

MIAA Wrestling Committee Meeting (Virtual)

Thursday, April 28, 2022 @ 10:00 AM

MINUTES

- **Call to Order** by Brendan at 10:06am
 - Attendance: Brendan Kent, Jason St. Peters, Amy Daniels, Jeff Lareau, Mark Hollick, Eric Conti, Keith Poloskey, Steve Cullinane, Mary Sokol, Steve Rotondi, Paul Shvartsman, Brian Tildsley, Scott Tremlett, Brian Urquhart, Phil Napolitano, Katie Kampersal, Desi Kaplan
 - Media - Danny Ventura Boston Herald, Brendan Kurie Boston Globe
 - Special recognition of Brian Urquhart (DI Tournament Director)

- **Minutes from January 21, 2022** - Approved 7-0-0 (motion by Mark H, 2nd by Amy)

- **New Business**
 - Review of the 2022 Individual Tournaments
 - Brendan- Thank you to everyone who made this tournament happen. There was moment around the holidays during the covid spike, the tournament was in jeopardy, however we were able to put on a safe and successful tournament. Thank you to Phil to the endless amount of time and effort he put into the tournament. Thank you Brian and Scott for all of their hard work.
 - Tournament Director's Reports
 - **Brian Division 1 Report**- it has been a difficult 2 years, but this year we really need to thank the coaches, AD's and the kids. Thank you to Phil for the great leadership during this time. It was a difficult process this year finding host schools for sectionals. Long term feeling that when schools host these sectionals that it cost them money. However, this year with the upfront money the schools got to host it will help alter the thinking. Couple of new sites for sectionals, hats off to Xaverian and Leominster for stepping up and hosting for the first time. The veteran sites were very dependable and did a great job (Methuen and Newton South). One of the budget impacts would be the cost of custodial expense. Online ticket sales seems to be going well, speeds up the entrance to the sites.

States-held at Game On, I was curious to see how this event would play out. The positive would be it enhances the crowd size, excitement, several coaches were for the event. Negative-unforeseen difficulties, lack of wi-fi, venue had never hosted a wrestling tournament, parking and PA system. Some things to consider-crowd control maybe instead of a rope maybe use plastic fencing, few problems with weigh ins (due to weigh in of all 3 divisions at the same time), maybe have a different location for each of the 3 divisions.
 - **Division 2**- No TD, Phil N took the time to thank all the host schools.

- **Scott Division 3 Report-** staying at Wahconah site-split the gym in half one half was for fans and the other half was for the athletes. Provided for better fan viewing. A little difficulty finding officials. The stipend was a huge incentive for the host schools.

Division 3 States- may have been a little overwhelming to have all 3 states at the same time. Maybe staggering the start time if all at the same site. Lack of enough bathrooms made things tough, very overwhelming, maybe having a list of the coaches, a list of helpers and a list of athletes. Barriers could be fencing and not the ropes, we need to keep the coaches and fans away so there is a better view. Officials need to get more strict with the number of coaches in the corner. The trainers had their own area on the 2nd weekend, it worked out really nicely. They were easy to find and had plenty of room. Keeping the coaches away from the tables, made it easier for the officials to see when a call was being questioned. Double checking the 1st round pairings to make sure everything was all set.

All States/Girl States-easier, less of a crowd. Need a min of 8 mats which we had. Need a little more announcements of what was coming up. Some teams/coaches left before their match. Game On-need to make sure that the parking is all set, we need to know what the food plans will be, make sure that the set up and break down is taken care of.

- Phil- thank you to those d2 schools that stepped up and hosted for the first time this year. Thank you Ann and Mary helping with selling tickets, Monty Tech was a huge help set up and break down for all of the games at the Game On. Many hands helped make these events successful.
- **Girls All-State Wrestling Tournament-**Wrestling was fantastic. However we need a seeding committee for this Tournament. We need to try and make sure they have more girl tournaments during the season. Weigh in was right after the boys, we need to spend a little more time in between, make sure the boys tournament started before the girls are weighed in. This will also allow the boys to use all 8 mats for their first round. At the end of the tournament we need to communicate that the coach of the winning individual will be handing out the trophies/medals. Better signage for the podiums, maybe the MIAA can get podiums built. We need corner protectors for the mats. Brackets were hand written, Desi has a printer that he may be able to print them off the day of the event. Early matches maybe to see if there was a way to have an assistant ref to do the timing and not the students. The fans loved it, the wrestling was great.
- **Observations/Comments Suggestions for improvements**
 - Desi-sectionals were fine, no major issues. Most of the suggestions that I heard from Scott and Brian are resulting in just not having enough staff. The weigh in concerns were because of the not having enough staff to do all these things. There was a software glitch that I had to overcome during the tournament,

there is not a reason for the girls/boys tournament to be separate timewise. The wi-fi on day 2 actually took down the whole venue, and we are learning why. Dealing with a large number of people in a large space it is going to fail, this is always a challenge. It is something that we are working on to make this better for next year.

