

MIAA Rugby Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 2, 2021 @ 10:00 AM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order
 - a. Welcome/Introductions - Quick round of introductions from the group as there are some new members this year. Update from Bill Good on his son.
 - b. Conflict of Interest reviewed and signed
 - c. Governance Structure reviewed with committee
2. Welcome from MIAA/MSAA Executive Director, Bob Baldwin - Welcome introduction from the new MIAA executive director. He thanked the group and appreciates the work that has been done. Phil mentioned that we are the only state that recognizes Rugby as a varsity high school sport.
3. Election of Officers - Jeff Sperling was not available due to a school emergency.
 - Jeff S nominated as chair and seconded. 11-0 yes.
 - Greg Bruce – Nominated and seconded for vice chair. 11-0 yes.
 - Jesse Nocon – Nominated and seconded. 11-0 yes for secretary.
4. [Minutes of February 9, 2021 meeting](#) - Minutes approved – 11-0 Yes. Tom Arria motioned to approved, Greg Bruce seconded.
5. 2021 Tournament Review
 - a. Tournament Directors Report – Amy Daniels
 - It was a success to even have the opportunity to compete last spring. Covid, weather, and other logistics made it very difficult last season. Everyone adapted and came together and had successful season for boys and girls.
 - The girls did a jamboree and did not have a formal tournament as no girls teams opted in to the tournament. Sarah G noted that we as a committee we need to ensure that the girls have a tournament as well.
 - Both championship games were postponed during game due to rain and lightning. Both and rescheduled to the next day and were both really successful.
 - b. Team Sportsmanship Award Winner – Chelmsford High School
 - c. Overall Experience was positive. Some challenges included masks, adapting to modifications to rules, low participation.
 - d. Comments/Suggestions for improvement
6. New Business
 - a. Growth of Girls' Rugby

Suggestions for growing the girl's game:

 - Email the membership a **form stack survey to gage the interest** of those schools interested in rugby. This survey will be sent prior to the start of the winter season.
 - Offer a **virtual workshop specific to rugby**, which would include assistance in how to successfully start a program.

- Host a **rugby specific session** at the **2022 MSSADA Conference**.
- **Reach out** to schools with MIAA boys' rugby programs to gauge their interest in starting a girls' program.
- Encourage schools to **utilize the cooperative team option** if they do not have numbers to sustain a program on their own.
- If **lack of available coaches** is a roadblock for schools interested in starting a program, the established teams should have a conversation with their **Assistant Coaches** that aspire to be Head Coaches.
- Engage the **New England Free Jacks**, who many believe would be willing to assist in the promotion of the sport and skill/developmental trainings for student-athletes and coaches.

A **sub-committee led by Greg Bruce** was created to brainstorm more ideas.

b. 2022 Rugby Format – **DRAFT ATTACHED**

- Scott Hutchinson – Proposing home teams host championship to help grow the game.
- General discussion around pros and cons of hosting the tournament at a neutral site vs at schools. Consensus seems to be falling on the side of using a neutral site and having it act as a showcase to grow the game.
- Review of items highlighted by Phil for the TMC.
- Discussion of Power Ranking system by Ryan Madden. Phil to reach out and see what flexibility we have on this. Tom A pointed out that the system is not different for rugby
- Discussion around having division 1 teams forced to play down a division during league play to keep things fair.
- Changing language to only require 3 officials at tournament games.
- Motion to approve by Tom Arria, seconded by Ryan madden, 11-0 approved.

c. Regular Season update – Tom Arria - Want some crossover between the two leagues.

7. Coaches Input

- Greg Bruce brought up the issue of set piece and health and safety issues around scrumming and those parts of the game that were taken out because of covid. Going to be hard to teach.
- Committee expressed a desire to have rugby start a bit earlier since many of the athletes have limited high school experience with the sport. This is a result of the lost 2020 season and modified play in 2021. The committee believes the students need more time to be taught proper technique to ensure safe play. Additionally, rugby is the only spring sport with a minimum number of practices (13) before the first competition and only allowed one competition per week.
- *Motion:* To allow for rugby to start Wednesday, March 16, 2022, with no more than three (3) practice sessions prior to March 21, 2022 (first spring practice date). This is an advisory vote (T. Arria/S. Manickan) **APPROVED 11-0.**
- This advisory vote would require approval from the Sports Medicine Committee and MIAA BOD.

8. Officials Input

Update from Jesse on new rules

Thought the officials did a great job with the difficulties last year.

Scrumming to be difficult to start the year

Adjournment