

MSDL Board Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2020 @ 7:00 PM

ZOOM meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 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, Sheryl Kaczmarek, Chris Sheldon, PJ Wexler and Keith West. (Scott & Joyce had to leave early).

Greg started by thanking everyone for making States work! Feedback from coaches and students has been quite positive. We all glowed in the glory of a job well done! We made the right choice to go “live” for all events.

1. States Debrief

Link to Document: [“What we learned at States 2020.”](#)

- Do we need Zoom in the fall?

Yes, but we don’t really need the webinar license.

In the fall, we will get 30 licenses for the first tournament or two (plan at least 2 tournaments within a 30 day period). We will either use them the way we did for States, or have them available as a back-up if we use another platform.

We will keep the account active over the summer with one license at the “Pro” level. In the fall, we will add licenses and move back to the “Enterprise” level.

- Does the new Tabroom feature allow a room for a judge briefing? Prep rooms? Ability to stream final rounds to Facebook (preferred) or YouTube?

Sounds like we can have rooms for teams to meet, and for competition, but not necessarily for judge meetings, prep rooms, or streaming. So we’ll need Zoom rooms for that - perhaps, all season next year.

- Write-up of how States was run for publication (Rostrum or National Federation Newsletter.)

Lisa & Josh will draft a document and share it with the rest of the board so they can add their parts in. We each did part of this and we need to be sure we cover everything. It would be nice to include a link to the [WGBH interview](#) Josh did following States for the show, “In It Together.” Jim will edit the article once we gather the details.

2. 2020-2021 Calendar (in a virtual world).

- Does the league run all virtual tournaments? Do we partner with “host” schools? Natick hosts 2 tournaments in the first ½ of the year and they reluctantly pass on holding the Gracia or the Holly this year before December.

During the first semester next year, all MSDL will be all on-line tournaments.

Lexington plans to run Little & Big Lex at just over cost (platform, judge hires, trophies) - which will reduce fees in order to be a service to the community.

We discussed the pros and cons of the MSDL hosting all of the online tournaments we hold during 1st semester. We're new at this on-line hosting and it took an army of our most experienced coaches (and some expertise from outside MA, too) to pull States off. It doesn't make any sense to imagine one school could do it without the board behind them.

We have two concerns though.

(a) Teams that host use tournaments as fundraisers

We don't imagine that will be much of a barrier, though. Most tournaments will be on line, so teams won't have major travel costs, at least through January 2021. If NCFLs and/or NSDAs are able to run live, we could explore setting aside anything we make (assuming we do more than break even at tournaments) to assist our national qualifiers with their travel expenses for nationals. In other words, the MSDL can take the pressure off schools that have national qualifiers. (We would be able to budget for that because we know how many qualifiers our NCFL and NSDA districts can send to nationals.) We will talk about this as we move into the season and see how the in-person tournament situation evolves.

(b) Schools that host often involve their students in the hosting efforts. If the MSDL runs the tournaments, students don't get to be involved in the way that they have been in the past. We talked about ways students could help.

- Responsible students could check on rooms to see if they have started rounds (in debate).
- Tournaments with a theme: Maybe kids can put together videos that are thematically relevant for the opening ceremony & awards ceremony.

Bottom Line: At some point, we may want to figure out how to bring schools in to assist with hosting, but until we run a few more tournaments on our own successfully, we are not ready to hand tournaments over to others. That said, we could certainly have students involved in

non-tournament running aspects -- like thematic videos. This will help make tournaments feel a little different from one another.

NEXT STEP

We need a calendar for the fall. Speech & Debate on the same weekends? Split them up? What are we going to do about fees? (How will we collect fees?). Awards? (Medals?)

We talked about whether our tournaments would be open only to MSDL schools, MSDL schools + some other invited schools, or leave tournaments open to all who want to participate.

Concerns

We do want to be sure that our Massachusetts students have full access to our local tournaments. To the extent that we can only handle a certain size tournament, we need to be careful that our students don't lose opportunity because other states are sending students to MSDL tournaments.

We need to be sure that our locals are accessible/not overwhelming to our novices and less-experienced folks. Not all tournaments should be open to everyone from across the country.

We will revisit that question once we set the schedule. Regardless of what format we adopt, all tournaments will be run on Eastern Time.

Novice tournament: Do we want to do this online this year? What type of experience will novices have? Without solid support from a team, some students may struggle. Will students attend?

For fall 2020, we discussed having an on-line Novice workshop instead of a full competition? Maybe with a practice round at the end of the day? Give them a way to learn the platform? Varsity kids mentor & judge? Novice ambassadors. The more kids facilitate other kids, the better.

We need to set dates as soon as we can. Josh, Joyce & PJ will take a look at the calendar and propose dates for MSDL tournaments through January. (See dates below).

We'll table the awards discussion & collecting of fees until later this summer.

DATES TO BE AWARE OF

SEPTEMBER

12 - ACT

19 - Rosh Hashanah (starts evening of 18th)

26 - erev Yom Kippur (starts at sundown the 26th)

OCTOBER

2-4 - Yale

3 - SAT

16-18 - Bronx (Note: Lexington & Bronx may collaborate on a one-day tournament)

24 - ACT

24 - NY will be running one-day PF & LD tournaments

NOVEMBER

7 - SAT

7 - Monticello will run a one-day debate tournament

DECEMBER

5 - SAT

12 - ACT

19 - NY will be running one-day PF & LD tournaments

- How far out do we assume tournaments will not physically happen?

At least through the first semester. So, September - mid-January.

- How much do we charge for entry fees and how do schools pay?

We'll figure this out later, once we have a better sense of our expenses.

Fees for MSDL membership will remain the same as before. (\$50),

- Awards in a Virtual World -- Splashy Online Recognition, Certificates, Medals, Regular Trophies and Plaques, Other

We'll wait on this conversation until later in the summer.

- Standardized Video Release Forms for Students and Judges (Kaz is on a Committee with NY and NJ Reps -- It is cool if we don't want to do this as a league, but it would save folks some time if we did it as a region.)

NY formed a sub-committee for a standardized video release form that would be attached to a student's tabroom account. We will look at what they come up with and adapt their form to our needs. We also need to have legal counsel give us some guidance around this. They should review the form we use.

- Standardized Code of Conduct Forms for Students and Judges for Online Speech and Debate (Kaz on This Too)

We talked about the need of a code of conduct so that students sign a piece of paper that says they understand they should neither give nor receive help during prep or their rounds. This is a trust activity and we want to be sure they understand and commit to abiding by the rules.

We also talked about asking the judges to sign a form that said something like: they won't be drinking alcohol while judging, will give the performers full attention while judging (won't be playing video games), and have judges on record as saying they are aware that they are working with minor children and must behave appropriately etc.

We have language in our on-line tournament guide that we can use for this form.

Timers in extemp - as a second person in the "room" with a student may be a good idea.

The following will be tabled until our next board meeting

- Things to Consider Regarding Online Tournaments if Schools are Open for Classes
 - a. Squads Meeting at their own schools for competitions
 - b. Equity issues if some schools can and some cannot meet at school
 - c. State Qualification Questions

3. New Business

Next Meeting - July 20, 2020 at 7:00 PM via Zoom

West: Motion to adjourn

Wexler: 2nd

We adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

clerk/secretary