

Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire

Spring Championship Schedule – All sites and dates have been confirmed for NJSIAA’s upcoming spring championship tournaments. Detailed information was distributed to the committee. Golf is underway and Ms. Maguire hopes this beautiful weather stays for the remainder of the season.

Winter Season Financial Results – A summary of the winter season financial results was distributed.

Overall, the winter season had a net profit of approximately \$115K, which is a decrease from the prior winter season – which was \$165K. Revenues saw a slight increase of 6% due to increased gate receipts at winter track & field and boys wrestling. During the prior year, attendance at winter track & field was limited (such as the relay events which had no spectators) and boys wrestling had an unusual decrease relative to recent years, so it was nice to see the rebound in attendance. Expenses had a more significant increase across all sports of 13%. The increase was primarily driven by increases in event staffing, officials’ fees, and trophies/medals.

Ms. Maguire has been commenting for some time that expenses are continuing to increase at levels that are becoming unsustainable under our current revenue streams – specifically ticket prices, which have been largely unchanged over the past 10+ years. This is particularly true in the sport of wrestling – boys wrestling has traditionally been one of the most profitable sports that has been relied on to help offset the losses incurred by many other sports. However, boys wrestling continues to see a decline in profitability due to increasing expenses – the current year’s net profit is down 25% relative to the last several seasons. This decrease plus the addition of girls wrestling, which incurred its own significant net loss of over \$50K this past season, puts a strain on the resources available to assist those sports with minimal revenues – such as bowling and fencing. Combined, the fall and winter seasons have a decrease of \$130K, or 30%, in total profit compared to the prior year. While the budget has been able to absorb much of this anticipated decrease in profitability, it is not sustainable.

Ms. Maguire thanked Senator Sarlo for his efforts to provide NJSIAA and our host venues, such as The Prudential Center, Rutgers University, Met Life Stadium, with what will hopefully be some relief on the current restrictions in place.

NJSIAA Hall of Fame Policy and Operating Procedures – One Reading – Voice Vote – An updated policies and operating procedures surrounding the NJSIAA Hall of Fame was distributed. The new procedures formalize the nominating process, establish clear criteria for nominees, and institute a two-level selection process – a screening committee and a selection committee. These operating procedures are commonly found among organizations and are relied on by NFHS and other state associations. The Association’s Hall of Fame is governed by the Executive Committee. A motion was made by Daniel Finkle, seconded by Jeremy Braverman, to approve NJSIAA’s Hall of Fame updated policies and operating procedures. Motion carried unanimously.

Drug Free Sports 2023-2024 Banned Substances List/Testing Protocols – One Reading – Voice Vote – The 2023-2024 list of banned drug classes and testing protocols was sent via email to the committee. Drug Free Sports made two big revisions from last year’s Protocols and Banned Substances List. First, in addition to grammatical changes, the procedures for an appeal were updated to include due dates for documentation. If the student-athlete desires to appeal the results of a positive anabolic steroid test, a written request for an appeal must be received by the NJSIAA no later than 20 days after the student-athlete receives the notification of the positive result from the NJSIAA. A written statement indicating the grounds for appeal, and any related documentation supporting the appeal, must be submitted to NJSIAA no later than 7 calendar days prior to the hearing date. The other major change was made to the Banned Substances List. Alcohol was removed from the list (Category 3 – Beta Blockers) since Drug Free Sports doesn’t test for that substance. A motion was made by Dr. Danny Robertozzi, seconded by Judy Finch Johnson, to approve the 2023-2024 Drug Free Sports Banned Substances List and Testing Protocols. Motion carried unanimously.

Recruiting Violations – Bylaw Amendment – Policies and Procedures - First Reading – Voice Vote

NJSIAA staff and the Transfer Committee recommend that guidelines be adopted to assist the Controversies Committee when issuing penalties for recruiting violations. NJSIAA staff and the Transfer Committee also recommend that the maximum fine available to the Controversies Committee be increased. This proposal will add a new section to the NJSIAA Guidelines, Policies and Procedures section of the NJSIAA Handbook – titled “Interpretive Guidelines for Recruiting Violations”. It is proposed to modify Bylaws, Article X, Section 1, 2.E and 3 and the Interpretive Guidelines for Recruiting Violations as follows: [Additions are underlined, and deletions are ~~struck through~~.]

