

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 10, 2024

Roll Call - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 via Cisco's WebEx Meetings platform, was called to order by the President, Jason Corley, at 11:03 am.

The following members were present: Mohammed Abdelaziz, Jeff Baldino, Dr. Carol Birnbohm, Joseph Bollendorf, Heather Crisci, Maria Crowley, Jorge Diaz, Al Dyer, Daniel Finkle, Judy Finch-Johnson, Barry Fitzgerald, John Fraraccio, Michael Gallo, Steven Jenkins, Kurt Karcich, Raymond Kiem, Howard Krieger, Dr. Michael Kuchar, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Leon Owen, Russell Petrocelli, Dr. Jeff Pierro, Dr. Michael Rossi, Dave Ryden, Dr. David Salvo, Senator Paul Sarlo, Steve Shohfi, Sheryl Smith, Jeffrey Steele, Gregory Troxell, Michael Vinella, Paul Vizzuso, Tammy Wagner, Barry Walker, Cynthia Wilks, and Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director; Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer; Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer; Al Stumpf and Derryk Sellers, Assistant Directors; Alexis Smith, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Jake Aferiat, *NJ Advance Media*, Mike McGarry, *Atlantic City Press*, and Steve Falk, *Asbury Park Press*. Also in attendance: Paul Anzano of Pringle Quinn Anzano, P.C. and Dave Frazier – Athletic Director at Rutherford HS/Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Russell Petrocelli, seconded by Judy Finch-Johnson, to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2023 Executive Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Legislative Update (Paul Anzano) – Mr. Anzano distributed a listing of current bills being considered by the legislature that affect high school sports. The ticket pricing bill that allows NJSIAA to increase ticket prices for tournament events was enacted. Mr. Anzano thanked Senator Sarlo and Assemblyman Wimberly for their support and assistance in getting the bill passed. The new legislative session began yesterday. There is a 25% turnover in the legislative membership as 27 new members were sworn in yesterday. Mr. Anzano congratulated Assemblyman Wimberly for serving as the Deputy Speaker. The Governor gave his state of state address yesterday – there are no concerns pertaining to upcoming legislation and high school sports. The budget discussions begin next month and all bills from the last legislative session need to be reintroduced and re-numbered.

Advisory Committee Proposals - One Reading – Voice Vote – Dave Frazier, Chair

Dave Frazier, Chair of the Advisory Committee, presented the two proposals unanimously endorsed by the Advisory Committee on 12/6/23. Both proposals were submitted by NJSIAA.

Proposal #1 – Girls Ice Hockey

The first proposal, unanimously approved by the Advisory Committee by a vote of 16-0, is as follows:

In October 2021, the NJSIAA Executive Committee unanimously approved a two-year pilot program which allowed NJSIAA to sponsor a Girls Ice Hockey State Tournament. The state tournament has gone very well with the championship game being played at The Prudential Center along with the boys state championship games. During the 2022-2023 school year, there were 16 girls ice hockey teams among NJSIAA member schools, 13 of which competed in the NJSIAA state tournament. In September 2023, the NJSIAA Executive Committee approved a proposal to extend the pilot program for one additional year.

NJSIAA staff now proposes to officially add Girls Ice Hockey to the list of NJSIAA sanctioned sports starting with the 2024 – 2025 school year.

A motion was made by Jason Miller, seconded by Russell Petrocelli, to endorse officially adding Girls Ice Hockey to the list of NJSIAA sanctioned sports starting with the 2024 – 2025 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

Proposal #2 – Classifications – Charters Schools/Cooperative Sports Programs

The second proposal, unanimously approved by the Advisory Committee by a vote of 16-0, is as follows:

NJSIAA staff proposes changes to the Association’s classification procedures for charter school and cooperative sports programs. The classification procedures are provided for in the Association’s Bylaws – Article III – Classification of Member Schools.

Charter Schools:

- NJSIAA currently has 27 charter school members.
- The number of charter schools sponsoring a particular sport varies widely but can have a significant impact – for instance, 24 charter schools sponsor basketball.
- There can be inconsistency in the varsity status of their programs, especially with newer charter school members.
- This inconsistency can negatively impact the public-school classifications.

