jeff Pierro, William Quirk, Scott Ridley, Danny Robertozzi, Senator Paul Sarlo, Frank Torcasio, Beverly Torok, Bill Vacca, Paul Vizzuso, Kathy Whalen, Denis Williams, Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly, Dr. Robert Zega, 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. and Scott Miccio, NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*; and Brian Deakyne, *nj.com*. Also present: Paul Anzano of Pringle, Quinn, Anzano, P.C.; Dave Frazier, Rutherford HS AD and Advisory Committee Chairperson.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Tom Mullahey, seconded by Mary Liz Ivins, to accept the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Executive Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Advisory Committee Meeting Update – One Reading - by Dave Frazier, Chair

There was one proposal submitted for consideration by the Advisory Committee on January 28, 2021, and it was endorsed unanimously. This proposal is unique because instead of being a proposal to amend the Constitution and Bylaws, it is a new structure for the football season/state tournament. The football proposal provides a tournament structure to achieve a true state group championship and therefore when the membership approved the removal of the constitutional wording prohibiting a state championship in football, the member schools were assured the tournament format would be brought to the member schools to approve or reject. Although the Executive Committee has the authority to approve the tournament playoff structure, due to the significance of this proposal, it is important that every member school be afforded the opportunity to vote.

As Chairman of the Advisory Committee, Dave Frazier briefed the Executive Committee on the 1/28 Advisory Committee meeting and went over highlights of the football proposal. The regular season start date will be calculated by counting back 12 weeks from the weekend prior to Thanksgiving. The preseason start date will be the fourth Wednesday that precedes the regular season start date. There will be a 10-game regular season max for both public and non-public schools. This proposal does not stretch out the season. The new structure allows flexibility for conferences. If a school wants to open Labor Day weekend, they can, but they don't have to and instead can pick up games on the back end of their schedule. Sponsors of the proposal

included a representative from every football conference so the whole state was represented when the proposal was developed. If a team does not make the playoffs, there is potential for two additional games in Weeks 11 and 12. Thanksgiving weekend games will remain intact. Schools playing a Thanksgiving game will receive a 7-game schedule while those without a scheduled Thanksgiving game will receive 8 games. Weeks 1-8 will be regular season, Weeks 9-11 sectional playoffs, Week 13-Thanksgiving and Week 14 will be the group championships. In the past, there may have been over 40 schools playing after Thanksgiving. With this new proposal it'll be only 10 so there's less student athletes with overlap between fall and winter seasons. It is also expected that there will be less waiver requests because there's more flexibility in the schedule so the need for a waiver won't be there. This does not mean this proposal will eliminate waiver requests, but it should reduce the need for them. For playoffs, teams will be seeded #1 – #16 in each Super Section. Teams ranked #17 – #24 in each Super Section will be seeded in a separate regional tournament and play in Weeks 9 – 11. Any team ranked below #24 in each Super Section will be able to request crossover games during Weeks 9 and/or 10 (one or two games may be requested). Any team losing in the first round of either the sectional playoff, or the separate regional tournament, may request a crossover game in Week 10. Teams can find meaningful, competitive games to end their season.

Jason Corley asked if there will still be awards given to sectional champions. Answer is yes. The football sectional games will be treated just like sectional tournaments in NJSIAA's other sports and trophies will be given out. Timothy McElhinney asked if early start date waivers will still be considered. Answer is yes but schedules are more flexible with this proposal so the need may not be there. Robert Grauso asked if only the group championships will be played at venues such as MetLife or will other rounds of the tournament have that opportunity. Ms. Maguire replied that the association is hoping the group championships will still be played at those type venues, but the locations of the state semi-finals are unknown at this time. Sectional final games will most likely be played at schools. It is getting harder to find viable and willing neutral sites for all sport tournaments.

A motion was made by Kevin Carty Jr, seconded by Joseph Bollendorf to endorse the Football Group Champion Proposal endorsed by the 2021 NJSIAA Advisory Committee. Motion carried unanimously. This proposal will now be reviewed by the membership at NJSIAA's upcoming sectional meetings.

Chief Operating Officer Update – Colleen Maguire

Program Review – Season 3 Waiver – One Reading – Voice Vote – The Program Review Committee met on 2/8 to review two proposals. The first was a proposal to delay the start of the summer recess period by two weeks, so a start date of July 5th instead of June 21st. This proposal was not endorsed by the Committee, therefore it was not considered by the Executive Committee.