Bylaws, Article X, Section 1, 2.E and 3 (Fines)

Article X PENALTIES

PENALTIES SHALL BE ASSESSED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OR THE CONTROVERSIES COMMITTEE FOR INFRACTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS OR RULES AND SHALL INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO:

Section 1

To ~~assure~~ ensure that member schools make certain that all Student-Athletes comply with eligibility standards or that they obtain appropriate waivers where necessary prior to competition, the following forfeiture penalties will be imposed. If the ineligible student participated in a TEAM SPORT, then that team will forfeit any games that it has won, irrespective of how long the ineligible student participated in that contest. This is so because it is impossible to calculate the impact made on a team contest by one or more individual players. In cases where the ineligible player participated in an INDIVIDUAL SPORT, then the team will only forfeit the events in which that player participated, since the impact of individual players can be calculated with some certainty. This penalty is mandatory and will not be subject to any appeal to the Executive Committee.

CL 1: Although the penalty of forfeiture for the use of an ineligible player is mandatory and not appealable to the Executive Committee, the school may appeal the determination of eligibility.

Section 2

After conducting a hearing and subject to an appeal to the Executive Committee, as set forth in Article XIII of the Bylaws, the Controversies Committee may impose the penalties set forth in this Section.

- A. A. Probation – A probationary period not to exceed two years may be imposed, which may include a requirement that a member school submit appropriate reports to the Association, certifying that the violations are not continuing. The Controversies Committee may determine that an offending school may not participate in championship contests in the sport in which the violation occurred.
- B. Forfeit of Games – Under such terms and conditions as the Controversies Committee shall provide.
- C. Forfeit of Championship Rights – A school may be required to forfeit championship rights as determined by the Controversies Committee.
- D. Suspension of Coaches and Players – In addition to any disqualifications imposed for unsportsmanlike and flagrant verbal or physical misconduct during an interscholastic contest a coach or player may be suspended for a violation of the Constitution and Bylaws or Rules of this Association, or for violations of the rules of good sportsmanship or the rules of a particular game.
- E. Fines – Member schools, Principals, Athletic Directors, and/or coaches may be fined by the Controversies Committee in an amount not to exceed ~~\$1,000.00~~ \$5,000.00 per party. Member schools may also be required to pay any property damages caused by their improper behavior and for the transcript and court stenographer costs of the Controversies Committee hearing, which would be payable within sixty (60) days.

** This amendment approved by letter from Commissioner of Education dated July 6, 1987 and published in the September, 1987 NJSIAA Bulletin.*

Section 3

Major Fines and Expulsion:

The Controversies Committee may recommend for approval by the Executive Committee, the imposition of major fines against member schools, principals, athletic directors and coaches exceeding ~~\$1,000.00~~ \$5,000.00 per party for serious violations of the Bylaws or Rules of the Association and/or the expulsion of member schools and/or coaches for serious violations of the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of the Association after a hearing or review on appeal by the Executive Committee, pursuant to Article XIII of the Bylaws.

***Rationale:** The increase in the potential fine will increase the burden on the violating school and will hopefully serve as a deterrent for future violations. The \$1,000.00 maximum fine has been in place for over the past 20 years. NJSIAA staff and the Transfer Committee continue to focus their attention on holding adults responsible for recruiting-related violations. This position is consistent with the updated recruiting rule's emphasis on holding the schools, not students, accountable for recruiting violations which was recently passed by the NJSIAA membership at the May 2023 Annual Meeting.*

Interpretive Guidelines for Recruiting Violations

If the NJSIAA determines that there has been athletic recruitment by a member school, ~~then not only will the athletes be subject to be declared ineligible, but~~ the recruiting school will be subjected to appropriate disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion among other penalties. Consequently, the Principal of both the former school and the new school of a transferring student must verify that there has not been neither athletic recruitment nor a transfer for athletic advantage on the appropriate Transfer Forms, furnished by the NJSIAA.