Cooperative Sport Programs:

- The number of cooperative sports programs continues to increase each year.
- Excluding Ice Hockey, the sports with the most amount of cooperative programs are:
 - Swimming – 18
 - Wrestling – 17
 - B Lacrosse – 10
 - Football – 7
- NJSIAA rules continue to evolve to allow schools flexibility to co-op on an emergent basis while also allowing schools the flexibility to replace a partner school as necessary.
- The increasing trend in program requests will continue while the need for flexibility is going to become more important in the future.
- While many cooperative sport programs are stable, there are many that are dissolving or changing during their 4-year approval period.
- This level of activity can negatively impact the public and non-public classifications since combined enrollments are relied on that may not be in place for the entirety of the two-year classification cycle.

Proposal: In an effort to minimize the impact due to inconsistency and variability noted above, I am proposing that sport-specific classifications exclude charter schools and cooperative sports programs to ensure the schools in each section and group are classified as accurately as possible. Once the classifications have been run for each sport, then all charter schools and cooperative sports programs sponsoring a varsity team in the sport will be manually inserted into the appropriate section and group based on their northing number and enrollment.

Rationale: This proposal will allow greater flexibility for the classifications to accommodate the changing status of charter schools and cooperative sports programs without impacting other schools in any section or group that have consistent varsity status and host their own stand-alone program.

Discussion took place. Mr. Frazier explained how schools on the bubble of a group continually get moved. This proposal allows those public schools to remain in their normal group and charter schools and cooperative sports programs will be plugged in afterwards, to minimize the amount of movement and inconsistency for the bubble schools. One grouping may have a larger number of schools in their group therefore there will be unequal numbers among the groups, but participation is not taken away from member schools so that outweighs the unevenness of some groups and provides constancy for public

schools who have had consistent programs. Senator Sarlo supports the proposal and commended the tremendous job charter schools do in educating students, but he is concerned about their placement in high school athletics. He reached out to other states and found out that across the nation, charter school students return to their public schools for athletics. He believes that charter schools have flexibility with their enrollment, which isn't fair to the small public schools, so he may propose legislation that places charter schools in the Non-Public B classification for state tournaments. Steve Jenkins echoed Senator Sarlo's statements, since charter schools have wider geographic population reach, they are not a true Group 1 school. He suggested maybe instead of public and non-public classifications, it change to open and closed enrollment groups. Assemblyman Wimberly questioned whether vocational schools belong in this category too. Senator Sarlo feels they are properly placed based on their enrollment size, whereas charter schools are always placed in the Group 1 or Group 2 classification.

Mr. Frazier shared that modifications may be made to these proposals after they are discussed at the NJSIAA sectional meetings. These topics were not addressed by the Advisory Committee.

A motion was made by Steve Jenkins, seconded by John Fraraccio, to endorse NJSIAA excluding charter schools and cooperative sports programs when initially calculating sport-specific classifications. Once the classifications have been run for each sport, then all charter schools and cooperative sports programs sponsoring a varsity team in the sport will be manually inserted into the appropriate section and group based on their northing number and enrollment. The manual insertions will be done annually. Motion carried unanimously.

Now both proposals will also be reviewed by the membership at NJSIAA's sectional meetings and can be modified based on feedback received in those meetings. The Executive Committee will then review the final proposal for placement on the annual meeting ballot.

Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire

NFHS Winter Meeting Update – Ms. Maguire thanked Mr. Frazier for being the long-time chair of the Advisory Committee, for giving the Executive Committee an update on the December Advisory Committee meeting, for his four years of service on the NFHS Board of Directors representing NJ well, and for accompanying Ms. Maguire to the NFHS winter meeting in San Francisco. This meeting, for all 51 Executive Directors, was a valuable two days of learning and fellowship, full of NFHS updates, presentations, and roundtable discussions. The NJSIAA transfer rule is piquing a lot of interest – two states in particular have legislatures applying pressure to change their long-standing transfer rule and six states have reached out for NJSIAA's rule and feedback to take back to their own governing committees.

NJSIAA January Newsletter – The NJSIAA January newsletter was posted via an Alert email on January 2nd and was also shared with the Executive Committee. Ms. Maguire encouraged committee members to share it with anyone appropriate as it contains important updates and information.

Bylaws Proposal – Duties of Executive Director and Penalties – Second Reading – Roll Call Vote

The detailed proposal can be found in the December 2023 minutes, but this proposal includes three updates to NJSIAA's Bylaws – specific to the duties of the Executive Director, the responsibilities of a head coach, and the authority of the Executive Committee. NJSIAA staff feels this proposal is important to assist in investigation and compliance efforts. The first addition specifies that the duties of the Executive Director include the ability to investigate any alleged infraction of the Association's Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, Policies and Procedures or Tournament Regulations. This addresses concern that some believe there needs to be a complaint filed by a member school in order for NJSIAA to investigate which is not the case. The second clarification clearly states that the head coach shall be held responsible for the actions of all assistants and staff who report, directly or indirectly, to the head coach. And the third, and final, addition will provide the Executive Committee the authority to temporarily suspend a member school from participation in any state tournament if the member school

fails to appear before the Controversies Committee upon receipt of a hearing notice or fails to cooperate with an investigation arranged by the Executive Director.

