

MSDL Board Meeting Agenda
November 18, 2019 @ 7:00 pm
Needham High School

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by the president, Greg Cunningham

Board Members in attendance

Joyce Albert, Joe Bowden, Scott Caron, Josh Cohen, Greg Cunningham, Sue Hennessey, Lisa Honeyman, Jim Honeyman, Keith West, PJ Wexler.

1. Proposed: Amend MSDL Rules and Regulations, Section 6.3.3.1 as follows:

6.3.3.1 Lincoln-Douglas Debate (LD) – Varsity & Novice Divisions

EXISTING TEXT

Any student in Varsity or Novice LD will qualify for the state championship tournament if he or she earns a winning record in LD at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament. In addition, any student in Varsity or Novice LD will qualify for the state championship tournament if he or she participates in three MSDL sanctioned tournaments in LD during the course of the season, regardless of the win-loss records at those events. Entries in the LD novice division at States must be novices, as defined by MSDL rules and regulations.

REVISED TEXT

Any student in Varsity or Novice LD will qualify for the state championship tournament if, in LD at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament, he or she either (a) earns a winning preliminary round record, or (b) earns a record that ties or is superior to the 8th ranked debater in that division. In addition, any student in Varsity or Novice LD will qualify for the state championship tournament if he or she participates in three MSDL sanctioned tournaments in LD during the course of the season, regardless of the win-loss records at those events. Entries in the LD novice division at States must be novices, as defined by MSDL rules and regulations.

West: Moved

Bowden: 2nd

Passed with one abstention.

2. Proposed: Amend MSDL Rules and Regulations, Section 6.3.3.1 as follows:

Edit the following (remove wording with strike-through text):

3.1.1.11 Communication between students and non-competitors Students in limited prep events shall not have communication about their speeches or speech topics with teammates, coaches, or any others during their prep time. ~~Use of phones, internet or other communication devices is forbidden.~~ Students must take only the prep time given to them, and may not speak out of the order assigned by the prep room staff, or otherwise attempt to gain extra preparation time, apart from tournament delays beyond their control. Students found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified. (Proposed by Greg)

3.1.2.5 Extemporaneous Speaking, change paragraph 2 to read as follows (new text in bold):

Electronic device use in Extemporaneous Speaking, **including use of the internet**, will be allowed with the following stipulations: ~~Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside of the room in which preparation and/or competition occurs. Internet access, use of email, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside of the competition/prep room are prohibited.~~ **1. Host schools are in no way responsible for providing internet access for individuals. 2. No adaptation will be made for individuals who have issues accessing the internet. 3. Communication with anyone inside or outside the prep room via electronic means is prohibited and subject to disqualification.** Host schools are not required to provide power for electronic devices. (Proposed by Greg)

Proposal is to use the proposed, changed, rules on a trial basis for the rest of this school year and revisit the issue in May.

Moved: West

2nd: Hennessey

Vote:

For - 8

Against - 1

The motion passes.

Lisa will post this on the MSDL website.

3. Do we need a similar internet access rule for Congress and Debate events? (Greg)

For the same reason that we need to allow extempers to use the internet, do we need to allow congress students to have internet access?

For consistency reasons, there was general agreement that we should extend the policy to Congress.

We also discussed whether or not this would be necessary in Group Discussion, and agreed that GD students should not need to get online in a round. If those students need materials they can not store on a hard drive, they should print them out and bring them to the tournament.

However, the same stipulations as we have for extemp are needed.

Proposed: ADD Section 3.2.17: For the 2019-2020 season only. This will be revisited in May.

Electronic device use in Congressional Debate, **including use of the internet**, will be allowed with the following stipulations: 1. Host schools are in no way responsible for providing internet access for individuals. 2. No adaptation will be made for individuals who have issues accessing the internet. 3. While a chamber is in session, competitors may not communicate with anyone inside or outside the chamber via electronic means, even if they leave the chamber. Competitors who violate this rule are subject to disqualification. 4. Host schools are not required to provide power for electronic devices. This rule may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

Motion: West

2nd: Bowden

For: 7

Against: 1

Abstain: 1

The motion passes.