The following chart will be used to assist the Controversies Committee in issuing penalties for violation of Article V, Section 4.D, Athletic Recruitment. The following penalties may be fully or in part enacted by the Committee:

Recruitment Violation Chart		
Infraction Level	Types of Infractions	Penalties
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of general advertising for recruitment of 9-12 grade high school students, including but not limited to: social media, flyers, advertisements, brochures, booster/donor sites, etc. There is no student contact involved in level one. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School must remediate issue immediately by removing, editing or rescinding advertisement. School (all sports) placed on probation for one year. AD and/or coach will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeating a Level 1 offense. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruiting contact/communication with a 9-12 grade student-athlete from another high school by a non-district approved person including, but not limited to: parents, boosters, alumni, former coaches, and recently hired coaches who may have recruited athletes just prior to being approved by the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person(s) guilty will be banned from all NJSIAA sporting events for three years. Head coach of program will be suspended for ¼ of the season's maximum contests for that sport (scheduled contests if sport has no max.) Head coach will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense. School (all sports) placed on probation for one year for 1st violation; 2 years if a level 1 violation has previously occurred.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeating a Level 2 offense. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violating program is ineligible to compete in NJSIAA Championship Tournament for one year or removed from tournament if in progress.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct recruiting contact/communication with a 9-12 grade student-athlete from another high school by a district approved person including, but not limited to: paid coaches, volunteer coaches, students at the behest of their coach, or any district employee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacating previously earned championships due to this recruiting violation. • Head coach of program, if not directly involved, will be suspended for 1/3 of the season's maximum contests for that sport (scheduled contests if sport has no max.) • Any coach involved will be suspended in all sports for 1 year. • AD, head coach and all other coaches involved will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense. • School (all sports) placed on probation for 1 year for 1st violation; 2 years if a repeat level 2 violation. • School will be fined 1/2 of the maximum amount allowed in Article 10, Section 2.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating a Level 3 offense. OR • An egregious violation of direct recruiting of a 9-12 grade student-athlete from another high school by a district approved person. The violation may include, but is not limited to: recruitment of multiple student-athletes, recruitment that endangers the health, wellness and safety of student athletes, recruitment violations that showed persistent and ongoing recruitment efforts by a district approved coach or employee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violating program is ineligible to compete in NJSIAA Championship Tournament for 2 years (removed from current tournament if in progress plus an additional year). • Vacating previously earned championships due to this recruiting violation. • Head coach of program, if not directly involved, will be suspended for 1 year. • Any coach involved will be suspended in all sports for 2 years. • AD, head coach and all other coaches involved will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense. • School (all sports) placed on probation for 2 years. • School will be fined the maximum amount allowed in Article 10, Section 2.

Rationale: *This chart will serve as a guideline so that consistent penalties may be administered by the Controversies Committee. It will also clearly outline potential penalties to schools for each violation level, which will provide transparency to member schools while also continuing to hold adults and schools responsible for recruiting violations, not the student-athletes. Additionally, this proposal strikes athletic advantage and student ineligibility from this section which is consistent with the adoption of a new transfer rule by the NJSIAA membership at the May 2023 Annual Meeting.*

Mr. Popadiuk explained that in addition to wanting to define “The Controversies committee can dole out various fines”, the current maximum fine is \$1,000, which was set twenty years ago. Also, Mr. Popadiuk reviewed data from the past ten years and found there was no consistency in giving out penalties, probably because the committee was constantly changing. This new proposal / chart provides guidance for the committee and clearly outlines penalties for possible infractions. This may also serve as a deterrent for coaches/offenders if they know in advance the potential consequences to their actions, prior to committing an infraction. Hundreds of football coaches received this proposal at a meeting earlier in the week, and it was well received.

A motion was made by Steve Shohfi, seconded by Ed Chmiel, to amend Bylaws, Article X, PENALTIES, and add a new section to the NJSIAA Guidelines, Policies and Procedures section of the NJSIAA Handbook – titled “Interpretive Guidelines for Recruiting Violations”, with guidelines to assist the Controversies Committee when issuing penalties for recruiting violations. Motion passed first reading with one abstention.

Program Review

On 5/10/23, 8 members of the Program Review Committee met for a virtual meeting to review the following two proposals. Both proposals were unanimously endorsed by the committee.

Ice Hockey Classifications and Tournament Regulations Updates – One Reading – Voice Vote –

NJSIAA continues to see an increasing trend in the number of boys’ ice hockey cooperative programs. For instance, during the 2012-2013 season, there were 22 programs while during the 2022-2023 season, there were 45 programs. When two schools co-op from either Group A, B, or both, the number of schools in those groups decreases, while the number of schools in Group C increases.

