

Minutes
MFL Board Meeting
Sunday, May 22, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 pm by the president, Mark McNeil.

Board Members present: Mark McNeil, Debbie Simon, Beena Koshy, Joyce Albert, Lisa Honeyman and PJ Wexler. Also present: Susan Marianelli.

At the request of Judy Crocker (treasurer), who was unable to attend the meeting, Lisa Honeyman distributed copies of the check register (10/2003-5/2005), a record of Income/Deposits for this season and a record of dues received for this year for the board to review.

For the next 30 minutes, the board read through the proposed amendments to the MFL By-laws, as prepared by Chris Palmer, Joyce Albert and Lisa Honeyman. (This was 25 pages long and took a while.) For the next 2 hours, we went through, paragraph by paragraph, discussing policy and making changes and corrections. The goal is to have the document finished to present to the membership at the fall membership meeting. A draft version will be made available before the fall meeting so that members can look at it in advance. Some issues came up in the discussion of the By-laws that need to be addressed at a future meeting. We also agreed to add a few more sections to the By-laws before we declare them completed, including an addendum that addresses the rules and regulations of the middle school league. Debbie Simon is going to get the middle school materials to Lisa Honeyman some time after nationals (but before August 15) so they can be added.

A question that arose that need to be addressed at a future meeting

- Should middle school coaches get votes at the MFL coaches meeting?

During the discussion of the By-laws a number of issues were discussed, including:

Responsibilities of the Vice Presidents

Debbie Simon brought up a concern that with the advent of the computer tab system, the VP Speech job has become more difficult to define. Mark M. suggested that one job of each VP is to make sure that there is consistency in tabulation from tournament to tournament. Vice Presidents must be present at all MFL sanctioned tournaments that offer their events. It is their job to maintain the consistency of rules and procedures from tournament to tournament. If a VP cannot attend a tournament, then it is his/her responsibility to find someone to cover the job in his/her absence.

Congress & Debate in By-Laws

The rules sections in the By-laws covering Congress and Debate events are not comprehensive enough. It was agreed that we need more information so that member schools know what their students should expect when they enter the event.

Mark McNeil said he would contact the VP Speech and VP Congress to get more information about those events to include in the By-laws. There will be an August 15 deadline to get this information to Lisa Honeyman so she can add it to the document and then distribute it to the membership before September 17.

There seem to be a number of confusions around congress, in particular, that need to be addressed. For example, how should congress ranks be counted towards sweepstakes? There was a lack of consistency in how it was done this year. We need to come up with a system and put it in writing so that people know what it is. We also need some Congress tabulation sheets that are consistently used from tournament to tournament so that it is done the same way in each chamber and from tournament to tournament.

While we were discussing congress, Lisa Honeyman suggested that we make a policy that congress bills be posted at least 2 weeks prior to any tournament offering congress as an event. This is the responsibility of the VP Congress, not the tournament host.

Letter to MFL Sanctioned Tournament Hosts

Debbie Simon suggested that we send a letter to every tournament director/host informing him/her of a number of tournament related expectations that come with MFL sanctioning. She will draft a letter in the next few weeks. Things to include:

1. Telling director/host that their tournament has been sanctioned.
2. What services the MFL board offers in the way of supervision and tabulation help
3. Information that should be included in an invitation
 - How ties will be broken
 - How sweepstakes will be computed (if there are sweepstakes awards)
 - Group discussion questions
 - Registration deadlines and how to register
4. What is expected of tournament in the way of awards
 - 1-6(7) trophies
 - Honorable mentions
5. Options for tabulation. They must verify with the VP Speech.

She will include these and many other expectations on the list that we expect of sanctioned tournaments. Perhaps this belongs in a separate document about how to host a speech/debate tournament.

Public Forum Debate now an official MFL event

It was moved by Mark McNeil and seconded by PJ Wexler that we make PFD an official MFL event. The board approved unanimously.

Lisa Honeyman asked why we did not use the April PFD topic at States. Discussion continued around how topics for debate are selected. It was agreed that the tournament host has the right to decide what topic will be used in debate. It might be the NFL topic for that time period or something else. The tournament must release the topic information with plenty of lead time so that students have time to prepare. The topic for States was in the invitation and sufficient time was given.

State Finals Entry Limits per event lifted

Susan Marianelli asked why we limit schools to two entries per event at States (not counting wild cards.) Why should a student who qualified for States by earning the necessary bids be denied the opportunity

to participate? We discussed how that would impact sweepstakes and considered ways of determining sweepstakes awards fairly even if schools entered more than 2 students per event.

Lisa Honeyman moved for a vote to allow all schools to enter qualified students in events at States without limit. This was seconded by Mark McNeil. Passed unanimously.

As a result we agreed that we need to examine the Sweepstakes formula. This will be left to a later meeting - during the 2005-2006 season.

State Finals Bid Modification

Joyce Albert moved and Beena Koshy seconded that all finalists in Speech Events earn a bid to States. Passed unanimously.

Semi-final Rounds

Debbie Simon suggested that at tournaments with very large entries in some events we run 2 rounds and then semi-finals in the large events. We talked about that and other options to more fairly determine who the best competitors are in large events, but came to no conclusion.

