

MSDL League Meeting
Saturday, May 14, 2016
Milton Academy, Milton, MA

In attendance: Joyce Albert (Natick), Josh Cohen (Newton South), Rob Croteau (Catholic Memorial), Greg Cunningham (Needham), Joe Curran (Revere), Sue Hennessey (Acton-Boxborough), Lisa Honeyman (Newton South), Jim Honeyman (Newton South), Patrice Jean-Baptiste (Milton Academy), Sheryl Kaczmarek (Lexington), Rodger Nix (BDL), Susan Marianelli (Milton Academy), Emily Murray (Walpole), Adam Nir (Needham), Amanda Parker (Natick), Dan Sapir (Sacred Heart), PJ Wexler (Needham).

The meeting was called to order at 11:15 am by the president, Susan Marianelli

Announcement: Sarah Donnelly – Reminder to people going to NCFL Nationals: Download NCFL App. They're looking for helpful criticism.

1. Treasurer's Report / Dues – Firm dates established for payment of dues.

Our current balance is \$18,217.85. (We have one large bill outstanding for this season). The two state tournaments more or less paid for themselves. Dues & novice tournament income added to our balance. We have not had any major expenses for the past few years.

a) Dues – firm dates established for payment of dues. (1.4 page 2)

We need the principal's signature on the membership application and a check attached in order for teams to participate in any MSDL Tournaments. Jim will send invoices and a letter to the 42 current MSDL member schools in September. We will also post the letter and application form on the website in the fall.

We will waive the fee for first year schools (schools that have not been an MSDL member for at least 4 years), as well as for out-of-state schools that only attend one tournament during the season, but schools located in MA must submit an application form, signed by their principal in order to participate in any MSDL tournaments.

Schools that are located in Massachusetts must abide by the MSDL Rules as well as schools in adjacent states that wish to join the MSDL.

Tournament directors can decide if they want a form of some sort filled out by out-of-state schools that they invite to indicate that the principal approves of their students participating in the tournament.

ACTION: Jim will write the form and send it to the board for approval. We will then post it on the MSDL website and send it to current member schools early in the fall. This new policy will apply to all schools located in Massachusetts that compete at any league-sanctioned tournaments, as well as schools in adjacent states that wish to join the MSDL.

b) Mileage reimbursement for league travel.

We didn't get to this.

3. Rules for disqualifications:

ISSUES:

- a) Texting (2.1.1 page 5)
- b) Whispering (2.1.1 page 5)
- c) Mimicking (2.1.1. page 5)

Do we need to include “no use of electronic devices” in section 2.1.1? We discussed this and determined that the current rules cover all disruptive behavior, including the use of electronic devices during rounds.

We need to teach kids responsibility about the use of electronics and also respectful behavior.

Suggestions:

- Ask judge to sit at the back of the room, where they can see texting going on.
- Make a bigger point in the judge meeting about the adult responsibility for teaching competitors how to behave well as an audience member. Ask the adults in the round to privately talk to students observed behaving inappropriately about the appropriate use of devices.
- Allow judges to consider rude behavior in rounds in ranks.
- Ask kids to go to their coach during the tournament to inform them of the issue in a timely way so that the coach can pursue the issue.
- Remind students at an Opening Meeting at all tournaments, where we set the tone for the day.
- Maybe coaches could remind kids at warm-ups?

We need all coaches to be on the same page.

What about kids who arrive without a coach or knowledgeable adult?

General agreement – this means all judges and students hear the same message at the start of every tournament and puts the judge in the position of teacher. We like this.

ACTION:

We will add a memo to the ballots that the first round judge is asked to read out loud at the start of the round regarding appropriate behavior in rounds. We will also ask judges to sit in the back of the room, where they can see all students in the audience.

Susan will write the letter and provide it to tournament directors to include on their ballots.

We will also post this information on the website.

d) Clarity in script rules? (3.2.1.1 page 9)

We discussed the rules as written in 3.2.1.1. Are these rules *too* descriptive? We all agree that students should not change the words in the script. However, we don't want to squelch creativity in interpretation.

ACTION: Joyce will re-write 3.2.1.1 and send it to the board for approval.

3. Clear and standard rules for no shows to be followed at every tournament. (3.2.1.15 p.12)

As a courtesy, if a competitor doesn't show up in a round, the TAB room will make an effort to notify a responsible adult from that student's school.

