

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 22, 2023

Roll Call - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, February 22, 2023 via Cisco's WebEx Meetings platform, was called to order by the President, Joseph Bollendorf, at 11:05 am.

The following members were present: Mohammed Abdelaziz, Jeff Baldino, Dr. Carol Birnbohm, Jeremy Braverman, Ed Chmiel, Jason Corley, Heather Crisci, Maria Crowley, Denise Crudup, Danielle Dayton, Jorge Diaz, Al Dyer, Daniel Finkle, Judy Finch-Johnson, Barry Fitzgerald, John Fraraccio, Dr. Kimberly Guccio, Dr. Dave Heisey, Steven Jenkins, Kurt Karcich, Raymond Kiem, Howard Krieger, Thad Lepcio, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Thomas Mullahey, Leon Owen, Russell Petrocelli, Jeff Pierro, Dr. Michael Rossi, Dave Ryden, Dr. David Salvo, Senator Paul Sarlo, Steve Shohfi, Sheryl Smith, Jeffrey Steele, Gregory Troxell, Joseph Ursino, Paul Vizzuso, Tammy Wagner, Kathy Whalen and Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director; Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer; Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer; Steven P. Goodell, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Brian Deakyne, *NJ Advance Media*; Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*; and Jane Havsy, *Daily Record*.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Jason Corley, seconded by Steve Shohfi, to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2023 Executive Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Update (Paul Anzano) – Mr. Anzano was unable to attend today's meeting but distributed a listing of current bills in the legislature that affect high school sports. He is available if anyone has any questions.

Ridge HS Ice Hockey Appeal – February 16, 2023 Protest Committee Decision – Roll Call Vote – A motion was made by Russell Petrocelli, seconded by Steve Shohfi, to enter in to closed session at 11:08 am to hear an appeal of a Ridge ice hockey player deemed ineligible for the state tournament by the Protest Committee on 2/16/23 since he did not meet the 50% participation rule. The Protest Committee was comprised of 1-NJSIAA Executive Director, Colleen Maguire, 2-Executive Committee President – Joe Bollendorf, and 3-Executive Committee Member – Tom Mullahey. For today's appeal of the Protest Committee decision, John Croot, Esq., counsel for Ridge HS, presented Ridge HS's case to the Executive Committee, followed by Paul Popadiuk, NJSIAA Compliance Officer, who presented why NJSIAA and the Protest Committee both ruled Ridge's ice hockey player ineligible. The hearing was transcribed by a court reporter. After both sides testified, questions were asked, then the committee deliberated. A motion was made by Russell Petrocelli, seconded by Judy Finch Johnson, to affirm the decision of the Protest Committee, who met on 2/16/23. A roll call vote was taken. Final Vote: Yes-35; No-0; Abstain-1. Motion carried.

Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire

Ms. Maguire started the meeting with a few remarks on the association's collective concerns regarding the increasing trend in unsportsmanlike behavior impacting interscholastic events – specifically in the sport of basketball. This past school year, there were 11 basketball teams that were not eligible to participate in the NJSIAA state tournament. For perspective, during the 2021-2022 school year, a total of 11 teams were not eligible to participate in the NJSIAA state tournaments across all sports. In far too many of these incidents, spectators were involved, which only elevated the situation and ultimately led to the early termination of a game. There are too many student-athletes that are sidelined during the most

exciting part of the season. One of the fundamental purposes of the NJSIAA is to promote good sportsmanship at interscholastic athletic contests. There is a sportsmanship rule embedded in the bylaws, which holds any person to high standards of good sportsmanship, and for approximately 20 years, there has been the 3-team DQ rule. Earlier this year, NJSIAA promoted the NFHS BenchBadBehavior campaign which provided a toolkit of resources for our member schools – social media graphics, flyers, public address scripts, etc. NJSIAA continues to message the importance of positive sportsmanship and the role that schools must play to ensure a safe playing environment, but more is needed. This seems to be a nationwide problem. Ms. Maguire recommends the following:

