

**MFL Board Meeting**  
**Saturday, June 10, 2006**

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 pm by the President, Chris Palmer

Board Members Present: Joyce Albert, Lynne Coyne, Rob Croteau, Lisa Honeyman, Holly Loell, Wendy O'Neil, Chris Palmer, Debbie Simon and PJ Wexler

Also present for most of the meeting: Jane Haney

**1. 2006-2007 Calendar Sanctioning**

No one put in a bid for States. The combined speech/debate format may need to be abandoned. Debaters did not like to do Friday and Saturday and it spread out the speech rounds into 5 time slots, making it a much longer day than necessary. We will try for two separate weekends at two different sites.

Due to vandalism of Westford Academy by policy debaters at States this year, they are not sure they can host States again. Vandalism by policy debaters is an on-going issue. What can we do about this as a board so we don't continue to jeopardize our ability to find host sites for tournaments that include policy debate? Should we allow the students/schools who vandalize to continue to compete at tournaments if we can figure out who is responsible? Usually the damage is discovered afterwards and we know what events are in the rooms, but we don't have the names of the students who actually committed the vandalism. We need to deal strongly with the culprits so that we can continue to find schools willing to host this event. As a league we're having more and more trouble filling the calendar because of school size and because schools don't want to open themselves up to vandalism.

Events listed in italics are events that do not offer bids to MFL States.

*September 15-16: Yale – Non-MFL*

*October 15: CM novice tournament & Coaches workshop – MFL but not sanctioning for States*

October 21: Hall of Fame – Dighton-Rehoboth (speech & debate)

October 28: Hull and Manchester (Debate)

November 11: Gracia (speech)

November 18: Little Lex (Debate)

December 2: L-S (speech) also possible Weston (debate)

December 16: Holly (speech)

January 6: Newton South (speech)

January 12-15: Big Lex (Debate)

January 20: Revere (speech)

*January 20-21: Columbia (non-MFL)*

February 3: Little Manchester (debate) & NFL Congress Quals

*February 10: CFL Quals (Shrewsbury)*

*February 17: Harvard (non MFL)*

February 24: ?? Lexington (in negotiation)

March 3: Mardi Gras? (speech)

*March 9-10: NFL Quals*

March 24: Needham (speech & debate)

March 31: State Debate (N. Middlesex?)  
April 14: State Speech  
April 28: Alternate States date

**Calendar Motion #1:** Accept the MFL Calendar as listed (above).

Motion by JA. Seconded by HL. Passed without objection.

## 2. Multiple

We referenced the summary from the surveys that Joyce prepared. (See other document for details). Joyce proposed that we:

- (1) Find a way to officially track the Multiple casts on-line or manually if necessary. (Chris said he'd modify the program to make tracking on-line possible over the summer.)
- (2) Add a recommendation in the tournament manual that if there are more than 4 multiple entries that tournaments run 3 prelims and a final.

For qualification to States a piece/cast needs 2 bids. Cast needs to have more than 50% of the students qualifying with a specific title. DS said we need to be sure that if there is illness or something of that nature we have a way to allow a substitution. The proposed rule allows for this type of situation. CP reminded us that schools can also apply for a waiver if there are extraordinary circumstances. RC asks for some consistency with other events – that kids can change the piece in other events. For example, in duo, the partners qualify together and can switch their piece if they want to. We discussed the merits of qualifying pieces, people etc. After some discussion, JA suggests that we include a possibility for an entire cast that is the same to change titles. There was a lot of discussion about why we are treating this event differently from other events. After MUCH discussion, Joyce put forth this motion:

**Multiple Motion #1:** The qualification for multiple will be by piece + one more than 50% of the cast in that piece. Alternatively, 100% of a cast may qualify together and may enter with another piece. In order to qualify for States, casts and pieces must receive two bids. This is based upon our ability to track members entered in multiple.

Motion by JA. Seconded by RC. Passed without objection.

## 3. Double-entry in States with two DUO partners.

This happened at States this year. Should we have a league rule about double-entry in the same event? After very brief discussion PJ Wexler proposes:

**Double-Entry Motion #1:** No student may enter any MFL-sanctioned tournament more than once in the same event.

Motion by PW. Seconded by WO. Passed unanimously.

## 4. Congress

PW started a discussion about weighting prelims and finals together for final standings. PW proposes that we weigh it like all other events, including ranks from both prelims and finals, counting each approximately 50%. JA asks if this would be affected by splitting prelim judging sessions? PW replied that it might. In an ideal world we could go with sections of 14-15 in two prelim rounds and then do finals. We discussed how we would have the judges rank/rate if we did two prelim rounds. A ranking system is easier for newer judges than some sort of point system (like the NFL uses.) PW then made a number of proposals in the form of motions.

**Congress Motion #1:** Prelims and finals both count towards final rankings in Congress.

Motion by PW. Seconded by JA. Passed without objection.