4. Dan Sapir – The good of the order.

Congratulates Massachusetts students and coaches for NSDA National recognitions and achievements as noted in this month's NSDA Rostrum. (He mentioned a few coaches who earned diamonds and students who earned special recognition).

He also relayed a message from the Middle School league. They request that impromptu be changed to 7 minutes in the MSDL to bring it in line with the middle school and national leagues. **We need to consider this for 2017-2018 because it is too late to change rules for next year.**

5. Standard Size of Congress Chambers / Amendments

PJ Proposed some amendments:

3.3.1 Submission of bill and resolutions

Bills and Resolutions for debate must be submitted in advance of the tournament and approved by the Student Congress Chair. **Students in Congress are expected to utilize original prose in authoring their legislation.** The Student Congress Chair will review the proposed legislation and will accept or reject it based upon its suitability for debate and compliance to the composition guidelines. **Students and/or schools must write their own legislation, and may not copy the same legislative language or substantial sections of the same legislative language as another contestant or school.** Acceptance of legislation by the Congress chair does not exempt students from the provisions of this section if such copying is discovered after acceptance. **Violations of this rule shall be grounds for disqualification. Sponsors of such legislation may be disqualified if said student gives a sponsorship or first affirmative speech on the legislation prior to the legislation's origins being brought to the attention of the Congress chair or the tournament director.** Schools which do not submit legislation and fail to receive an exemption from the congress chair for doing so will have their congress entries' ranking altered as listed in 3.3.11.

Moved as Amended: J. Honeyman

Seconded: J. Curran

Vote: 7 for; 0 opposed.

Passes.

Proposed replacement of section 3.3.2 with:

3.3.2 Rules Committee

At the beginning of each day the Parliamentarian will ask one representative from each school to serve in the Rules Committee. The representatives are generally, but not necessarily, authors of bills or resolutions. The Rules Committee will set the docket of the bills with the following guidelines.

3.3.2.1 Legislation authored by and credited to a student present in a given chamber must be placed on the agenda at a place of that student's choice. In the event that more than one piece of legislation meets this requirement, and a particular spot on the agenda is desired by more than one author, the agenda order between those pieces of legislation shall be determined randomly. These requirements may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

3.3.2.2 Legislation authorship credited to an entire school does not meet the preference described in 3.3.2.1. Such preference is accorded to the actual author only, who must be named on the piece of legislation. No piece of legislation may be credited to more than one student at a given tournament. This restriction may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

3.3.2.3 The first five pieces of legislation on the docket are guaranteed an authorship/sponsorship and three subsequent speeches before a motion is in order for previous question or tabling the legislation. The parliamentarian may waive this requirement if necessary in order to ensure the day ends on time. However, in no case should the Congress adjourn early or take long recesses in order to avoid debating the full docket. This restriction may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

Moved as Amended: J. Honeyman

Seconded: J. Cohen

Vote: 8 for; 0 opposed.

Passes.

Change section 3.3.5 to read as follows:

3.3.5 The Presiding Officer

The Presiding Officer (PO) is a member of the chamber who ensures that the rules of order and precedence are followed in accordance with the role outlined for presiding officer in Robert's Rules of Order. The student congress chamber will elect presiding officers for terms specified by the chamber at the beginning of the Student Congress session on a preferential ballot. The Tournament Director of Congress Chair may designate an alternative means of choosing the PO. The Tournament Director or Congress Chair may designate the order in which the Presiding Officers serve, though they may not assign the author of a piece of legislation to be a Presiding Officer at the same time that legislation is scheduled to debate without that student's affirmative

consent. In all cases in which the PO is a member of the chamber, all judges will be reminded orally and on their ballots/ranking sheets, that the PO is eligible for advancement.

Moved as Amended: P. Wexler

Seconded: S. Hennessey

Vote: 7 for; 0 opposed.

Passes.

Regarding size of chambers in Congress: Lisa asks for loosening of the size regulations. Lack of parliamentarians and space in buildings makes it very difficult to maintain the 15 person cap per chamber when using “option 2” for running sessions during the day.

In the course of the conversation we thought that we may need to train people to be parliamentarians. General outreach to find people who come on a regular basis to serve in this way.

We discussed various options including the old NSDA base system and having entry quotas. We may also need to increase judge quota for tournaments.

Motion: J. Albert

Proposed: Raise the maximum entry per chamber using Option 2 to 18 (from 15).

Moved by: J. Curran

Seconded: J. Albert

Vote: for; 5 opposed 2; abstain: 1

Passes.