A motion was made by made by Judy Finch Johnson, seconded by Russell Petrocelli, to approve the proposed additions to the Association's Bylaws Article I – Duties of Officers and Article X – Penalties. A roll call vote was taken. Final Vote: Yes-36; No-0. Motion passed second reading unanimously.

Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)

Eligibility Update – On 1/6, senior transfers became eligible and completed their 22-day sit. On 1/13, winter athletes sitting 30 days will become eligible for participation. Reminder since athletes are still moving around – if an athlete transfers after the competition date, they sit 30 days and are not eligible for the post-season tournament.

Fall Cooperative Sports Application Deadline – January 22, 2024 – Fall cooperative sport applications are due 1/22. The committee will meet in February to review all fall applications.

Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)

Ice Hockey Update – Coaches are loving the overtime rule previously approved by the Executive Committee.

Swimming & Diving Update – There have been some pool issues but overall, the season is moving along nicely.

Score Reporting Mandates – It is a requirement to report scores to nj.com after an event. The association will begin to fine schools \$150 for not inputting the information and the money collected will go towards student-athlete scholarships. It's a disservice to students and parents or who want to see stats and the information is needed for planning NJSIAA tournaments. For example, in swimming, times affect power points or in fencing, participating in 50% of bouts is required to enter the state tournament. Procedural questions were asked from committee members. Home team coaches are responsible for reporting the game scores, but each coach is responsible for reporting their players' stats. The portal is very easy to use.

Al Stumpf

Fencing Update – District team and independent entries close on 1/13. The first district tournament (Districts 1 and 2) begin on 1/28.

Basketball Update – Schools can enter the tournament from 1/30 - 2/8. Mr. Stumpf secured the RWJ Barnabus Center in Toms River for the Group 1 and 3 State Finals on 3/10 since Rutgers wasn't available.

Unified Basketball and Unified Bowling Update – The Unified Basketball South Region qualifier is scheduled for 1/27 at Moorestown HS and the North Region qualifer is scheduled on 2/4 at W Morris Central HS. The A Group Finals will take place at Rutgers on 3/9. The B Group Finals are TBD.

The Unified Bowling championships will take place at Bowlero on 2/27.

And for the first time, there may be Unified swim relays at the swimming tournament finals.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day – The event will take place on 1/14 at 2pm at Rutgers. 275 high school seniors are being honored at the Rutgers-Penn State girls basketball game.

Derryk Sellers

Bowling Update – There was some confusion in the beginning with all the changes made to the state tournament but now everyone understands the process.

Winter Track Update – Mr. Sellers will spend the next six days at the bubble in Toms River for the winter track relays. His hope is that the storm does not interfere with the tournament and expects that the meets won't last as long, based on the tournament changes approved by the Executive Committee.

NJSCA HOF – A program for the weekend's upcoming NJSCA Hall of Fame / Coach of the Year event was distributed. Congratulations to Executive Committee member, Assemblyman Wimberly, who will be inducted in to the NJSCA Hall of Fame.

Finance Committee Update – Jason Corley

Approval of Monthly Checks – The December 5, 2023 through January 8, 2024 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Dr. Carol Birnbohm made a motion, seconded by Barry Walker, to approve the December 5, 2023 through January 8, 2024 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

Report of Counsel (Alexis Smith, Esq.) – Ms. Smith gave a brief legal update. There are several issues pending a decision from the Commissioner of Education including an eligibility appeal case and a request by a student to participate in a district in which they don't reside. There are no investigation updates since the last meeting.

Old Business / New Business – Senator Sarlo recommended moving quickly on the spectator policy proposed in last month's meeting after a video of a parent at a wrestling match went viral. The video just echoes the need for the proposal. Ms. Maguire had planned to gather feedback from tomorrow's Leagues and Conference Officers meeting tomorrow. She is confident there will be a policy put forward this year. It is in the works.

Adjournment – A motion was made by John Fraraccio, seconded by Steven Jenkins, at 11:54 am, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire
Executive Director

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