- 1- Continue to support our officials, and hold coaches accountable if they, or their student-athletes, act in unsportsmanlike ways.
- 2- Kids can be taught to stay on the bench, even when tempers flare. Coaches need to practice their sideline and bench control just like they practice their end of game situations. There are best practices for doing this. NJSIAA is going to work with the coaches' associations to help provide this kind of training.
- 3- NJSIAA will make sure that schools are communicating with each other to ensure there is adequate security and oversight of spectators from both teams.
- 4- And finally, the association publishes a crowd control handbook which is available on our website. NJSIAA staff will be taking a close look at the handbook to make sure it has the latest and best advice – and that it is a reliable resource for our member schools.

NJSIAA Hall of Fame / Awards Program – Sunday, March 19, 2023 – NJSIAA will induct seven individuals into its Hall of Fame on March 19, 2023. Inductees include former longtime NJSIAA staff members Larry White and Jack DuBois, along with the following five student-athletes: Bob Bianchi (Columbia HS), Lou Creekmur (Woodbridge HS), Mike Grey (Delbarton School), Frank Tripucka (Bloomfield HS) and Ajeé Wilson (Neptune HS).

The association will also honor Jen Fleury (athletic director at Villa Walsh Academy), Dr. Chris Mendler (chair of the NJSIAA Sports Medical Advisory Committee), and Chris Faytok (high school sports editor for NJ Advance Media/NJ.com), with service awards. The 2023 Award of Honor will be presented to Mary Liz Ivins, former President of the NJSIAA Executive Committee and longtime Principal of Notre Dame High School.

Wrestling Updates – On Sunday, 2/12, Rutgers University hosted the boys team championships and crowned seven state champions. It was a great day of high school wrestling. Ms. Maguire thanked the schools who hosted the 34 boys' District and 4 girls' Region tournaments. All the events were efficiently run and had a lot of great competition. Next up is the 8 boys Region tournaments and the girls' state championships at Phillipsburg HS. Ms. Maguire thanked Dr. Troxell and Kyle Fleming for their continued hospitality at Phillipsburg HS – their team does a fantastic job hosting this event at their beautiful facility. New to this year, the girls will wrestle back through 3rd place at Phillipsburg. Then the finals will move to the following Saturday, March 2nd, at Boardwalk Hall. The girls individual finals will start around 2:00pm which is just prior to the start of the boys individual finals.

Student Ambassador Meeting Updates – Ms. Maguire hosted a fantastic two-hour meeting with NJSIAA's student ambassadors at the office on Sunday, 2/5. There was great discussion over what constitutes a successful season. It quickly became apparent that their view of a successful season may not always be in line with their coaches' view. The ambassadors have been tasked with gathering a lot of feedback from their peers on what they view to be a successful season so a list of priorities for everyone to take into consideration can be created.

The second big discussion was the increasing trend in social media used among sports teams. It has become common for a team to have their own Instagram account – primarily used to engage their classmates and community. However, many have experienced a team in their school being subject to taunting before competition, trash talking after competition, and some even targeting specific student-athletes. For instance, a football game was lost on a missed extra point attempt – the winning team

posted a thank you message on their Instagram account with a picture of the kicker who missed the extra point attempt. With good reason, the association cannot help but think that this social media behavior may have played a role in some of the unfortunate incidents that have occurred so far this school year. NFHS Learn has a free online course “Social Media for Students” which is designed to give students the information they need to develop responsible social media habits. NJSIAA will continue to promote this course. The association also needs to ensure that coaches are modeling proper use of social media. Too often an inappropriate social media post by a coach of an NJSIAA member school is brought to Ms. Maguire’s attention.

The student ambassadors’ next in-person meeting is in late August.

Program Review

On 2/21, 13 members of the Program Review Committee met virtually to review the following two proposals. Both proposals were endorsed by the committee.