**Congress Motion #2:** Tournament directors choose from one of two models when they offer congress.

1. One prelim session with same three judges throughout. The Parliamentarian does not judge unless as an emergency substitute. Keep current size limits in place. (Current system).
2. Two judges in each of two preliminary sessions with no more than 15 competitors in each. Each judge would vote and the parliamentarian would have a 5<sup>th</sup> vote. Neither the students in the chambers nor the parliamentarians will change during the preliminary sessions, although the two judges will change half way through the day.

Either way, there will be three judges in finals.

Motion by PW. Seconded by HL. Passed unanimously.

**Congress Motion #3:** If a scenario is to be used in the super-session, then it must be outlined in the invitation or it must be posted on the MFL site by the Tournament Director or the Congress Chair at least 7 days in advance of the tournament.

Motion by PW. Seconded by RC. Passed unanimously.

LH Asks how we count prelims and finals if there are ranks from 5 judges in the prelims and 3 in finals? It's not 50-50 like other events. JA asks about how a scenario would change the dynamics of debate in finals.

We discussed the formula for use for final standings and decided that we will count all judges' ranks, no matter which model is used so that both prelims and finals count towards final standings even though the formula using option two (see motion #2 above) would have prelims count more than finals.

## 5. Debate – Novice question

LC asks how should a novice in debate be defined? Is it the first year a student does ANY type of debate or is it the first year he/she enters a SPECIFIC type of debate? LC argues that it should be the first year a student does any type of debate, just as we do not allow students to enter various IEs as a novice if they switch events from year to year. (The exception for Novice Extemp was noted.)

It is theoretically possible for a 9<sup>th</sup> grader to enter policy debate as a novice, then enter L-D as a novice in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and then as an 11<sup>th</sup> grader enter PFD as a novice. If this is allowed, then brand new competitors end up in rounds with experienced debaters who just haven't done LD or Policy or whatever. She suggested a number of options and discussion ensued, specifically about whether or not there were different skill-sets involved that would warrant novice status for experienced debaters that switched events. One possibility is to offer JV and Novice as separate divisions, where Novice = 1<sup>st</sup> year, JV = 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Varsity = 3+ years experience. Both novice and JV could be judged by varsity students.

**Debate Motion #1:** First year debaters = first year in debate. A novice in debate is defined as a student who is competing for his/her first year in debate.

Moved by LC. Seconded by WO. Passed unanimously.

**Debate Motion #2:** At the first three MFL debate tournaments of the year, the MFL will offer a JV division for 2<sup>nd</sup> year debaters and then stop offering it. Bids earned at these tournaments in the JV division will qualify students for the "Open division" at States.

Motion by LC. Seconded by PW. Passed without objection.

**Debate Motion #3:** The MFL will suggest to tournaments offering PFD that there be some sort of recognition for top novice performers. (This can be a novice final round or a "top novice" award or some other sort of recognition.)

Motion by LC. Seconded by RC. Passed without objection.

## 6. Survey Results

**As a result of responses to the coach questionnaire that was given out at States, we examined the following categories and issues. The Board extends a BIG THANK YOU to Joyce Albert for compiling all of the responses and also a BIG THANK YOU to the coaches who took the time to fill out the lengthy survey!**

Joyce began by asking how much should be left to the discretion of the tournament director? Should we allow tournament directors to offer variations on official MFL events? Or not? After some discussion we decided to leave the rules as they are currently written: Tournament directors must stick to official MFL rules for official MFL events.

### • Radio:

Many coaches want clarification regarding rules for radio. There is confusion about how much non-news material is allowed (commercials, transition material etc.), whether multiple character voices are allowed, as well as whether or not students may bring prepared introductory and transitional material into the prep room. Judges are confused about what they are looking for when judging this event. In order to address these issues and (hopefully) clarify the rules, we modified the rules for radio as follows:

### New Rules for Radio Broadcasting

Radio broadcasting is a public address event in which a student presents a classic “top-of-the-hour” news broadcast in the voice of a single professional broadcaster. In this event, each student will receive a packet of news-copy or a newspaper. The student will report to a preparation room where s/he will have 30 minutes to select and organize the material into a 5 minute radio news broadcast. Judges will listen to (not watch) the presentation. Throughout the broadcast, the timekeeper or judge will keep the student informed of time. Students may use minimal introductory remarks and transitional material. Advertising, including sponsorship taglines, is not allowed even if it is included in the copy provided by the tournament staff.

**Radio Motion #1:** Accept the rules change to Radio as written above.

Motion by JA. Seconded by WO. Passed without objection.

**Radio Motion #2:** Students should be allowed to bring prepared introductory/transition material into the prep room.

Motion by JA. Seconded by RC.

Vote: Yes (2), No (5), Abstention (1).

Decision: Students may NOT bring pre-written material into the prep room.

