

MFL League Meeting – June 7, 2008
Milton Academy, Milton, MA

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 by the president, Chris Palmer.

In attendance: Susan Marianelli (Milton), Chris Palmer (NSHS), Lisa Honeyman (NSHS), Jim Murphy (Weston), Chris Sheldon (Bancroft), PJ Wexler (Needham), Greg Cunningham (Hull), Mark Fellowes (Revere), Joyce Albert (Natick), Sarah Donnelly (Natick), Dan Sapir (Silver Lake), Rob Croteau (Catholic Memorial), Bob Hutchings (Phillips Academy), Nancy Gahagan (Montrose), Jonathan Peele (Manchester-Essex)

The consent agenda was approved without objection.

STANDING REPORTS

1. The president's report on the general state of the league

Basically – everything is going pretty well.

Chris passed out next year's proposed calendar. With approved modifications, it is as follows:

MFL 2008-2009 CALENDAR (also NCFL and NFL Quals)

Oct 11 – Novice Tournament/Coach Convention – probably at CM
Oct 18 – Hall of Fame – probably at Milton Academy
Oct 25 – Hull
Oct 31-Nov 1 – Big Manchester (Tim Averill invitational)
Nov 8 – Dighton-Rehoboth
Nov 15 – Gracia (at Natick)
Nov 22 – Little Lex (at Lexington)
Dec 6 – Lincoln-Sudbury
Dec 20 – Holly (at Natick)
Jan 10 – Newton South
Jan 17 – Lexington TOC
Jan 31 – Manchester Luncheon & NFL Congress Quals
Feb 7 – NCFL Quals at Shrewsbury
Feb 28 – Mardi Gras – at Shrewsbury
March 7 – Silver Lake
March 13-14 – NFL IE & Debate Quals at Newton South
March 21 – Needham
March 28 – State Debate
April 4 – State Speech – tentatively at Westford Academy

OTHER TOURNAMENTS OF INTEREST

Weekend of Sept 27 – Yale
Weekend of Oct 4 – Monticello
Weekend of Oct 18 – UPenn
Weekend of Oct 11 - Monticello

Weekend of Oct 25 – Bronx
Weekend of Nov 15 – Hendrick Hudson
Weekend of Nov 22 – Villiger/Glenbrooks
Weekend of Dec 6 – Princeton/GMU
Weekend of Dec 13 – Ridge Debate
Weekend of Jan 3 – MBA
Weekend of Jan 24 – Columbia
Weekend of Jan 31 – Ridge Speech
Weekend of Feb 7 – Scarsdale
Weekend of Feb 14 - Harvard

We discussed the fall coach’s convention and novice tournaments – formats etc. and decided on the following:

We will run the novice tournament as usual – next fall on October 11, tentatively at CM. We will award medal to all 1st place ranks as we have been doing the past 2 years. We will hold a separate MFL meeting in early/mid-September so that coaches are not tied up in a meeting while the tournament and sessions are going on. The meeting will tentatively be at Natick H.S. Date TBA.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Report given by Rob Croteau. We finished the year with \$8871.63. How might we use this money?

ITEM 1 on the AGENDA – 501(c)(3) wording

Grants & Scholarship Authority for 501(c)(3) application. The proposed language is drawn from IRS documents. There was no discussion and there were no objections.

Motion to accept by Hull. 2nded by Needham. Passed without objection.

1.9 Policy on Grants

The MFL Board may appoint a grant committee or committees empowered to award grants in support of member chapters. Grants may be awarded from MFL general funds or funds donated to the MFL for the express purpose of supporting member programs. Grants may be awarded to forensics programs for general funding, or specific purposes established by either the Board in the charter of the particular grant committee, or the committee itself as part of the award. Grant committees shall take reasonable steps to ensure that funds are used for the purposes delineated in the award or to the benefit of the program as a whole.

Grant committees shall consist of no fewer than three people, of whom one is also member of the MFL Board. Grant committee members shall not vote on awards granted to their own programs; alternate members to grant committees may be appointed by the Board as needed to allow for recusal of members with a conflict of interest.

The MFL may receive directed grants on behalf of school forensics programs. If a gift is directed at a particular school’s forensics program by the donor, the MFL treasurer or president shall pass on that award to that program directly without need of a grant committee.

1.10 Policy on Scholarships

The MFL Board may appoint a scholarship committee or committees empowered to award scholarships to students of member programs. Scholarships may be awarded from MFL general funds or funds donated to the MFL for the express purpose of awarding scholarships.

Scholarships may be awarded to students for tuition for summer camps or other educational programs, or college tuition, or for attendance to national or regional tournaments. Specific purposes for scholarship funds shall either be established by the Board in the charter of the particular scholarship committee, or the committee itself as part of the award. Scholarship committees shall take reasonable steps to ensure that funds are used for the purposes delineated in the award.