- Keith-Paul do you want to fill in what the coaches thought of the tournament?
- Paul- the coaches understood the challenges of finding the sites. They did not enjoy the Game On facility. Move the divisional states back to the high schools and then have the All-States/Girls All-States some place where the fans are not on top of the mats (Tsongas/DCU).
- Phil-you don't know what you don't know until you go through it. Day 1 divisional states when you have them all together even before you open the doors there are 1400 people who are participating in the day, then once the doors open you add the spectators. Even at schools the first day is jammed packed. There are some concerns, the wrestling was amazing, but how do we change the pattern of negative behavior. How do we change the yelling at coaches, officials, staff. We need to work to fix this now and there are things that we can do to help make this more positive for the future. Do we adopt a Zero Tolerance policy when it comes to people's behaviors, including coaches? We need to brainstorm how to make things better for everyone, our coaches need to be more responsible to follow the rules, only bringing the athletes that are competing, and collectively we can make it a better experience for everyone.
- Mary-I witnessed an athlete go after coach, got right in his face and went after the coach. Nothing was done, the coach just brushed it off. Society has changed, covid has not helped, we have to tell kids to "knock it off" or they can't wrestle. If we do not set the tone now, things are going to continue to go downhill. We need as a group need to be more proactive. Mary personally liked Game On, but lack of seating/bleachers was an issue.
- Keith-the area between the mat and the barrier where the fans are, can we move that barrier back to give the mats/wrestlers more room.
- Desi-every foot that you make available that a fan or a wrestling body can go. That space gives the wrestlers/coaches more space to hang out. Scott-there does need to be a more defined area.
- Paul-a place like the Tsongas you cannot get onto the mats due to the way seating is.
- Brendan-Wakefield we are lucky to have some heavy duty barriers and we have another area designated for the coaches and wrestlers. I would be happy to loan this barriers out for All States as long as we get them back. During the tournaments there is constant communication. Sportsmanship-this is in discussion with other AD across the states. We have noticed this as an issues across the board with all sports. Middlesex league is trying to form some sort of leadership training for the captains to learn how to address this.

- Mary-I personally like having it at Game On, however the seating was terrible. There were no bleachers, made it difficult for everyone to see.
Scott-thank you to Jason St Peters for all of his help working a table all day during the tournament.

- **TMC Update**

- Subcommittee reviewing current tournament structure & proposals to alter the structure:
 - Proposal A -Marty D and Sean B - eliminate sectionals, go to states with 5 divisional states, 32 wrestlers qualify for All-States.
 - Proposal B- Ryan Buff SJ HS (Shrewsbury) - consolidate to 8 sectionals, 2 divisional states and keep All States
 - Proposal C- Scott Tremlett - eliminate sectionals, 4 divisional states top 8 seeds have a bye, then keep All States/Girls All States
 - Proposal D- keep things the way it is
 - Issues-2 proposals are to eliminate the sectionals-heard feedback that the 4 week grind is a lot on the wrestlers (including New England's). Some other coaches said those making it all the way to New England's are the elite wrestlers who wrestle year round so they are used to the grind.
 - The state tournament would be much bigger if sectionals were eliminated. Finding venues is difficult as it is, would we be able to find a big enough venue for 3 days that can hold 5 mats. One way around this would be having a qualifier. Can this be done for wrestling, other individual sports have this in place? Phil did some research, reached out to the other 49 other states, no other state has a qualifier at this time.
 - Single elimination-received negative feedback from the coaches
- Benefits of the smaller sectional tournaments-they felt as though it is important to keep these.
 - 5 divisional state championship-would be watering things down.
- Proposal B was the least popular between the coaches and committee. Very similar to current structure but would create more of a grind as sectionals would be larger and more competitive.
- Proposal C- coaches were not crazy about single elimination
- Proposal D- Keeping things as they are was the most supported structure between the committee and coaches.
- Paul-the coaches met and requested that Proposal C was removed, did not think it was fair to the kids. 96 coaches 76% voted to keep things the way it is, a lot of votes for were proposal C. Coaches like the current structure, proposal B is the least favorite. Proposal A is a distant 2.