Heat Acclimatization/Football Tournament Regulations – One Reading – Voice Vote – NJSIAA staff proposed the following changes to the tournament regulations for certain sports.

1. Heat acclimatization – In an effort to allow teams which are subject to heat acclimatization protocols additional pre-season practice days, NJSIAA staff recommends an optional 2-day early start for heat acclimatization. The optional 2-day early start does not impact the practice start date or first scrimmage date as the optional 2-days will not count towards the 6-days of practice/1-day of rest rule. The optional 2-day early start is not required but is subject to approval by the school district. This proposal will impact both field hockey and football. Based on feedback from members of both committees, the 2-day early heat acclimatization will allow for additional practice days and intrasquad scrimmages to better ready all members of the team for live competition. NJSIAA used to allow an optional early start for heat acclimatization, so this is not a new concept. This is especially appreciated in the sport of football where schools will have additional days to work with their student-athletes on tackling mechanics.

The Football Committee recommended the following changes to the football tournament regulations: (All items were unanimously approved by the Program Review Committee except for the addition of St. Thomas Aquinas to multiplier C category – there were two no votes while all others were in favor.)

1. Regional Invitational Tournament (RIT) – the tournament will consist of pairings of 4 teams, so a maximum of 2 games will be played (was decided three games is too much). The losers in the first round can mutually agree to play a 2nd game at their discretion. Seeding for the RIT will be based on the United Power Ranking (UPR); however, crossover between Sections and/or Groups may be necessary to complete the 4 team pairings.
2. Public Tournament State Championship Dates – for the 2023-2024 season, all public-school state championship games will be played Week 13 which is Thanksgiving weekend. The non-public state championship games are currently being played this weekend (November 24, 25, or 26, 2023). However, any public state championship game including a school with a Thanksgiving Day game commitment will be played during the week no later than the following Thursday. The day, time and venue will be subject to availability of the NJSIAA state championship hosts, MetLife Stadium and Rutgers University, but their availability is not guaranteed. This will allow public schools that do not have a Thanksgiving Day conflict to finish their season one week earlier.
3. Non-Public Multiplier – for the 2023-2024 season, St. Thomas Aquinas will be added to the non-public multiplier C category. Summit High School submitted a proposal to the committee requesting that St. Thomas Aquinas be added to the list of multiplier schools.

A motion was made by Jeremy Braverman, seconded by Dave Ryden, to approve the proposed heat acclimatization and football tournament regulation changes approved by the Program Review Committee on 2/21/23. Motion carried with one abstention.

Baseball Tournament Regulations – Pitch Count Procedures - One Reading – Voice Vote - NJSIAA staff proposed the following clarifications to the baseball pitch count procedure for the regular season and the state tournament. The purpose of this clarification is to make it clear that protests regarding the pitch count are not permitted after the game is complete. All pitch count protests must be handled at the end of each half inning and once the first pitch is thrown for the beginning of the following half inning, the pitch count becomes final. The old procedure stated that pitch counts must be verified after every half inning, and once the umpires leave the confines of the field, the pitch counts are final. This jeopardizes the consistency of the pitch count. This new procedure will eliminate any confusion and will force the coaches to take a more active role regarding the pitch count. The new procedure below is separated into three categories starting with opening day to the final championship. This will leave no ambiguity to this procedure. This proposal was unanimously approved by the Program Review Committee.

New Pitch Count Recording Procedure

Regular season

During the regular season, each school shall designate a pitch counter for their team. This person can be a coach, manager, or team-designated pitch counter. The home team's pitch counter will also be designated as the "Official Pitch Counter." The official pitch counter will count pitches for both schools.

Pitch counts **must** be verified with representatives of both teams **after each half-inning**. If both teams agree on a pitch number, that number shall be recorded as the official pitch count. If one team disagrees on a pitch count, the official pitch counter's number shall be recorded. Once the first pitch is thrown for the next half inning, there can be no protests or appeals to the pitch count.