Another proposal, which allows a one-time waiver to participate in two strenuous sports at the same time, for this year only, submitted by Tony Mitchell on behalf of NJSIAA's member schools, was considered and endorsed by the Program Review Committee. A motion was made by Rob Haraka, seconded by Beverly Torok to approve the one-time waiver. This waiver would only be available to Season 3 athletes during any overlap period between seasons and only for those student-athletes participating in sports that do not normally run in the same season (example -students cannot get a waiver to play boys basketball and wrestling because in the course of a traditional school year both of those sports compete in the winter season). This proposal was originally introduced to the Program Review committee in January; however, it was tabled pending input from the Medical Advisory Task Force. Athletes must still complete the

requisite number of practice sessions as outlined by the NJSIAA to be eligible to compete in each respective sport.

Beverly Torok explained that the overlap this year affects many more female athletes. Volleyball overlaps with softball or lacrosse, as does wrestling, and she feels it's unfair that students are forced to choose, especially because the crossover is for such a short period of time, so competing in two strenuous sports isn't really an issue. Also, athletes may not have two practices in one day because they may miss one practice for a game or both practices are at the same time. Rob Haraka shared that the Program Review Committee discussed this topic at length. It was felt that students shouldn't have to choose and that players may not get to all events for both sports but it's still good to be part of the team. There will be logistical challenges and the Medical Advisory Committee is against this waiver because of the cross-contamination risks for two teams if a student becomes COVID positive. Mr. Haraka polled his conference on this topic and the vote was 16-6 in favor. On behalf of the Sports Advisory Task Force (SATF), Mr. Mullahey explained that the SATF does not support this waiver because though it doesn't want kids to choose, the committee feels the reward is not greater than the risk. An example is if a team is in the playoffs, then has to opt out due to COVID because of cross contamination. A spring sport scrimmage could ruin a volleyball championship game. Logistics are also a concern of the SATF. Ms. Torok shared that her school's boys' basketball had been committed to quarantining and not co-mingling, and the program was still shut down so there's risks regardless. Mr. Mullahey still feels it's doubling the risk. Mr. Haraka expressed this proposal is only relevant to athletes competing in wrestling, gymnastics and volleyball. Mr. Karcich acknowledged this is a tough decision, but what is best for the kids? In this different type year, is it best to prevent kids from doing what they are used to doing and love or give the kids the choice in this abnormal year?

A roll call vote was taken. Final Vote: Yes-38; No-0; Abstain-4 (Mullahey, Quirk, Whalen and Wimberly). Motion carried.

Cooperative Sports Program Waiver – Article III, Section 7.C.1 – One Reading – Voice Vote –

The Cooperative Sports Committee has been reviewing and approving single-season cooperative sports program applications on an emergent, as-needed basis. The goal being to provide as many participation opportunities for as many student-athletes as possible in continuing difficult circumstances. Last week, the committee approved a request between Lodi HS and Immaculate Conception HS (Lodi) for girls wrestling, pending Executive Committee approval since programs between public and non-public high schools are currently prohibited. A motion was made by Maureen Bilda, seconded by Joanne Dzama, to permit a waiver Bylaw Article III, Section 7(C)(1) for the Lodi HS/Immaculate Conception (Lodi) cooperative sports program in girls wrestling for the 2020 – 2021 school year only. Motion carried with one abstention (Whalen).

DEI Advisory Committee Proposal – One Reading – Voice Vote – Last month, Ms. Maguire met with NJSIAA's Executive Committee officers to gather their feedback to address diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within the NJSIAA. Ms. Maguire shared the goals of this newly formed committee but expects them to continue to evolve. This committee will be a standing committee acting in an advisory capacity.

A motion was made by Mary Liz Ivins, seconded by Joseph Bollendorf, to approve the creation of a new standing committee focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Discussion ensued. Jason Corley feels this is a great idea and will spark many uncomfortable but necessary conversations as has happened in his Shore Conference. Dr. Greene shared that addressing equity issues in the New Jersey Association of School Administrators has been a real benefit to their organization. He's seen how it can work so he appreciates the NJSIAA doing the same. Assemblyman Wimberly thanked Ms. Maguire for her meetings with the NJ Minority Coaches

Association and the NJ Officials Association. This will go a long way in promoting inclusion. Motion carried unanimously.

If anyone has recommendations or resources they can share, please reach out to Ms. Maguire.

NJSIAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee Realignment – One Reading – Voice Vote – A plan to realign NJSIAA’s existing Medical Advisory Committee and re-title it as the NJSIAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (NJSIAA SMAC) was emailed to the Executive Committee. The realignment proposal is based on feedback from the NFHS, and peer states, on the organization and role of their Sports Medicine Advisory Committees. The proposal includes member term limits and rotations and requires that certain practices/specialties will be represented on the committee. The current Medical Advisory Committee plays a very valuable role in extracurricular athletics; however, it has never had a documented mission statement and goals, a committee alignment plan or a defined and clear role. Ms. Maguire believes that this plan will provide for much more efficient use of these resources. A motion was made by Tom Mullahey, seconded by Mary Liz Ivins, to approve the renaming and reorganization of NJSIAA’s existing Medical Advisory Committee.

Legislative Update - Paul Anzano

Mr. Anzano’s tracking report of current legislative bills was distributed. It continues to be a quiet year when looking at legislation and high school sports. Requests for permitting spectators, having an individual wrestling tournament, etc., have been received, but they are handled as they arise. Thanks to Assemblyman Wimberly and Senator Sarlo, the association receives advance notice as much as possible when a decision is made impacting high school sports. No questions were asked.

Assistant Director Reports

Kim DeGraw-Cole

Eligibility Committee & Eligibility Appeals Committee Updates –There are only a few cases for the Eligibility Committee to review on 2/16 but Ms. Cole will most likely add an additional Eligibility Committee meeting in March. The Eligibility Appeals Committee will meet on 3/24. Ms. Cole has received additional COVID waivers.

Status Report on Eligibility and Transfers – There were 1,885 transfers in the system. Of the 1,885 transfers, 282 are pending former school response, 148 were immediately eligible due to a true bona fide change of residence, and 876 were immediately eligible because they didn’t play varsity at their former school. For 92 transfer students, the ineligibility period applies, and 377 transfers were immediately eligible because they were COVID-19 compliance transfers. Of this 377, 75 were Non-Public to Non-Public transfers, 76 were Non-Public to Public transfers, 94 were Public to Public transfers, 122 were Public to Non-Public transfers, and 10 are out of state / unknown determination of school status. 78 had affidavit issues and 23 were denied due to affidavit and no participation. Four other requests are under review because more information is needed. Below is transfer trend data:

Sports Specific Transfers:

- Basketball Boys: 142 with 82 Immediately Eligible
- Basketball Girls: 56 with 32 Immediately Eligible
- Ice Hockey: 17 with 15 Immediately Eligible
- Swimming: 23 with 8 Immediately Eligible

- Wrestling: 57 with 24 Immediately Eligible
- Winter Track: 42 with 17 Immediately Eligible

Total Transfers (Varsity and non-Varsity)

- Transfers from Public to Non-Public: 456
- Transfers from Public to Public: 876
- Transfers from Non-Public to Non-Public: 195
- Transfers from Non-Public to Public: 360

Senior Credit Waiver – Season 2A, Season 3 and Season 4 – One Reading – Voice Vote – Under Article V, Section 4(E), under normal circumstances, seniors are permitted to withdraw from courses if they are carrying sufficient credits to graduate, only if they withdraw with a passing grade in the course. Member schools have requested that NJSIAA relax this rule for the 2020-2021 school year to permit student-athletes to compete in Season 2A (Swimming and Winter Track), Season 3 (Gymnastics, Girls Volleyball and Wrestling) and Season 4 (all spring sports) as long as they remain on track to graduate, regardless of whether they withdraw from a course with a passing grade or not. In this virtual environment, many seniors are dropping courses they don't need for graduation.

A motion was made by Joseph Bollendorf, seconded by Derek England, to amend NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V, Section 4(E)(2) – Credit Requirements for Student-Athletes During the Second Semester, for the 2020-2021 school year, by removing the italicized wording in the following sentence in Clause 3: Seniors *who withdraw from courses with a passing grade (WP)* will be eligible provided they are carrying sufficient credits for graduation purposes. This waiver applies to seniors only and is only amended for the 2020-2021 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

Girls Lacrosse and Softball Sports Update – Spring sports committees have been meeting and Ms. Cole is optimistic for a spring season. Rules and Regulations for girls lacrosse and softball will be posted next week. On February 9, 2021; the Lacrosse Committee will meet at 3 pm, followed by a Rules Interpretation Meeting at 7 pm. The Softball Committee and Rules Interpretation meeting will be on February 10, 2021 at 7 pm.