- Phil-due to not having a quorum the vote cannot happen. This is just a recommendation, I think we should still talk about it. I can send out in an email and have people vote and get back to us.
 - Scott-Proposal C can be tweaked-single elimination on the first day would be for logistics. I think we should stay the same, but TMC is looking for recommendations. Going anything above 4 states is watering down the competition.
 - Phil-thank you to Paul and the subcommittee for their help and feedback in this. We want to hear the voices of the coaches.
 - Jason-Thank you TMC for having us look at this. Sometimes it is nice to have a fresh look at things.
 - Coaches – If we keep current structure....**the coaches executive board wants top 5 to qualify for states (versus current top 4)**. Will add to next agenda.
 - Phil will send out each tournament structure proposal to the full committee for ranking/voting. ***(Email Vote resulted in unanimous support to keep things as is...proposal D...with proposal A being ranked 2nd)***.
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- **2022-23 Wrestling Tournament Format – DRAFT**
 - page 2-seeding- criteria2 will be back for next year
 - page 7- starting states earlier in the day if it was at a non-school site. 11am start
 - Page 9- there has been a lot of confusion on this over the years. By entering the Tournament you agree to the sportsmanship policy.
 - The Girls State tournament will be called the Girls All-State tournament moving forward
 - Scott- weigh at sectionals- do we need to have a rule change to have this count as a 60%- Phil-yes this will have to be a rule change proposal. Let me correctly myself, I believe that this needs to be qualifier which has to go through a different process.
 - Phil-Paul did you want to get rid of the Flo Arena weigh in form?
 - Paul-yes I would like to get rid of it. It is confusing, he did talk to Desi and Desi will be talking to the Flo on finding a way to fix it. Coaches are having issues understanding it.
 - Phil-this is something that we can talk about later down the road.
 - **Eric motioned to approve format 2nd by Mary- Approved 11-0-0**
- [MIAA Rule Change Proposals](#) – Due June 1, 2022
- Other
 - Phil/Brendan- Thought of pushing back the cutoff date. Cutoff date is a Wednesday, seeding is the next day. It becomes tough to hunt down the information from the coaches.
 - Phil-is there the ability for an early cut-off date now that there can be 3 matches a week. I do not believe that we are giving ourselves enough time to seed prior to tournament starting.
 - Brendan-I know that my team during the last week we are not loading up on matches, we are trying to give out kids a little bit of rest.

- Scott-I believe that it should be the Sunday before seeding. Gives everyone time to look at things
- Brendan-AD prospective-rescheduling with snow days and it is hard to fit everything in. Makes me a little uneasy, but I understand and respect where you are coming from.
- Paul-the Merrimack league has their biggest meets that week
- Keith-we try and take as much as time off that week
- Desi-2 big problems-giving the reps enough time to look at the info to get the seeding done, 2nd problem is that the coaches are not keeping up with their books the entire season.
- Phil-this provides a better time line for us to address issues of missing information and gives coaches time to review things.
- Brian T-changing the cut off runs into many issues with teams that have senior nights that have planned.
- **Motion to move the cut off date back to that Wednesday-Jason St. Peter 2nd by Keith. All in favor 7, opposed 2, Abstain- passed 7-2-0**

- **Coaches Input**

- Paul- Communication about the Flo weigh in sheet vs traditional weigh in. We have to do a better job with coaches entering things into Flo. 60% rule, a lot of the coaches would like to lower that to 50% or even lower.
- Phil-the coaches association would need to submit a rule change proposal
- Paul-concerns about an ineligible wrestler who cannot weigh in on sectional and have it count towards the 60%. Another concern about coaches showing up late to weigh ins and not doing their paperwork on time. These coaches know that they will not be turned away and that teams will wait for them to complete weigh ins so they can wrestle.

- **Officials Input**

- Brian T- served as the bridge that notified the officials that there may not be a post session due to lack of venue. From an officials prospective the matches were competitive, it was really the adults/spectators who were giving us a hard time. Everything worked itself out during the tournament. Working internally on how to work with Paul to provide a list of their top officials and creating a ranking system. Looking forward to next year with no masks and no electronic whistles. We have official have our first female in the program. We think she will be ready to go for the season.
- Brendan-the officials have done an amazing job over the last 2 years managing covid restrictions.
- Phil took Andy Meier advice to make changes in set-up at All-States/Girl States which improved.
- Spectators are too close to mat which causes tough task for officials

- **Adjournment @ 11:51**