4. Ombuds training follow-up (PJ)

PJ spoke with Karen Thompson at EDCO about getting some training for folks so they could become Ombudsmen. Having an Ombudsman at every tournament would be helpful. People running the tournament have other responsibilities during the tournament and cannot take on the added work of investigating the types of complaints that an ombudsman could take on. Karen said that they could put something together (total cost approx. \$2000) in order to train people to deal with the types of issues we have heard about in the past, specifically around the topics of gender issues and facilitating empathic discussions.

It seems that students are reluctant to bring social problems to the TAB room. They are not necessarily looking for a tournament official to **do** something. They may just want someone to talk to. An Ombudsman could fill that role.

- Do we envision having someone on call at every tournament?
- What human resources do we have now? Do we need to expand on these resources?
- Maybe we should survey league coaches to find out who is already trained and willing to serve in this capacity?

Could we put a question out to league coaches to find out how much interest we have in the three hour training? If enough coaches will commit to attending, and we can find a date, we could pursue offering the course. (What's not clear is what they would be trained to do.)

Before we continue to pursue training, we need to be able to better articulate what our needs are and what we hope to get from training.

We have tried to address some of the gender bias we know exists by talking about it in judge briefings. But, there's a lot more to do to change the culture.

Can we gather some data?

Greg asks 2-3 people to put together a proposal answering the question: *How do we foster a culture of inclusion and belonging.*

Committee: Keith, Sue, Tammie & PJ.

5. Discussion on Student Congress Items - Electronic balloting, getting more Parlisis trained (Joyce)

- Judges are asking for electronic ballots.
- Feedback is generally more comprehensive/better
- We need to be sure that the tabulation online comes out the same way as it would be if it was done by hand.

Congress is growing and we need more parliamentarians. We're straining to find enough staffing for our tournaments.

At the next two tournaments we will try to set up interested folks to be trained to be parliamentarians.

Joe will create a template to help the novice parliamentarians.

PJ will send out a note asking people to identify potential parliamentarians.

6. Revision to 3.2.8 Friendly Amendments under Student Congress (Joe)

Change section header to read “Amendments”

Replace text with the following (new text in **bold**).

An amendment must be first presented in writing to the Parliamentarian. A properly formatted amendment specifies the text to be added, removed, or altered. A topical amendment is relevant to the topic of the legislation pending before the chamber, notwithstanding its impact on the legislation. The Parliamentarian shall review the amendment within one speech cycle both for proper formatting and for topicality. The Parliamentarian shall return an improperly formatted amendment to its author without prejudice to allow for proper resubmission. The Parliamentarian shall rule dilatory and reject with prejudice any non-topical amendment. An amendment that has been approved by the Parliamentarian, or upon which no action has been taken by the Parliamentarian after one speech cycle, shall be passed to the Presiding Officer, whereupon a motion to amend may be made.

To expedite debate, the MSDL allows “friendly” amendments. These are amendments to the **legislation** that the author finds friendly, or in keeping with the **intent** of the **legislation**. When a motion to amend is **made**, the Presiding Officer **shall** read the text of the amendment, and then ask the author **or sponsor** if he or she finds the amendment friendly. **If neither an author nor a sponsor is present, then the first affirmative speaker shall have this privilege. If the amendment is deemed friendly, then it shall automatically be incorporated into the text of the legislation. Amendments not found to be friendly shall proceed according to the parliamentary procedure in effect in the chamber.** This rule may be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

DISCUSSION

- We need to agree what a “friendly amendment”
- Is there a reason to change the rules in the middle of the season?

We agreed to table this proposal until the Annual Meeting since it is a rules change.

In order to codify the rules change, we need to come to an agreement regarding what a “friendly amendment” is.