**Radio Motion #3:** Make the following modifications to the ‘Standards for Judging’ section on the Radio ballots: Add “- effective use of time, giving appropriate priority to different stories and sections of the news based on their importance and relevance.”

Moved by JA, seconded by LC. Passed without objection

- **Extemp:**

After some discussion about the writing of questions for extemp, we decided we were doing a pretty good job. CP said that students seemed pleased with the questions this year. LH noted that our students seem well prepared to answer questions when they travel to tournaments like the extemp TOC, CFLs etc. So, we decided not to change anything about that.

DS noted that some brand new coaches are confused about how to set up extemp files – what is allowed in the files and the prep room, what is not etc. We will add some information in the (under progress) “How to Start a Forensics Program” booklet and perhaps offer a session about starting up an extemp program at the fall coaches convention.

CP asked if it would be helpful to publish our extemp questions after tournaments. There was general agreement that folks would like these so their teams could use them for practice speeches. LH suggested we put copies of questions in packets after tournaments.

We then discussed whether or not to offer cross-examination in finals for extemp at MFL tournaments. Opinion was split on the survey. We held an initial straw vote as to whether or not to require cross-ex for all extemp finals.

Straw vote results: (3) No Cross-ex; (3) Have cross-ex; (2) abstentions

DS expressed concern for the novices. After minimal discussion the following motion was made:

**Extemp Motion #1:** In varsity extemp finals only we have an open 3-minute cross-examination period.

Motion by LC. Seconded by LH. Passed without objection.

Chris will write some rules and guidelines for cross-ex in final rounds and put it to an e-mail vote.

- **Group Discussion**

A majority of coaches who answered the survey seemed content with the group discussion rules as they are currently written. We decided to leave the current rules alone, but to modify standards for judging in order to address concerns about how the event is judged and what it teaches students.

**Group Discussion Motion #1:**

Add the following criteria to the “Standards for Judging” section of the Group Discussion Ballot:

- Does the panelist contribute to the thoughtful exploration of the issue(s) with the other members of the group?
- Does the panelist effectively build on points made by others?
- Does the panelist respectfully acknowledge the variety of opinions on the issue?
- Is the student assertive but respectful as opposed to loud and overbearing?

Remove the part about reaching consensus and solutions.

Moved by JA. Seconded by DS. Passed without objection.

- **Impromptu**

Impromptu is offered at quite a few MFL tournaments now and the rules are always different which students and coaches find confusing. JA proposes that we establish rules so that there is consistency from tournament to tournament. Wendy will draft rules to present to the board at a later date.

- **Team recognition and individual recognition**

As a result of responses in the survey, there are no recommendations for mandates by the board.

- **Judging**

How do we address the issue of schools with non-English speaking parents? Joyce solicits ideas for how we recruit college students or others that can help out. Send ideas to Joyce.

We finished discussing issues that were addressed in the survey and moved on to other topics.

Thank you – again – to Joyce and the coaches who filled out the survey!

## **7. Coaches convention and novice tournament at CM (October 15, 2006).**

Wendy, Debbie and Joyce will plan a new judges workshop to be offered on October 15 at CM. Chris and PJ will head the coach convention committee, planning who to invite to speak etc. Rob and Lisa will work on the novice tournament which will be offered at the same time.

## **8. Middle School league integration issues**

DS says that we need to address a number of issues such as:

- Students cannot use material they used in the middle school league in high school tournaments
- If a student did not enter two upper school tournaments he/she is still a novice

Clarification of such rules needs to be addressed at a future meeting.

## **9. Should Board Elections and Board turn-over happen in the spring rather than the fall?**

This would require a constitutional change. We need to think about it and discuss this. It cannot come to a vote today. Some say 'yes' and some say 'no.' If the term ends at the end of States, the new board can set the calendar for their term. There could be a hand-off meeting. It would have to be a paper-election either at States or at some other date in April. We would need some sort of nominating process and a prepared position papers in advance. Dates for who wanted to run would have to happen in March. We would need a group of people to be "election commissioners." The group would need to be made up of people who are not running for election and who are not from schools that have candidates on the ballot to assure confidentiality. Maybe instead get more coaches to attend the fall meeting? Why are the 'at-large' members selected by the board and not elected as well? We discussed various ways for electing officers and board members. We have to follow the procedures for constitutional amendment and if changes are to be made get them done before March.

## **10. MFL Dues and entry fees**

RC notes that MFL tournament expenses are high. We were close to running in the red at some events. He suggested that we increase dues to \$60 and entry increases from \$5 to \$6 at MFL run events (States, HoF). LH and DS spoke against this. We decided that if necessary, we can charge for attendance at the coaches convention. Our 501(c)(3) status is nearing finalization, so we can also seek donations once we get the non-profit status.

Motion to adjourn by LH at 6:44 pm. Seconded by WO. Unanimously passed!

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Honeyman

VP/Secretary