

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 15, 2023

Roll Call - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, via Cisco's WebEx Meetings platform, was called to order by the President, Jason Corley, at 11:04 am.

The following members were present: Mohammed Abdelaziz, Dr. Carol Birnbohm, Joseph Bollendorf, Maria Crowley, Danielle Dayton, Daniel Finkle, Judy Finch-Johnson, John Fraraccio, Michael Gallo, Dr. Kimberly Gruccio, Dr. Dave Heisey, Christopher Huber, Steven Jenkins, Kurt Karcich, Raymond Kiem, Dr. Michael Kuchar, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Russell Petrocelli, Dr. Michael Rossi, Dr. David Salvo, Steve Shohfi, Jeffrey Steele, Gregory Troxell, Joseph Ursino, Michael Vinella, Paul Vizzuso, Tammy Wagner, Barry Walker, Tripp Welborne, and Cynthia Wilks. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director; Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer; Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer; Al Stumpf and Derryk Sellers, Assistant Directors; Steven P. Goodell, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Jake Aferiat, *NJ Advance Media*; Mike McGarry, *The Press of Atlantic City*, and Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*.

Approval of Minutes - A motion was made by Russell Petrocelli, seconded by Steven Shohfi, to accept the minutes of the October 18, 2023 Executive Committee meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Update (Paul Anzano) – Mr. Anzano was unable to attend today's meeting but had previously distributed a listing of bills related to high school athletics being considered by the legislature.

Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire

Fall Championship Update – Ms. Maguire congratulated NJSIAA staff on completion of the cross country, field hockey, boys and girls soccer, and girls volleyball tournaments. A summary of state champions by sport was provided to the committee. Special thanks were given to the staff at Franklin High School and Bordentown High School for their hospitality hosting many of these championship events. Football is the only fall sport left with the upcoming semifinals and finals, and a total of 19 games left to be played. 20 public sectional champions were crowned last weekend. Ms. Maguire commended the hosting schools for their oversight – some games had 3,000+ attendees.

Ms. Maguire also thanked members of the press for their coverage of all NJSIAA state tournament events – their photos, the feature stories, the interviews all create memories for our student-athletes.

Advisory Committee – Legislation Reminder – Reminders have been sent to member schools that the deadline to submit proposed legislation is Friday, December 1st. The Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, December 6th, at 1:00 pm, following the December Executive Committee meeting. All committee members are welcome to attend.

Officials' Implicit Bias Program Update – NJSIAA is continuing to host virtual implicit bias workshops for winter sport officials. To date, NJSIAA has hosted over 20 virtual workshops since late October with approximately 1,500 officials participating. There are six more workshops scheduled for this week.

Calendar Proposal – First Reading – Voice Vote – Ms. Maguire highlighted the detailed proposal that was sent via email to all committee members prior to the meeting. This proposal follows a June 2021 proposal that brought consistency to all sports across all seasons. Since implementation, NJSIAA staff

has solicited feedback from its sport committees and leagues and conferences in addition to learning some best practices from like-size and neighboring state associations.

Ms. Maguire recognizes that there is no one size fits all solution but that there are many factors that everyone agrees on, which are: school days and school years are continuing to evolve as religious holidays and other school-district recognized events are impacting member schools differently, there is no national standard or consistent standard to adhere to regarding preseason length, leagues and conferences have a need for consistent and reliable dates moving forward that will assist with planning their own league/conference and county tournaments, member schools will benefit from flexibility at the start of their season to schedule non-league/non-conference contests at their discretion, and that the weather is far from predictable.

To allow flexibility at the start of the season, NJSIAA will no longer establish one standard competition start date – schools will be permitted to schedule scrimmages and regular season contests once the 6-days of practice/1-day or rest rule has been satisfied. This means schools will have the autonomy to determine when regular season competition will start. While there is no limit on the number of scrimmages, once a school plays and reports a regular season contest, then no future contest will be considered a scrimmage – all future contests will count towards that sport's maximum number of competitions. Ms. Maguire made it very clear that this proposal does not change the maximum number of competitions in any sport. This provides leagues and conferences with the flexibility to establish their own regular season start date – their member schools can rely on this start date to schedule non-league/non-conference contests.

To provide consistency, NJSIAA will establish a competition end date for the fall and spring season and utilize this date to count back the number of weeks to determine the practice start date and tournament start date. For the fall season, NJSIAA will establish a competition end date as the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving week for all sports except for football. For the spring season, NJSIAA will establish a competition end date as the Sunday preceding the NJ Juneteenth state holiday.

In both seasons, the association will count back 14 weeks from the Competition End Date to establish the practice start date. Please note that in the fall season, the association will count back 15 weeks to establish the practice start date for both football and girls tennis. Next, NJSIAA will count back 3 weeks from the Competition End Date to establish the Tournament Start Week for each season. Ms. Maguire noted that not all state tournaments take 3 weeks and that sport committees will review and recommend state tournament dates that may end prior to the Competition End Date. This proposal establishes the methodology that leagues and conferences can rely on to schedule their own league, conference, or county tournaments. These tournaments are important to member schools and student-athletes – NJSIAA staff wants to make sure the schedule allows adequate time and flexibility for leagues and conferences to host their tournaments. Ms. Maguire also commented that state tournament dates for cross country, spring track and field and boys/girls tennis may not follow this methodology since they are dependent on third party facility availability, but that staff will work to confirm futures dates to the extent possible and provide adequate notice to leagues and conferences as timely as possible.