MFL Dues will be due December 1 of each year

There was concern about students who would have earned bids if their schools had paid their dues on time, but did not because dues came in late (or not at all.) Rather than penalize students for something beyond their control, the board agreed to set an amount for dues (currently \$50) and a deadline (December 1.) After that point, the dues would go up in price. No school can participate in State Finals unless the dues are paid. So, the incentive to pay on time is there, but no students are penalized directly. There was no agreement about how much to increase dues after Dec. 1. Suggestions ranged from adding \$50 per month late, to charging \$250 after December 1 to raising the dues to \$100. We agreed in principle but did not set an amount.

2005-2006 Calendar

Mark McNeil presented a preliminary calendar. Two schools have offered to host the Hall of Fame tournament. After discussing which would be better able to host due to size constraints it was unanimously voted to grant Acton-Boxborough the tournament.

The board unanimously voted to approve the calendar proposed by Mark McNeil for the 2005-2006 season. These dates came from schools that sent in requests for sanctioning. (Calendar attached). Debbie Simon agreed to type up the letter that included information about what services the MFL board will offer to tournaments. (discussed earlier)

Double Entry at States

PJ Wexler brought up a number of issues regarding the State tournament. One involved double entry at States. We agreed on the following:

Students may double enter at the combined State Final tournament in all events except Congress, Policy & Novice Policy Debate, and Group Discussion. Students in draw events may only double enter within

the speech side of the tournament and may not enter two draw events. There can be no double-entry within debate. Otherwise, there will be no restrictions on double-entry at States. The restrictions were made in order to make it possible to run the tournament in a timely manner.

Varsity students who judge novice debate events cannot enter the tournament as a competitor in any event.

Other Issues about States

Sweepstakes awards. PJ asked if we would consider doing an over-all sweepstakes award for Speech/Debate/Congress. We discussed this and decided this was not the time to institute such a sweepstakes policy. He also asked about a possible award to students who do well in two events, similar to the Double-Entry award given at the Holly fest. We discussed this as well, and decided that many coaches are not yet comfortable with encouraging students to double enter at States. We have provided the opportunity, but we are not ready to actively encourage double-entry.

Due to difficulty getting enough judges, we discussed increasing the judge requirement per school. We also need to devote some MFL money to hire neutral judges, especially in debate, in order to make the tournament run more smoothly.

Officers for next term

The two year term for the current board is coming to a close. We discussed whether or not the board should put a slate forward for the next board or take nominations from the floor at the fall meeting. We decided to take nominations from the floor.

Fall Coaches Meeting set for September 17

Mark McNeil suggested that rather than holding the annual fall coaches meeting on a weekday in September as we have done in the past, we do it on a Saturday and do a mini-convention for coaches at the same time. Debbie Simon motioned that we hold the meeting and a mini-convention on a Saturday. Joyce Albert seconded. The board voted for the motion unanimously and set the date for September 17, 2005.

Trophies from States

Lisa Honeyman asked what the status was for the replacement plates for extemp and novice extemp, the missing 7th place trophies and the honorable mention ribbons from States. Mark M. said they were not ready yet. Each coach needs to get addresses to Mark so the trophy plates, trophies and ribbons can be sent to the students over the summer.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm.

MFL CALENDAR – 2005-2006

Date	Tournament/event	Speech	Debate
Sept 17, 2005	Fall Coaches Meeting at Sacred Heart		
Oct 15, 2005	New Leadership		x
Oct 22, 2005	Hall of Fame at Acton-Boxborough	x	x
Oct 28-29, 2005	Big Manchester		x
Oct 29, 2005	Hull	x	
Nov 12, 2005	Gracia – Natick	x	
Nov 19, 2005	Little Lexington		x
Dec 3, 2005	Lincoln-Sudbury	x	
Dec 17, 2005	Holly Fest – Natick	x	
Jan 7, 2006	Newton South	x	
Jan 13-15, 2006	Lexington Winter Invitational		x
Feb 4, 2006	Little Manchester		x
Feb 11, 2006	Heartbreaker – Debate		x
Feb 25, 2006	Heartbreaker – Speech	x	
Mar 4, 2006	Mardi Gras – Shrewsbury	x	
Mar 3-5, 2006	Bishop Guertin		x
Mar 25, 2006	Needham	x	x
Apr 7-8, 2006	States	x	x

Other Tournaments of interest to MFL schools

Date	Tournament/event	Speech	Debate
Sept 30- Oct 2	Yale	x	x
Oct 7-9	U-Penn	x	x
Oct 7-8	Monticello		x
Oct 14-15	Bronx Varsity debate		x
Nov 11-12	Newburg Free Academy		x

Nov 18-20	Villiger/The Glenbrooks	x	x
Dec 9-10	Henry Hudson		x
Jan 13-15	Lexington Winter Invitational/Heart of New England	x	x
Jan 20-22	Columbia	x	x
Feb 10-11	Lakeland		x
Feb 17-21	Harvard	x	x
Mar 10-11	NFL IE and Debate Quals (Congress TBA)	x	x