Wrestling Season 3 Update – There will be an individual post-season tournament, but Ms. Cole is actively working on determining the structure based on available sites. The NJSIAA Wrestling Committee meetings are tentatively scheduled for February 2 and February 18.

Bill Bruno

NFHS Heart of Arts Award Nomination – Four candidates were considered and Noelle DeBiase from Mater Dei Prep was chosen to be the 2021 NFHS Heart of Arts Award recipient.

NFHS National Coach of the Year Award – William Clifton – William Clifton, Girls Cross Country Coach from Middletown South, was named the National Girls Cross Country Coach of the Year by the National Federation of High Schools. National recognition does not happen often, so this is a huge achievement and well deserved.

Bowling Update – The season is well underway. Feedback has been very positive. Bowlers and coaches are happy.

Winter Track Update – The WebEx meeting on 1/15 was well attended. The season is off and running. As of today, there are over 63 meets, (polar bear outside meets as well as small indoor

events) planned. Most are just happy that we are giving the student-athletes something to do and look forward to.

Gymnastics Update – The goal is to have normal sectionals as done in previous years, but four of the five sectional sites understandably may not be available. Plan B is a Senior Showcase with a North and South site. The top 15 gymnasts would receive medals; all other participants would receive certificates. This is a tentative plan and is still being fleshed out.

Spring Track – Regulations are almost done and will be posted by 2/17.

Jack DuBois

Ice Hockey Update – Approximately one-third (40) of ice hockey schools have paused their programs during the first two weeks of the season due to COVID-19. Half of the conferences are planning a Conference championship, which will take place the first weekend in March.

Football League & Conference Update – The committee met on 1/22/21 and agreed to the following items:

1. Zero Week – August 27/28, 2021
2. Official Start of Practice and Heat Acclimatization – August 9, 2021
3. First Scrimmage Date – August 16, 2021
4. Non-Public Group Classifications reduced from three (3) groups to two (2) groups based on non-public equivalency chart. Equivalency Groups V, IV, III – Non-Public Group A; Groups II, I – Non-Public Group B
5. Regional Championship and Non-Public Final games retained for 2021 season – November 26/27; or December 3,4,5 using either MetLife Stadium or Rutgers Stadium for 12 games
6. Strength Index Adjustment – average of the 2019 and 2020 seasons re-centering to 60
7. Non-Public Multiplier Adjustments - No adjustments made from the 2020 published categories
8. Classifications – NJSIAA will collect the Non-Public enrollments by April 1, 2021; Public enrollments will tentatively be established in spring 2021
9. Intent Card Due – October 25, 2021
10. Cut Off Date – October 30, 2021
11. Seeding Meeting Date – October 31, 2021 (Non-Public Groups A and B will be seeded by committee)
12. Video Replay – Will be permitted for a third experiment year during the regular season 21-22
13. Shortage of officials' issue was discussed. Conferences are selectively opting to schedule games on Thursday evening to meet the anticipated official shortage

Boys Lacrosse Update – Tournament Regulations have been posted. There is a lacrosse interpretation meeting on 2/28.

NJSIAA Hall of Fame Update – A list of student-athlete nominees was sent to the committee. The committee will choose eleven (11) student-athlete selections, ranking their top inductee with eleven (11) points and the remaining ten (10) in descending order. Selection sheets are due by March 5, 2021. The next NJSIAA HOF Class will be announced in the April 2021 Executive Committee meeting.

Fencing Update – 60 schools participated successfully in a fencing season this winter and averaged two matches per week.

Al Stumpf

Basketball Update – Due to weather, NJSIAA has granted two four-game weeks to help schools re-schedule games but teams cannot play three games in a row. Ms. Maguire added that this is applicable to all Season 2 sports, not just basketball. 15 games is the maximum number of games that may be played by the end of the season, March 6, 2021.

Volleyball Update – The Girls Volleyball Rules and Regulations will be posted tomorrow, while the Boys should be available by the week of February 15th. The NFHS has removed the requirement that a state association must approve religious headgear worn by volleyball players. The NJSIAA will no longer be issuing these approval letters- all officials have been notified of this new rule.

Mr. Stumpf shared a story that took place recently. An official collapsed at a sporting event, so Edison Athletic Director, Dave Sandaal, revived him. Kudos were given to Mr. Sandaal for his heroics.

