

MSDL Annual Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2020 @ 11:00 AM

ZOOM meeting

The meeting was called to order at 11:07 AM 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, Sheryl Kaczmarek, Chris Sheldon, PJ Wexler and Keith West.

1. Welcome

The president, Greg Cunningham began by welcoming everyone to the Annual meeting.

2. Boston Debate League (Roger Nix)

Roger Nix presented some information about the Boston Debate League offerings for this summer. This summer there will be a one-week long coach camp the week of August 3 - 7, 2020. It's likely to be offered online. They will have sessions that focus on Policy Debate, but also about coaching in general. How do you be a good coach? How do you convince teachers and administrators to help you build a team? Build student leadership? Best practices. The program is completely free. Roger invites everyone to join - to learn and to share together.

A few folks who participated in past summer workshops spoke about how valuable this program is and spoke of their wonderful experiences. The focus is Policy Debate, but Roger says that other coaches will benefit as well.

Several coaches offered to help.

Here's the link to sign up for Boston Debate League's Coach Camp (training):

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMqTQUeOsla7cvOPdcv1HjBmHLvsBo5gzRb0MQbEKVOBgg-w/viewform?usp=sf_link

If you sign up we will make sure you receive info with updates going forward, and if you decide later you can't attend, that's totally fine! The dates are August 3-7, 2020.

3. States overview

Greg explained why we are doing an all "live" format and why we chose Memorial Day weekend. Prelim rounds on Saturday and the rest on Sunday. There will be a much larger amount of time for each round to make this possible. The minutes from our discussions over the past week or so are all online so that everyone can see what we have been talking about. Greg encourages everyone to look at those minutes.

Greg also laid out the procedures for questions/comments at today's meeting.

4. States invitation particulars (Joyce/Josh/PJ)

Joyce: Will be running Speech

She explains that our goal is to try to replicate the actual in-person performance experience as best we can. Details for the logistics and adjustments to rules will be in materials that will be sent out soon.

Josh: Will be running Debate

He suggests that people test connections in advance and have students practice before a friend/family member. Suggests acquiring an ethernet cable if wifi connection is not good at home. Speed is an issue because of the way sound is transmitted over the lines. So, students need to speak slowly. Evidence will be via email chain. Sharing evidence is something students should practice in advance, as well. Evidence will need to be accessible across email, so it can not be behind a paywall.

No recording of rounds will be allowed.

The expectation for attire is “professional” - the same way they would be dressed for a regular tournament.

PJ: Will be running Congress

Chambers may be a bit smaller because of the way technology functions. Students should consider whether they want to sit or stand.

5. Zoom rooms(Lisa)

Lisa explained our current plan, but we are still trying to figure out if Zoom with Breakout rooms will work for us. Of particular concern is the incompatibility of Chromebooks with some Zoom features.

Question: Can people watch?

Answer: No. Video quality becomes impaired the more people who are in the Zoom room. We’re considering how we might be able to stream out-rounds on YouTube.

Greg

Re: Streaming - at minimum we hope to live stream the awards ceremony.

Students will “sign in” and go “on stage” by event (like being “on-deck”) and then be on screen as awards are announced.

So . . . we need to have **release forms** giving permission to the League to stream people online live. The link to the release form will be on Tabroom and was also emailed to coaches yesterday.

6. Judge instructions for states (Chris)

Judges can judge Saturday, Sunday or both.

Speech: 1:4; Debate 1:2

There will be instructions sent to judges that will be very important.

We imagine a “judge lounge” for judges not actually assigned to rounds each round so we can push judges into rounds as needed.

Unique categories like extemp, impromptu & radio will look a bit different from usual.

We want judges to “roll with the punches” and make this a good experience for students.

Chris urges coaches to bring judges who are going to be able to handle the technology and who can be flexible when things are a challenge. He suggests we reach out to alumni since they are tech savvy.

Judges will have more time to write comments since there is more time between rounds. (We still need ranks in Tabroom.com as soon as possible.)

Joe Bowden is putting together a guide for coaches that will be shared with all coaches.

Judges will not be giving time signals. Students must time themselves for pacing, but the judge timer is the official time.

Judges will be instructed to ignore sounds in the background in student homes. Students may use headset mics/table mics but not as props or for sound effects.

DUO and MULT will be judged one at a time.

With the exception of MULT, students can sit or stand in an event, but they may do one and only one. So they can't start in a chair and then stand up because then the chair becomes a prop.

One single camera. No panning, not zooming. A student may use a plain/blurred screen behind them, but no "set."

The online guide will give a lot more information about details.

Question: Time Schedule

Answer: We're looking at fairly widely spaced time slots (2-3 hours per round).

Speech

Round 1: 10:00 AM

Round 2: 1:00 PM

Round 3: 4:00 PM

Debate:

Roughly running from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM for 5 rounds on Saturday. Outrounds will be on Sunday.

Congress:

Will follow a schedule similar to Speech.

Question: Is it possible to set a schedule that will make it possible for international students to participate?

Answer: That's not something we will be able to adjust for given that the vast majority of our participants and judges will be in the Eastern time zone (in Massachusetts). That said, the folks running debate events will talk with coaches who have international students on their teams to see what they can work out. (Balancing the needs of kids in Europe with those in Asia and in the eastern U.S. will be very difficult.)

Question: Prep time in debate

Some times have been expanded a bit to facilitate communication between debate partners.

Joe Bowden spoke a bit about our **guiding principles**.

He will publish the document he's working on in the next few days on the MSDL website.

Guiding principles

- 1) Access over perfection
- 2) Equipment - participate with what you have
- 3) Judges should hold students accountable for what they say and how they say it -- not the quality of their technology
- 4) Tech Time - if kids get disconnected, judges should allow time for them to get back online

Home atmosphere:

To the best of their ability, students will need to negotiate with household members regarding internet usage (siblings streaming online, for example, would degrade video quality). For sound quality, headsets work well. Students should get as close as possible to their router or plug in through ethernet.

If students need to perform outside, that's OK.

As much as possible - judges must be flexible

Encourage performers to keep their backgrounds in mind. (Maybe close the closet door. Make the bed. etc.)

In the time leading up to the tournament, we'll have times when kids and adults can get online and test their technology. Encourage kids to sign up for time to try this with about 1 minute of material to try out.

Question: Do we really need the video release forms for non-seniors?

Answer: We are planning to live-stream the awards ceremony and we may try to stream elimination rounds. We need permission from all students in order to do that.

Question: Do adult judges need to sign the video release form?

Answer: No. We'll get verbal permission from judges if we live-stream rounds that they may appear in.

Question: Can we share this information with our students?

Answer: Yes. Please do!

Greg asked folks to reach out with questions as they arise.

Josh reminded folks that there will be changes to the invitation and there is a change log at the end of the document. Check it often.

Greg will send out information about major changes to coaches directly.

General thanks to the board for the amount of time and energy it is taking to try to pull this tournament together. Thank you!

Greg also thanked everyone effusively.

Motion to adjourn: Bowden

2nd: West

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 PM by the president, Greg Cunningham.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

Clerk/Secretary