Scholarship committees shall consist of no fewer than three members, of whom one member is also member of the MFL Board. Scholarship committee members shall not vote on awards granted to students from their own programs; alternate members to scholarship committees may be appointed by the Board as needed to allow for recusal of members with a conflict of interest

ITEM 2 on the AGENDA – Clarifications regarding rules violations

This is an attempt to codify consequences for rules violations. These are amendments to the Rules & Procedures of the MFL. We might want to look at other types of sanctions in the future, but we have not added anything other than what we already do to this document.

We looked at each section separately. Each amendment passed unanimously as written or as modified (modifications noted below). There are notes where things need to be discussed in the future and possibly modified at that time.

A – Addendum to Rule 3.6: no objection as written

In addition, lines in Duo cannot be taken from one character and given to another. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

B – Addendum to Rule 3.7: no objection as written - note: Need to discuss further at a later date.

(Students using Interp material in two different school years): Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

C – Addendum to Rule 3.8: no objection as written - note: Need to discuss further at a later date.

(Students using the same material in two different events at the same tournament): Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified from both events, and shall not receive State bids for either entry.

D – Addendum to Rule 3.9: no objection as written.

(Students using Original Oratory or other original work in two different school years): Students must use their own work, and may not copy the same speech or substantial sections of the same speech as another contestant. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

E – Addendum to Rule 3.10: no objection as written

(Limited prep events using unpublished material during prep time): Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

F – Addendum to Rule 3.11: no objection as written

(Interp events using unpublished material): Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

G – Add Section 3.12: no objection as written

Students in Limited Prep, Debate, Congress, Oratory or other events where citations of evidence are expected are responsible for the accuracy of their citations based on that material. Students must cite facts and analysis from source material accurately and in keeping with the author's intent. Judges may request to see original copies of the sources cited, and bring discrepancies to the attention of the tournament director. Students found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

H – Add section 3.13: no objection as written

Students must use source material from the appropriate genre for that event. Students may not use source material from an incorrect genre, such as performing a play in prose reading, as defined in the rules of each event. Other than verse dramas, which are not poetry per the rules of Poetry reading, material which crosses genre boundaries may be performed as either genre it falls in, but may only be performed as that genre in a given season by the student. Students found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

A genre encompasses the style a selection is written in, not the content of that style; thus poetry, plays and prose are genres, while for instance Dramatic Interp, Humorous Interp, or Children's Literature would not count as separate genres; each encompass many genres. Children's Literature, HI or DI selections therefore can be performed in different categories within the same League Season, though not at the same tournament.

I – Add section 3.14: no objection as written. – Need to discuss whether declamation needs to be published.

Material used in Declamation must have been presented as a public address and found in print, on video, DVD or on an audio recording. Speeches that have been used only for forensic competition are not acceptable, even if found in print. Students found in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

J – Add Section 3.15: no objection as amended (red parts)

Students in speech events whose performances exceed the stated time and grace periods of their events shall be penalized by one rank by the tab room for the round where the time violation occurred. Other students in the round shall not have their ranks raised as the result of a time violation. Judges may, at their discretion, also consider the effect of excessive time violations in their rankings, but the 1 rank penalty is mandatory. Judges must have kept accurate time in order for this rule to apply, and should use their discretion in adjusting timing to account for audience laughter, or disruptions beyond the student or students' control.

Wording was changed as follows: “. . . Judges may, at their discretion, . . .” was swapped with the sentence immediately following it. Passed as rephrased. (note: They have been swapped in the preceding paragraph.)

K: Add 3.16 – Remove the word “substantial.” No objection as modified

Students in limited prep events shall not have ~~substantial~~ communication about their speeches or speech topics with teammates, coaches, or any others during their prep time. Use of phones, internet or other communication devices is forbidden. Use of electronic information storage or retrieval devices in prep is forbidden. Students must take only the prep time given to them, and may not speak out of the order assigned by prep room staff, or otherwise attempt to gain extra preparation time, apart from tournament delays beyond their control. Students found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

Add section 3.17 – no objection as written

Students competing in events which forbid the use of props, costumes or visual aids who nonetheless use these in competition shall be disqualified.

Add section 3.18 – passed with no objection as amended (phrase in red added).

Students who are disqualified may not receive State bids for their disqualified entries. Students disqualified for personal conduct and discipline issues shall be barred from further competition **at that tournament**. Students disqualified for infractions of the rules of events may be permitted to compete further to receive ballots and feedback, but may not advance to elimination rounds or win awards. Their scores will not count in tournament results or sweepstakes. The scores in all rounds the disqualified entry competed in will be adjusted so as to negate the disqualified entry's presence; any students the disqualified entry ranked better than will be adjusted upwards 1 rank.

Add section 3.19 – passed with no objection as written

All rule infractions spelled out in these rules, the event descriptions, or tournament invitations, shall be penalized by the judge or judges in their rankings at their own discretion, unless a different penalty has been explicitly laid out in these rules, event descriptions, or the tournament's invitation.