7. Revision to 3.2.12 Scheduling of Sessions (Joe)

If there is more than one chamber, either the top contestants in each chamber will receive an award, or the tournament may elect to have a Super Session of Congress with the top competitors from each chamber advancing for an overall final round. ~~Prelims and finals both count towards final rankings in Congress.~~

Rationale: To facilitate the use of electronic balloting and tabulation via Tabroom, and to bring MSDL practices in line with the way other leagues tabulate Congress.

- Long-term, we’d like to have everything in Tabroom to maintain a central source of both student ballots and results.
- The way MSDL currently tabulates Congress, with multiplication factors for preliminary and final rounds, is non-standard. Other leagues and major national tournaments do not combine preliminary and final round ranks in Congress. At least for me, it’s difficult to see either competitive or educational justifications for this practice other than to match what we do with Speech.

c. In addition to the operational concerns I present in (b), in a competitive sense, it privileges students who have an “easy” draw in a prelim chamber. Since chambers do not change throughout the day, students aren’t seeing diverse competition and aren’t exposed to the rest of the field. The only test against the rest of the field is in the final session, and someone who marched over their chamber in prelims is unfairly advantaged over someone who had a more competitive chamber.

I recognize that this is also a concern in Speech, but at least in all other events, students are exposed to the rest of the field because they draw other opposition across three preliminary rounds. They don’t compete against the same four or five students all day.

DISCUSSION

- Reminder: What we decide only applies to tournaments the MSDL board runs -- this year, just States.
- In most national tournaments, the “Super Session” consists of at least two pieces of legislation, not just one 3-minute speech. They also get a chance to speak in more than one position in the Super Session. Otherwise, your position in the speaker order makes too much of a difference.
- If we only count Super Session, we do not reward breadth of preparation. Everything depends upon one topic.
- Sometimes things are not fair - and being in a ‘stacked’ chamber isn’t going to happen at every tournament. And, judges vary from chamber to chamber, too. There’s a lot that depends upon luck.
- Maybe you can randomize draw so speaker order isn’t political. If you get a late draw for a speech, maybe give students the opportunity to ask questions early.

We agreed to table this proposal until the Annual Meeting.

8. Use names instead of code numbers in speech (Joyce)

At both of the tournaments held this year, students got the wrong comments & wrong scores on their ballots. One happened in Group Discussion. Because names were used on the ballots, Joyce was able to sort out which comments belonged with which code number and was able to fix the problem. (4 students had to swap trophies.)

How do we fix this problem? Would putting a face and name together solve this problem?

Could we ask coaches to register titles with the events? (Might be a lot to ask coaches).

Maybe we can ask kids to write their first name on the board, along with the code number? The judge can write the first name on the ballot as well as the title.

To the degree that judges are cutting and pasting comments from a word processing document, this is not likely to address the issue.

It was agreed that we would use FIRST NAMES and CODE NUMBERS in round only. There is no Tabroom setting to make this happen.

We will try this at Lincoln-Sudbury.

9. How to deal with judges who do not show up at final rounds. (Greg/Joyce)

ISSUE: One school left Natick before finals. Their judges were not there to judge finals and a student who broke to finals was not there to compete, preventing another from advancing. Another

school registered but didn't show up. Greg called both of these schools and spoke with the coaches who said they will deal with the issues.

But, that leaves us still questioning what to do if this continues to happen.

We would like to ask if there is a way to add an option to Tabroom to withhold ballots from schools that do not stay through finals.

Greg will start a Google spreadsheet for TAB to use to track which judges and which schools are missing rounds. If the problem continues, we'll need to figure out how to go beyond the two steps below:

1st offense: Contact coach

2nd offense: Contact principal/head of school

Send schools a sample "expectations" document. Tammie said she can share her team's document with Greg who can share it with offending programs.

10. Addition to 3.2.12.2 Scheduling of Sessions (Joe)

Insert the following after 3.2.12.2 and before "If there is more than one chamber..."

Each chamber shall maintain precedence and recency through all preliminary sessions to ensure fairness in speaker recognition. Precedence and recency shall not reset from one preliminary session to another. This rule may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

Rationale: To codify current MSDL practice and to ensure opportunities to speak for all competitors.