Golf Update – All tournament sites except for two have been confirmed.

Tony Maselli

Spring Sports – Rule Interpreter Meetings – Spring Rule Interpreter meetings began this week.

Rule Interpreter/Assignor - Rotation - To ensure all our student athletes and all NJSIAA interscholastic competitions have the highest quality officiating possible, the NJSIAA has instituted a rotation for the positions of “Rules Interpreter” and “Tournament Assignor” in all sports that utilize those positions. All NJSIAA Rules Interpreters and Tournament Assignors will serve a three-year term. Upon completion of the three-year term, the NJSIAA will re-post those positions based on the rotation below. All rules interpreters and tournament assignors completing their three-year term can reapply for the same position. The association successfully started this procedure in the winter and had planned do it for spring sports last year, but then COVID hit so this was put on hold. See below for the rotation schedule. Every registered official will receive the opportunity and information to apply.

Last Season	Season	Interviews
2019-2020	Winter Sports	May 2020
2020-2021	Spring Sports	August 2021
2021-2022	Fall Sports	January 2022
2022-2023	Winter Sports	May 2023
2023-2024	Spring Sports	August 2024
2024-2025	Fall Sports	January 2025
2025-2026	Winter Sports	May 2026
2026-2027	Spring Sports	August 2027
2027-2028	Fall Sports	January 2028
2028-2029	Winter Sports	May 2029
2029-2030	Spring Sports	August 2030
2030-2031	Fall Sports	January 2031
2031-2032	Winter Sports	May 2032
2032-2033	Spring Sports	August 2033
2033-2034	Fall Sports	January 2034

AD Forum Update – The new website has a true forum function, and a new feature to look for games, but no email is generated when a forum message is posted. Athletic Directors want the email feature back, so Mr. Maselli is working to make that happen. He did share the system works the same way as in the past, but Athletic Directors just have to log in to see all the posts instead of receiving emails each time something is posted.

Swimming/Diving Update – The season is under way and many schools will do virtual swim meets. Some facilities are hosting swim meets, but not all.

Boys Tennis & Baseball Update – Besides the later start date, Mr. Maselli plans on running regular post-season tournaments like in years past for both sports, including a tennis team and individual (singles and doubles) tournament.

Finance Committee Update – Steve Shohfi

Approval of Monthly Checks – The checkbook from January 12, 2021 through February 8, 2021 was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Mary Liz Ivins made a motion, seconded by Kurt Karcich, to approve the January 12, 2021 through February 8, 2021 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

Report of Counsel (Steven Goodell, Esq.)

On 1/26/21, the association was notified of a lawsuit being filed by wrestling referee Al Maloney, in the Superior Court of Atlantic County. NJSIAA is being represented by counsel assigned by its insurance carrier to defend the claim. The next day, the association received a decision from the Commissioner of Education in a separate administrative action filed by Mr. Maloney challenging the disciplinary action received from NJSIAA as a result of the Buena wrestling match incident. The Commissioner ruled in favor of the actions taken by the NJSIAA, and determined that the NJSIAA granted Mr. Maloney due process, NJSIAA had jurisdiction, and the decision was not arbitrary or capricious. If Mr. Maloney chooses to appeal this decision, it can be filed with the Appellate Division within 45 days. Lastly, on 2/1, Mr. Goodell and Mr. Miccio appeared virtually in Superior Court in Union County to represent the NJSIAA in an Order to Show Cause With Temporary Restraints filed by The Patrick School. The Patrick School challenged the decision of the NJSIAA, which determined that The Patrick School did not comply with NJSIAA Rules and Regulations, Specific Sport Regulations, Note 3, and therefore could not be a member of the association this year. The judge heard considered written submissions, heard oral argument, and decided that he would not the grant temporary restraints sought by The Patrick School. The Patrick School agreed to voluntary dismiss their complaint without prejudice, but the judge told The Patrick School they may bring their complaint to the NJ Department of Education Commissioner. So far, no further action has been taken.

Old Business/New Business – Senator Sarlo shared that he hears the frustrations of the local Boards of Education and the inconsistent interpretations from the local and county Departments of Health regarding Covid-19 guidelines. Discussions are ongoing.

Adjournment – A motion was made by Rob Haraka, seconded by Tom Mullahey, to adjourn the meeting at 12:18 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Maguire, Chief Operating Officer

CEM: In