The official pitch counter shall inform both coaches and the plate umpire when a pitcher reaches their maximum pitch count threshold. Coaches are responsible for their pitcher's pitch count at all times. The home team shall report the home and visitor pitch counts on the nj.com website within 24 hours of the game's conclusion.

State Tournament Rounds 1, 2, 3 & Sectional Finals

During these state tournament rounds, each school shall designate a pitch counter for their team. In addition, the home team must supply an "Official **Adult** Pitch Counter" who shall not be part of the coaching staff or team manager. The official pitch counter should be dressed in apparel that is considered neutral during the state tournament. The official pitch counter shall be situated in an area near the backstop and equally accessible to both teams. The official pitch counter will count pitches for both schools.

Pitch counts **must** be verified with representatives of both teams **after each half-inning**. If both teams agree on a pitch number, that number shall be recorded as the official pitch count. If one or both teams disagree on a pitch count, the official pitch counter's number shall be recorded. Once the first pitch is thrown for the next half inning, there can be no protests or appeals to the pitch count.

The official pitch counter shall inform both coaches and the plate umpire when a pitcher reaches their maximum pitch count threshold. Coaches are responsible for their pitcher's pitch count at all times. The home team shall report the home and visitor pitch counts on the nj.com website within 24 hours of the game's conclusion.

State Tournament Semifinals (public only) & State Finals

During these state tournament rounds, each school shall designate a pitch counter for their team. The NJSIAA will supply the “Official Adult Pitch Counter.”

Pitch counts **must** be verified with representatives of both teams **after each half-inning**. If both teams agree on a pitch number, that number shall be recorded as the official pitch count. If one or both teams disagree on a pitch count, the official pitch counter’s number shall be recorded. Once the first pitch is thrown for the next half inning, there can be no protests or appeals to the pitch count.

The official pitch counter shall inform both coaches and the plate umpire when a pitcher reaches their maximum pitch count threshold. Coaches are responsible for their pitcher’s pitch count at all times. The home team shall report the home and visitor pitch counts on the nj.com website within 24 hours of the game’s conclusion.

A motion was made by Dr. David Salvo, seconded by Joseph Ursino, to approve the amended Baseball Pitch Count Reporting Procedures approved by the Program Review Committee on 2/21/23. Motion carried with one abstention.

Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)

Sports Medical Advisory Committee (SMAC) Meeting Update – The SMAC met in January. The big topic of discussion was steroids and the increase in positive tests. So far this year, there were 3 positive tests by fall athletes and 1 winter athlete tested positive, but the test was reviewed and approved as an atypical result, not a positive. There is an appeal hearing scheduled for next week. The positive results are stemming from additives added to protein bars/shakes – athletes are not even realizing they are taking illegal substances. SMAC is giving a presentation at the DAANJ Conference for ADs in March. It’ll focus on what to look for, what to avoid. The more education, the better.

Swimming & Diving Update – The swimming state championships are set for the weekend of 2/24 at GCIT. The diving championships will take place at Montgomery HS on 2/28 and 3/1.

Ice Hockey Update – Everything is set for the finals at the Prudential Center and the tournament is progressing nicely.

Officials’ Recruiting Update – This campaign has been so fantastic that it will continue next year so new officials will be offered the \$300 rebate again. Fall chapters are already advertising that information.

Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)

Fall Cooperative Sports Application Deadline – January 23, 2023 – The Cooperative Sports Committee met on 2/15/23, to review four new fall sports program applications, all of which were unanimously approved. A motion was made by Tom Mullahey, seconded by Steve Shohfi, to approve the following four fall cooperative sports programs, for a four-year period starting with the 2023-2024 school year.

1. Cresskill-Emerson: Football (NJIC)
2. Riverside-Palmyra: Girls Field Hockey (BCSL)
3. St. John Vianney-Ranney: Girls Gymnastics (Shore)
4. Wood-Ridge - Wallington: Girls Soccer (NJIC)

Motion carried with one abstention to the St. John Vianney-Ranney Girls Gymnastics Cooperative Sports program.