6. Standard Size for Speech Sections at States

Size of rounds – psychological reasons for having rounds with no more than 6 per room. We can run in 75 minutes with 6 or fewer. Go to 7 and we need to go to 90 minutes. We decided to maintain current practice, allowing tournament directors to panel as needed for their tournaments.

7. Time for tournaments to end 5 or 6 not 7 to 9.

Lengths of tournaments: if we have bigger speech sections, we might be able to go to fewer time slots. Each round lasts 75 minutes to accommodate the maximum number of students. If you go to 7 or 8 in rooms, you need to go to 90 minutes, but you may need to run the ones you do run, longer. With 3-4 times slots each running 90 minutes, it doesn't save any time but makes the judges job much more difficult.

We could cap events in order to keep the number of time slots down to no more than 3. Semi-finals adds another 90 minutes. We could eliminate them.

Should we suggest to tournament directors that we put caps on events? No more than a total of x number of entries per event and a small number of entries per school.

What about semi-finals? You're benefiting (possibly) 36 kids at the expense of hundreds. Should we eliminate semi-finals? There is a benefit for breaks to finals, but it does add a lot of time. It adds at least 90 minutes to the tournament.

The Holly doesn't offer semi-finals.

The general consensus is that it is an unrealistic expectation to end tournaments by 5:00 or 6:00 and the board can make suggestions, not mandates.

8. Standardizing the rules for behavior in the prep room.

Susan and Amanda put together some guidelines to give to the person running the prep room and presented them to the folks at the meeting. T

9. Review of new ballots

Judges want the rules on the ballots. Let's put them on the back.

Most judges think the check boxes are a rubric. But, at least there is some feedback for kids now. Congress ballots are better in every way except aesthetics. Need to be redesigned.

ACTION: We are going to ask a graphic designer to take a look at what we have and see if they can make them better.

10. Calendar for 2016-2017

We set the calendar. (It is posted on the MSDL website)

11. Request for training day clinic for just new coaches for speech and debate, separate from the novice meet so that coaches can focus and ask all the questions that they want without worrying about students.

We discussed the possibilities. Separate weekends for speech and debate training? Face to face? (If so, when?) Webinars? Videos?

ACTION: Amanda will put out a survey asking coaches for what types of sessions they would like to attend. We set a tentative date of October 1.

12. Controlling Spreading in Debate

Proposal that MSDL adopt similar language to what Emerson College has on their website regarding debate.

General consensus among the debate coaches in the room that legislating how kids debate from the TAB room on this issue probably won't be effective. What's on the Emerson website has to do with college debate, which is different from what we do in high school. Having a more diverse LD judge pool would solve the problem. Judges already have discretion about how the judge kids who speak so quickly or unclearly that they can't be understood by the judge in the

room. We could encourage league tournaments that offer both PF and LD to share the judge pools. Kids need to be informed and then they will either adapt or suffer the consequences.

13. More debate opportunities

There is a desire from coaches for more debate opportunities. There was a meeting during Round 2 at NSHS and they had a great discussion. The notes were shared. There are 7 PF opportunities, 5 LD and 2 Policy tournaments on the schedule.

14. Other Business

- We need a manual for how to host/run a tournament so we can get more schools involved in hosting/running tournaments. **Joyce will put together a guide for this purpose and we will post them on the MSDL website.**
- Encourage more universities, like Tufts, to host. They need to draw on us as experts, though, and not over-charge students.

Motion to adjourn: J. Curran
2nd: S. Donnelly

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Honeyman

VP/Secretary

Following the meeting the board voted to appoint Mr. Greg Cunningham to fill the at-large vacancy for the 2016-2017 season only. The entire board will be up for reelection at that point.

The board also considered a request by Roger Nix on behalf of the BDL. He requested that the BDL be allowed to pay dues once on behalf of all member schools. Roger pointed out that the BDL member schools only participate in one or two tournaments each year and they are organized through the BDL. All students would continue to register as students of the high school they attend, not as a group.

The board was clear that if this request were approved, it would *not* mean that “club” teams or other groups comprised of students from several difference schools would be allowed to participate in league-sponsored tournaments.

Motion by Jim Honeyman

The Boston Debate League (BDL) shall be treated as one school for the purposes of annual dues payment and administrative permissions to compete at MSDL tournaments. At tournaments, BDL students must represent their own individual schools and not the BDL as a whole, but their

dues and permissions to perform are handled collectively by the BDL. The MSDL reserves the right to review this decision going forward.

2nd by C. Sheldon

For: 11

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

The motion passes.