There are no changes to the winter season with the exception that leagues and conferences will have flexibility to establish their own regular season start date, and their member schools will have the flexibility to schedule non-league/non-conference contests. The practice start dates or state tournament dates that are already approved for the 2023-2024 winter season will remain in place.

Lastly, Ms. Maguire commented that this proposal was reviewed and endorsed by the Sports Medical Advisory Committee at its October meeting. The committee understands the need for scheduling flexibility and feels it is necessary to reduce risks of injury and overtraining. This proposal has also been discussed at length since August over the course of three meetings with the officers of our leagues and conferences. This proposal reflects feedback and input from all these meetings.

Discussion took place. Mr. Abdelaziz asked about fall and winters seasons overlapping and if there will still be a 3-day tryout period for sports like basketball. The answer is yes – there will still be the 3-day tryout period prior to Thanksgiving and that all state tournaments, except for football, will be completed prior to the 3-day tryout period. Mr. Fraraccio shared that he feels this proposal is a no-brainer. The flexibility and consistency it offers is helpful to Athletic Directors. Now they don't have to cram games into a short amount of time, teams can start earlier or later based on their needs, and this helps with the officials' shortage. He also remarked that county tournaments are important to athletes and the community because not all schools make the state tournament, so the consistency offered by this proposal for league scheduling helps avoid having the county and state tournament coincide.

A motion was made by John Fraraccio, seconded by Brendan McGovern, to approve the NJSIAA calendar proposal. Motion passed first reading unanimously.

Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)

Transfers Update – Schools have been entering their winter athletes in the portal. Mr. Popadiuk encouraged administrators to keep up with their transfers and not wait until the night before the sports seasons begin.

Eligibility Update – The Eligibility Committee met on 11/14. Any appeals of those decisions will be heard by the Eligibility Appeals Committee on 12/13, the day before most winter sports begin.

International Students – Mr. Popadiuk has experienced many situations with international students so he's formed a committee to review how NJSIAA currently processes them. The committee will meet in December to look at NJSIAA's current procedures and practices. The following six Executive Committee members will serve on the committee: Dr. Birnbohm, Judy Finch-Johnson, Russell Petrocelli, Dr. Rossi, Dr. Salvo and Steve Shohfi. The goal of the committee will be to present a proposal to the Executive Committee in February, should one be needed.

Bylaws Clarifications – Second Reading – Voice Vote – A motion was made by Judy Finch Johnson, seconded by Steve Shohfi, to approve the clarifications proposed by NJSIAA staff to Bylaw, Article V, Section 4. The proposed changes are detailed in the October 18, 2023 minutes. A roll call vote was taken. Final Vote: Yes-30; No-0; Abstain-0. Motion passed second reading unanimously.

Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)

Safe Sports Zone Workshops Review – The two workshops held last week to provide education and resources to provide a safe environment at athletic events were very well received and the speaker was tremendous. Approximately 50 Athletic Directors, Principals and Site Supervisors attended. NJSIAA may continue offering these workshops in the future.

Winter Sports Regulations/Updates – All winter tournament regulations will be posted soon.

Updated Coaching Requirements – Mr. Maselli distributed a memo to Athletic Directors yesterday regarding updated coaching requirements. In June 2023 the Department of Education changed their substitute requirements from 60 college credits to 30 which was announced in a memo sent to all Superintendents. Unfortunately, the NJSIAA did not get this memo, despite asking to be put on the list. Therefore, there was a 146-day delay in sharing this important information. This means that a public-school coach, paid or volunteer, only needs 30 college credits to become a credentialed instructional substitute. The 60 college credits are no longer a requirement and background checks are still required.

Al Stumpf

NJSIAA NAGWS Event – Sunday, January 14, 2024 – In the past, NJSIAA held this event at Seton Hall University. This year, the association has partnered with Rutgers University to host this event and honor NAGWS honorees at the girls basketball game at Rutgers v Penn State. The event will take place on 1/14/24. Registration forms will be available on 12/1 and will stay open for nominations until 12/22.

Derryk Sellers

NJSCA Hall of Fame/Awards Luncheon – Sunday, January 14, 2024 – This year’s NJSCA HOF inductees and NFCA Coach of Year honorees will be honored at the Pines Manor on 1/14/24, the same day as the NAGWS event.

Finance Committee Update – Jason Corley

Approval of Monthly Checks – The October 17, 2023 through November 13, 2023 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Russell Petrocelli made a motion, seconded by Dr. David Heisey, to approve the October 17, 2023 through November 13, 2023 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business / New Business – none.

Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell) – No report.

Adjournment - There being no further business, a motion was made by Russell Petrocelli, seconded by Judy Finch Johnson, at 11:41 am, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire
Executive Director

CEM: In