- a. MSDL has not in recent memory had a reset of precedence and recency from one preliminary session to the next.
- b. Students usually have an opportunity to present two speeches per session. The most engaged students speak four times in preliminary rounds (or three speeches plus a stint as Presiding Officer). There are some students who are new, nervous, or otherwise less engaged, and they may choose not to speak until later in the day when they feel more comfortable. I don't see a competitive harm in giving them an opportunity to speak over someone who has already spoken three times in the day (and who is already far more likely to break). We want kids to get ballots and feedback, not to be competing for attention again as the day goes on.

DISCUSSION

- This is just to codify long-standing practice

Moved: West

2nd: J Honeyman

This motion passed unanimously

11. Updating event descriptions which appear on Tabroom.com ballot pages. There is missing or erroneous information there as of yesterday. For example: It still says binders may not be used as props in POI. There is no mention of binder events being reading events, as Chris

now emphasizes in judge trainings. There is no mention of citations being a requirement in Extemp (2 of 6 Varsity Extemp finalists used no sources at all yesterday). The issue is: (a) we need to update these descriptions and (b) HOW do we want to update these descriptions? Some judges miss the old rubrics and have expressed a desire for a couple bullet points listing essential criteria on the Tabroom.com ballot page.

DISCUSSION

This is something that has to be done manually for all tournaments. Joyce will take care of it for the rest of the tournaments this year. (Lisa will do the NSHS tournament).

12. How to cite multiple sources in interp events such as PO and POI. Happily, students are citing titles and authors now; it's rare to see someone introduce a program by "various authors" who are not cited. Not so happily, many students are using 5, 6, or 8 pieces, and they're ripping through them so fast in their intros that (a) I as a judge cannot possibly write them down fast enough or even know for sure what material is being used, which feels oddly similar to not naming titles and authors at all, and (b) it eats up valuable performance time if the student is using lots of sources with long titles. It seems impractical to write six titles and authors on the board. Knowing that extempers are required to hand their judge the exact question they draw, I found myself wondering if PO and POI and other competitors might be empowered to hand their judge(s) a written bibliography. Ominously, this would not help at CFLs or NSDA's unless those organizations also allowed this...

DISCUSSION

- Can we ask coaches to type in titles and authors at registration? That seems onerous.
- Would it be possible for kids to hand the judges a card listing their sources? If we do that, we're out of step with the NCFL and NSDA rules.
- Is there an issue of students having to present content in a speech tournament that is not spoken?

Judges may comment on the ballot if students are speaking too fast during the introduction.

This is an issue that is probably coming up across the country, especially in POI. Is this something we can solve? (Maybe not.)

NEW BUSINESS

Insurance update (Jim):

Jim looked into weather insurance for tournaments that take place during the winter. He reported that there are two different types of insurance:

- (1) Weather Insurance - very specific about hours, inches of snow etc.
- (2) Event Cancellation insurance - can cover for pretty much any reason -- more expensive

Jim shared a proposal with us from a company called "Spectrum," which specializes in weather insurance. He looked into insuring Holly, NSHS, Big Lex & Mardi Gras for \$3000 and found that we can put all 4 locations on one policy. We would need to determine the time window and snow depth that we are interested in insuring against? We talked about some other tournaments that might want coverage.

Overall - what Jim found out is that we can do this in an affordable way.

Jim will gather the data and then bring to us a proposal for the one that seems most beneficial. We need this for Holly - so not too far from now.

Jim will make more calls tomorrow and send information out to the board for their consideration.

Joyce & Josh - RE: Lincoln-Sudbury

Josh will not be at L-S this year.

He met with the folks at L-S last week. They're excited to host.

We will assign board members to assist in each of the main areas that have been problematic in the past. They are eager to do a good job hosting and would welcome the help.

- Jim & Greg can get there early and work with the people at registration
- Lisa will work with kids to set up awards

Motion to adjourn: Jim Honeyman

2nd: K. West

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

Clerk/Secretary