As a result of this trend, NJSIAA staff propose changes to the current classifications which are described below. This proposal is based on feedback solicited by NJSIAA staff from Athletic Directors and coaches and reviewed by the ice hockey committee at its post-season meeting. The ice hockey committee unanimously supports this proposal. On behalf of the Program Review Committee, a motion was made by Jeremy Braverman, seconded by Steve Jenkins, to approve the following changes to the current ice hockey classifications:

Currently, the number of schools in each classification group are:

Group A = 22 (16 make the tournament)

Group B = 23 (16 make the tournament)

Group C = 45 (32 make the tournament)

Non-Public = 25 (all make the tournament)

Proposed Changes to Ice Hockey Classifications:

1. Combine groups A & B totaling 45 schools. Divide those schools in half to make North & South-sections. We will add a sectional championship game for the two divisions, and the north sectional champion will play the south sectional champion for the state championship. The sectional championship games will be played at either Cody or Mennen arenas.
2. Group C will be divided in half to make the North & South sections. We will add a sectional championship game for the two divisions, and the north sectional champion will play the south sectional champion for the state championship. The sectional championship games will be played at either Cody or Mennen arenas.
3. The Non-public group classifications will remain the same.

New qualifications numbers for the state tournament based on the proposals:

Group A North = 23 (20 make the tournament)

Group A South = 22 (20 make the tournament)

Group C North = 23 (20 make the tournament)

Group C South = 22 (20 make the tournament)

Non-Public = 25 (20 make the tournament - All 11 Gordon Division teams are automatically in)

This will equal the number of schools that qualify for the tournament across all the groups and allow for more competitively balanced first round games.

Motion carried unanimously.

Boys Wrestling District/Region Alignment – One Reading – Voice Vote – Historically, NJSIAA has realigned its boys' wrestling districts and regions on a two-year cycle. The 2022-2023 season is year 2 of the previously approved realignment plan. A Realignment Committee composed of current and former Executive Committee members (Gregory Troxell, Kurt Karcich, Brendan McGovern, Charles Klaus), Howie O'Neil (NJSIAA Wrestling Tournament Director) and Ken Rossi (NJSIAA Wrestling Coordinator) analyzed six years of historical data, and proposed the below methodology that will be used for the next realignment, as well as other changes to the tournament regulations.

Rating Criteria

The committee recommends that the realignment use the following criteria to rank the teams:

1. 60% team power points – two-year average
2. 40% returning state wrestle back round 1 participants, or better

The previous realignment plan relied on 75% of team power points (two-year average) and 25% returning state wrestle back round 3 participants. The committee believes that the returning state wrestle back round 1 participants is a better indicator of a team's strength for the next season as it casts a larger net of participants. Therefore, the increase in the weighted percentage used in the criteria from 25% to 40% results in better ranking criteria.

Non-Public Schools

Based on the ranking criteria, the top 8 ranked non-public schools will be assigned one per Region – the realignment will rely on northing number. The next 8 ranked non-public schools will be assigned one per Region based on competitive balance and northing number. Competitive balance will strive to assign the higher ranked schools with the lower ranked schools.

District Alignments

The top 32 ranked schools (both non-public and public) will be assigned one per District and will represent the first line in the realignment. The second line in the realignment will be assigned based on northing number and competitive balance. All remaining schools will be assigned locally based on proximity to the host school and will strive to maintain both traditional rivalries, where possible, and a consistent competitive balance across each District within each Region.

NJSIAA reserves the right to adjust this plan when needed to accommodate District and/or Region host sites. However, any adjustment will not compromise the competitive balance.

Realignment Cycle

To balance the anticipated strength of teams on a year-to-year basis, the committee recommends that the realignment be updated on an annual basis. Therefore, this methodology will be applied at the conclusion of each season and the realignment will be updated annually moving forward. The committee believes that an annual realignment is the best path to ensuring a competitive balance is maintained across all Districts and Regions.

4th Place Finishers

During the 2016-2017 season, 4th place finishers at each Region advanced to Atlantic City – this increased the total number of participants from 336 to 448. The committee has reviewed the success of these 4th place finishers to determine if they should continue to advance to Atlantic City. Before making a final recommendation, the Committee recommends that the 4th place finishers be seeded in the same manner as all other qualifiers – currently, they are unseeded and are placed between seeds #25 and #32. To ensure the integrity of the individual tournament, and in effort to assess the viability of the 4th place finishers, the Committee recommends that any forfeit (medical or other reason) during the District or Region tournaments be counted as a loss against the wrestler who forfeits.