Eligibility Update – Any age/credit/semester eligibility waiver requests will be reviewed by the Eligibility Committee on 2/28, with appeals to be heard by the Eligibility Appeals Committee on 3/22. After that, the next Eligibility Committee meeting will be 3/28, followed by the Eligibility Appeals Committee on 4/19.

Compliance Monitor Program Updates – This program, which sends experienced retired Athletic Directors to schools to help Athletic Directors with NJSIAA compliance has been reinstated. It had been on hiatus due to COVID. Monitors will visit schools for the following type of situations:

1. A school that needs help with compliance due to a Corrective Action Plan
2. School has new or recently hired Athletic Director
3. Struggling Athletic Directors that need help. League and Conference officers can provide names if they feel some members could benefit from some extra help.

The following people will serve as NJSIAA Compliance Monitors: John Maggio (retired AD from Bridgewater-Raritan HS), Todd Jorgenson (retired AD from Cumberland Regional HS), and Stan Fryczynski (retired AD from Secaucus HS). Rich Shello of Ridge HS will join as the fourth monitor after he retires (in June 2023).

Sportsmanship - Disqualifications – As Ms. Maguire talked about earlier in the meeting, last year there were 11 total schools disqualified from the state tourney due to 3 or more DQs (4 in football, 2 in boys baskets, 3 in girls baskets and 2 in ice hockey). This year there are 22 already (6-football; 5-boys soccer; 1-girls basketball; and 10-boys basketball). The association feels this is way too many altercations and there needs to be a focus on turning around this trend. Coaches need to prioritize bench practice. Assistant coaches should be securing benches. Roselle Catholic HS proved it can work when their coaches restrained the players. As a result, the school is still participating in the state tournament. Coaches need to exhibit and model appropriate behaviors, and administrators need to address coaches who are not setting examples and yelling at officials/players. Schools also must educate and control parents, by setting high expectations and zero tolerance, having good security, doing their part to help officials, and create a safer environment.

Al Stumpf Report (given by Paul Popadiuk)

Basketball Update – In the Unified Basketball tournament, West Morris Central defeated Voorhees HS in overtime to win the Unified “B” Championship at Hunterdon Central HS. Hunterdon Central HS and Moorestown HS will play for the Unified “A” Championship on March 5 at the RWJ Barnabas Arena

The NJSIAA Basketball Tournament is underway. The boys group finals are at Rutgers University on 3/3 and 3/3 and 3/4. The girls group finals are at RWJ Barnabas Arena on 3/4 and 3/5.

Fencing Update – The District Fencing Tournament is complete. A list of all teams that won in districts and move on to the Sweet 16 Team Championship, was distributed. Mr. Stumpf thanked Passaic Tech, North Hunterdon and Montgomery HS for hosting events for this tournament. The team championships will take place at Morris Hills HS on 2/22. The individual championships will be at Bernards HS on 2/26.

Derryk Sellers Report (given by Paul Popadiuk)

Bowling Update – Sectionals are completed. The championships will take place later in the week at Bowlero in North Brunswick.

Winter Track Update – The sectional and group championship rounds have been completed. The Meet of Champions will take place on 3/5 at Ocean Breeze, beginning at 10am.

Finance Committee Update – Joe Bollendorf

Approval of Monthly Checks – The January 17, 2023 through February 17, 2023 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Raymond Kiem made a motion, seconded by Dr. David Heisey, to approve the January 17, 2023 through February 17, 2023 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business / New Business – none

Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell) – A motion was made by Steve Shohfi, seconded by Jason Corley, to enter into closed session at 12:38 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Steve Shohfi, seconded by Jason Corley, to enter into open session at 12:54 pm.

Adjournment – Once back in open session, a motion was made by Russell Petrocelli seconded by Tom Mullahey, at 12:54 pm, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire
Executive Director

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