

Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association
(MPSSAA)
Baltimore, MD

February 7, 2014

Minutes of the MPSSAA Executive Council Meeting January 30-31, 2014
--

Refer Questions: Edward Sparks, Executive Director, 410-767-0376

Districts Represented: Jim Rodriguez and Kevin Kendro (District 1), Jeff Sullivan (District 2), O'Shay Watson (District 3), Andrew Roper (District 4), Greg LeGrand and John Davis (District 5), Mike Sye (District 6), Ken Zorbach (District 7), David Byrd (District 8), Robert Wade (District 9),

Also Present: Earl Hawkins, President, MPSSAA
William Beattie, Past President, MPSSAA
Kim Dolch, President Elect, MPSSAA
Jill Masterman, Program Specialist, MPSSAA
Andy Warner, Assistant Director, MPSSAA
Donnee Gray, MPSSAA
Lynette Mitzel, Supervisor of Athletics, BCPS (recording secretary)

Materials Distributed:

1. Minutes from the September 2013 Executive Council Meeting
2. Projected State Tournament Dates 2013-2021
3. Projected State Tournament Time Lines for 2014-2015
4. MPSSAA 2014-2015 Quick Reference Calendar
5. MPSSAA Coaches' Conference Proposal
6. The Impact of the Coach on Student-Athlete Development
7. House Bill 427
8. House Bill 426
9. MPSSAA Softball Adoption Proposals
10. New Balance Tennis Tournament Agreement
11. 6-man Football Mechanics Proposal

Minutes:

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:11pm
2. The September 2013 minutes were reviewed and following a motion by Ken Zorbach, and a second by Bob Wade, were unanimously approved.

3. Mr. Sparks provided the date for the outgoing President's dinner to be held at the Elkridge Furnace Inn. This year's dinner, which honors the service the President of the MPSSAA, will be held on June 3rd at 6:00pm.
4. The new NFHS public service announcements were played for the group. These PSAs have been sent to radio stations across the state and when aired will acknowledge the MPSSAA and the MSADA as the sponsoring organizations.
5. Mr. Sparks referenced a return of the National Student Leadership Conference which is held by the NFHS during the summer months. The last one the NFHS sponsored was held in Indianapolis in 2010. The proposal is for the event to take place again in 2015 under a different format.
6. Mr. Sparks informed the group about Ref Pay, a program run by Arbiter Sports, which the MPSSAA will implement during the wrestling state championships this winter at Cole Field House. The program allows an official to receive payment one of three ways – via direct deposit, a debit card, or a check. The first two payment options are free of charge, while receiving a check will cost the official \$5.00. Michael Sye informed everybody that a majority of referees are already using the system, so the transition should be seamless.
7. The MPSSAA Wrestling Committee released a survey requesting information from individuals concerning their proposal to make amendments to the current format of the championships. The survey will be open for users until the state championships are over, at which time the data will be collected and reviewed.
8. Mr. Sparks reviewed the current coverage PlayOn! Sports and the NFHS Network provides for state associations. While the MPSSAA opted not to become a member of the NFHS Network, the state championships are still up on the site for the public to view.
9. Mr. Sparks reminded the group of the 2014 Basketball Draw, which will take place on February 23rd at 10:00am at Long Reach High School. The Press Luncheon for the state championship participants will be held on March 11th at SECU Arena on the campus of Towson University. Mr. Byrd made a suggestion that the draw, if continued in person, be streamed live in a similar fashion to our state tournament games.
10. Mr. LeGrand distributed information on a girls' soccer concussion survey done in Anne Arundel County this past fall stemming from a brain injury task force. They will be looking into possible restraints for soccer practices to minimize the chance of concussions taking place.
11. Mr. Sparks spoke of the Athletic Directors Conference held annually by the NFHS and NIAAA in December. The upcoming conference will be in the National Harbor and the MPSSAA has contacted the MSADA in order to assist with the hosting duties.
12. The medical advisory group formed last year has met once and will meet again in March. Mr. Sparks will present the group with some of the new House Bills being introduced in Annapolis and request their input.

13. It was brought to the group's attention that the fall 2014 championship date for cross country and field hockey falls on a national SAT date. This is a change from the traditional date of the first Saturday in November. Mr. Sparks has requested the council be proactive in disseminating the test date well in advance so potential test takers are aware of the possible conflict.
14. Mr. Hawkins shared a proposal for a Coaches Conference to be sponsored by the MPSSAA. His request outlines many quality programs that could be offered to ensure non-educators are receiving proper coaching professional development. Several council members offered to serve on a steering committee.
15. Mr. Sparks introduced two new House Bills that have been presented in Annapolis. House Bill 426 is a new bill to establish a Concussion Impact Sensor Pilot Program. As discussed by the Executive Council, anything placed on a helmet (football or lacrosse) nullifies the NOCSAE safety seal. Mr. Sparks mentioned that this bill doesn't appear to have the support to get passed. House Bill 427, Maryland Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act, would require policies to be developed to educate coaches, parents, athletes, school personnel, on the signs and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest. The Executive Council agreed that the MPSSAA should not support this bill for various reasons – 1. It targets athletes only 2. What are the signs and symptoms? (the CDC lists sudden cardiac as an event that occurs without warning) 3. What is the advantage to having the training? How is it different from CPA/AED training? 4. At this time there is no course available to provide training.
16. Mr. LeGrand requested a clarification on the definition of Designated Optional Tournaments. After much discussion, Mr. LeGrand made a motion to add the word "mixer" to the tournament definition. Mr. Rodriguez seconded the motion and the group passed it unanimously. The new verbiage will read: "three or more teams or individuals competing in elimination, round-robin, or mixer (predetermined opponents) structure where a champion is determined."
17. Mr. Sparks reviewed the first full season of sectional play that occurred in the fall. Mr. Byrd voiced concerned over two teams playing during the regular season and then getting to the sectional finals and the team who won the head to head match during the regular season having to travel to the other team for the regional title. Mr. Sparks reminded the group that there is already a process in place for alternative plans should the sections want to play the game at a neutral site.
18. The meeting was adjourned for dinner.
19. Following the dinner break, the council had a lengthy discussion concerning corollary sports. At this time it appears that the MPSSAA will now be assuming a larger role in the overseeing of the program. As the local school systems continue to grow their programs, state championships will be discussed in certain sports. The biggest hurdle will be the different counties coming together under the same rules and regulations. An advisory group will be formed to delve into the matter in more detail.