Howie O'Neil attended the meeting and reviewed the proposed alignment with the Executive Committee. He noted that in his 40+ years, he has never had host issues until recently. The sport is struggling to find schools to host because attendance hasn't been what it was because with the current structure, the rivalries aren't there, so it's not financially beneficial for schools. This proposal should help with that issue. On behalf of the Program Review Committee, a motion was made by Dave Ryden, seconded by Maria Crowley, to approve the boys wrestling district/region realignment plan as proposed by the Realignment Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance Committee Update – Joe Bollendorf

Approval of Monthly Checks – The March 28, 2023 through May 8, 2023 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Gregory Troxell made a motion, seconded by Mohammed Abdelaziz, to approve the March 28, 2023 through May 8, 2023 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell) – none.

Old Business / New Business – Ms. Maguire will be sending out a survey to gauge feedback on Executive Committee meetings from this past year so she can plan next year's meeting schedule.

Belleville/Paramus Catholic Football Recruiting Allegations – Appeal of Controversies Committee Decision – At 11:42 am the Executive Committee took a short recess to get the parties involved in the appeal hearing.

On 9/30/22, a decision was issued by the Controversies Committee in the matter of recruiting allegations made by Belleville HS against Paramus Catholic HS. The committee found Paramus Catholic HS to be guilty of recruiting and issued several penalties, which Belleville HS felt should be enhanced, so they appealed the penalties. On 10/19/22, after hearing arguments from attorneys for all sides, the Executive Committee modified the decision of the Controversies Committee, and enhanced the penalties that were already levied to prevent these occurrences from happening again and provide a true deterrence for recruiting. Additional penalties proposed were: 1-Suspending the Assistant Football Coach Christian Maldonado for the remainder of the 2022 season and the entire 2023 football season; 2-Suspend Head Football Coach Greg Russo for the first four games of the 2023 season, and 3-fine the school \$1,000. Both Mr. Maldonado and Mr. Russo appealed this decision in Superior Court, Bergen County, arguing that they did not receive fair representation as they were not represented by their own counsel. The Superior Court agreed and remanded the case back to the Executive Committee with each party having their own individual counsel.

With that background, the following people had 15 minutes each to speak on behalf of their respective party: David Frazier – Controversies Committee Chairman, Ari Schneider, Esq. – Counsel for Belleville HS; Daniel Mc Nerney, Esq – Counsel for C. Maldonado; and Patrick Jennings, Esq. – Counsel for G. Russo. After the attorneys and Mr. Frazier had completed their presentations, Executive Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions. Questions were asked by: Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Braverman, Mr. Abdelaziz, Mr. Shohfi, Mr. Schneider, and Mr. Bollendorf. The Executive Committee then met in closed session to deliberate and decide whether to affirm, reverse, or modify the Controversies Committee decision of 9/30/22. No new information was permitted – the hearing focused only on the official record that was submitted to the Executive Committee in advance. The hearing was transcribed by Court Reporter, Karen Ahern.

After the committee deliberated, a motion was made by Jason Corley, seconded by Daniel Finkle to enter open session at 1:48 pm. A motion was made by Tom Mullahey, seconded by Ed Chmiel, to affirm the

9/30/22 Controversies Committee decision, but modify the penalties as follows: 1-Suspend Head Football Coach Greg Russo for the first four games of the 2023 season. He cannot be on the premises in any capacity on game day. 2-Suspend the Assistant Football Coach Christian Maldonado for the duration of the probation period (which was the remainder of the 2022 season and the entire 2023 football season), and 3-fine the school \$1,000. (The fine has not been challenged.) Mr. Goodell asked for time to prepare the official decision for the committee to review. A roll call vote was taken. Final vote: Yes-31; No-0; Abstain-1. Motion carried.

Ms. Maguire thanked outgoing Executive Committee members, Dr. Patricia Camp, Kathy Whalen and Tom Mullahey for their service.

Adjournment – A motion was made by Jason Corley, seconded by Dan Finkle at 1:55 pm, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire
Executive Director

CEM: In