20. Mr. LeGrand requested the group discuss the potential conflict of interest between a club and school coach. In his jurisdiction, many club coaches are now encroaching on the school teams in order to obtain more athletes for their club teams. Now one coach is coaching these athletes year round. Anne Arundel County has a regulation stating a high school coach can't benefit from returning players, but if their coach is a club coach, where is the line drawn? Not many other LEAs are running into this problem at this time.
21. The meeting was adjourned for the evening.
22. Mr. Sparks inquired about the new out of season coaching rules, and most people said it was working well. Many have found teachers taking advantage of it more than non-teacher coaches.
23. An informal discussion was held on the amateur status of athletes and its beginning and end. It varies in each sport and as long as the athlete isn't going to participate in the sport in which he/she accepts money or wins a prize, he/she hasn't violated the amateur status.
24. Ms. Masterman informed the group of the upcoming ball contracts that are ending with softball and soccer. The Brine soccer ball contract will end in the fall and proposals will be given to the MPSSAA from various sponsors by the middle of March. This is the last spring for the softball contract. The softball committee is deciding between a cork center and a poly core ball. Dudley is the brand of choice and following a motion by Dr. Beattie (second by Mr. Wade) the group voted to approve the Dudley ball.
25. The MPSSAA Football Committee will propose a 6-man crew be used for state football playoff games. There was a lengthy discussion on the benefits and potential detriments of 6-man official crews for the playoffs. No formal vote was taken, but it will be on the agenda at the April Board of Control meeting.
26. Mr. Sparks discussed the deteriorating conditions of the UMBC stadium with the group. The MPSSAA has recently moved the girls' state basketball tournament from the university. While the location is ideal, the facilities have fallen off and a top rate product is not being given to the student athletes in those sports.
27. Mr. Sparks brought to the attention of the council the continuing addition of charter and virtual schools in the state. Although the MPSSAA is built on the traditional Maryland structure of school systems, by constitution, these charter and virtual schools are entitled to become members of the MPSSAA. Many questions are raised as to where to place these schools; do they fall into their geographic district or should they fall under the local school system's rules. As they continue to grow a decision will need to be made as to their placement.
28. Mr. Zorbach questioned the group on how the credentialed coach certification was being tracked across the state and if anybody was running into any problems with the system. Everybody reported it was going well.

29. Mr. Zorbach brought to the group's attention the potential need for swimming meets to be permitted on consecutive days. As with track and cross country, at times it becomes an issue to reschedule postponed games without swimming on consecutive days. He will make a proposal to the Board of Control in April.
30. Mr. Sparks discussed the possibility of providing leadership development for potential committee chairpersons. At this time chairs are primarily picked based on longevity on the committee, or by recommendation from a supervisor of athletics. Mr. Sparks questioned the need for assistant directors to assist the chairperson and perhaps be the next in line to chair the committee.
31. Dr. Roper questioned the committee on how each system is addressing home schooled students versus home and hospital students. According to information he has obtained, they have rights to participate in athletics. More guidance might be needed on an individual basis.
32. Mr. Sparks finished the official business of the meeting by discussing the financial situation as it relates to payment of officials and site workers for state games, travel reimbursement, ticket prices, and services the MPSSAA provides that may no longer be needed. There was a general consensus that the fees paid out at the state tournaments need to be reviewed. Some discrepancy has been noted in the way workers are paid for one game at a site versus four games in the same day at one site. Travel reimbursement is another area that needs to be reviewed. The amount and what is covered hasn't changed in a number of years and it may need some revisions. Ticket prices are still consistent with prices that were established ten years ago. In order to continue generating revenue, prices may need to increase. There are a number of things the MPSSAA provides to members at no cost – bulletins, handbooks, region director guides – that may not need to be printed any longer. Another question was asked concerning the sale of programs – are people still interested in purchasing them or are they satisfied seeing the information online? While the information was discussed briefly, Mr. Sparks will bring these topics to the Finance Committee at their April meeting for further review.
33. Mr. Byrd made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Mr. LeGrand seconded the motion and following a unanimous vote, it was adjourned at 11:45am.