Disqualification rulings shall be made by the tournament director or their designee, and appeals may be made to a Grievance Committee as specified in section 2.4.1.

FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

- Do matching outfits in DUO or MULT count as a costume?
- From C: Should students maybe be allowed to pick one event to continue in and drop the other?
- From D: Need to define whether or not participation in contests such as American Legion or the English Speakers Union Shakespeare Monologue contest disqualifies material from MFL use in subsequent years.
- From I: Do declamations need to be published in order to be used in the MFL?

ITEM 3 on AGENDA – Novice Qualification clarification

Proposal to Add Section 6.3.2 - passed without objection as written.

Novice Reading and Novice Extemp are not offered at States. A student may substitute a maximum of two half-bids in Novice Reading to count as a single bid to one State-qualifying reading event. A student may substitute a maximum of two half-bids in Novice Extemporaneous Speaking to count as a single bid in Extemporaneous Speaking.

ITEM 4 on AGENDA – Impromptu Addition

After some discussion, the rules were accepted as follows:

Add Section 3.5.15 as follows:

Impromptu Speaking is a required speech event with the following description:

On the speaker's turn, he/she will select three topics from an envelope (or other such container), choosing one of them to perform. After the choice is made, the judge begins to time the event. The contestant has a total of 6 minutes to prepare and deliver his/her presentation. The time may be divided up as the contestant chooses. (Ex: 2 minutes prep, 4 minutes speaking). No outside materials, notes, props or costumes shall be used during presentation. **A student has the option of using up to one 3"x5" index card of notes created during the preparation period. Index cards will be provided by the**

tournamenet staff.” Impromptu topics may include proverbs, words, events, quotations or famous people.

Time: No minimum time, but the contestant must cover the subject adequately, 6 min. max., 30 second grace period.

Moved: Montrose. 2nd by Bancroft.

Vote: 12 for – 1 against.

The motion passes.

We will form a committee to offer more curricular advice to help judges and students: Dan, Joyce, Lisa. Bob H. will look into finding the survey used in the past by the middle school league to help us assess how the new event is working and how judges perceive its strengths and weaknesses.

At this time next year we will debrief and examine how our first year of MFL impromptu goes.

ITEM 5 on the AGENDA – Group Discussion

The round as proposed would take about 1:20. To fix this – cut 20 minute discussion times to 15 minutes and cut final prep time to 1 minute instead of 5 minutes. These time changes constitute a proposed amendment.

Amendments to proposal in red

Delete section 3.5.6 and replace with:

Group Discussion is a required speech event with the following description:

Group Discussion is an event in which students discuss and argue a topic set at the beginning of the round. The topics will **present an issue**, designed to introduce a variety of conflicting opinions. Students will be given the generic nature of the **issue** in the invitation, with **a specific focus** to be **discussed** at the start of the round. **Students should research the topic in advance and may bring notes and outside resources into the competition.** After the topic is revealed, students will be given 5 minutes to formulate their argument, draw for speaking order, and then each shall be given 2 minutes to deliver an opening statement. **Then an open discussion period of up to 15 minutes shall follow in which the issue is discussed and criteria for a resolution or recommendation are established, followed by another period of open discussion of up to 15 minutes to present and discuss possible solutions that meet those criteria. The students will then have 1 minute to prepare their final arguments and 2 minutes to present their final argument in the reverse order of their opening.**

Standards for Judging

Does the student speak with poise/confidence and with appropriate skills?

Does the student exhibit an understanding of the subject and remain on topic?

Does the student defend their positions clearly, with evidence and reasoning?

Does the student contribute effectively and politely to the discussion, while maintaining a strong and clear defense of their own viewpoint.

Outside sources may be used during the competition.

Motion – Hull. 2nd by Silver Lake.

Opposed: 1

In favor: 11
Abstain: 1

Motion carries.

ITEM 6 on the Agenda – State Qualifications

Chris Sheldon did some analysis and said that the practical impact of this amendment would mean more bids in large events. Small events will be generally unaffected because a cume of 9 would get you into finals anyway. At some tournaments, a cume of 9 means more than 50% of kids get bids. Having a certain amount of difficulty of getting bids is a motivator for coaches.

Joyce suggests that States was barely viable because we didn't have enough judges and if we have more entries, we have more judges and can run the tournament.

Question – do we agree with the system of the cumulative rank? Yes. (no one says no.)

Question – what should the cut-off be? Where is the line? How do we make States the Pinnacle of the year? Should it be a “big festival” or a “tournament of champions”? Lisa notes that this is a philosophical question that we need to answer.

Vote: For cume of 9 as cut-off – 7
For cume of 8 as cut-off – 5
One abstention

Motion passes for a cume of 9.

BOARD OPENINGS

Maggie Berthume is leaving Lexington. They are looking for a Policy Debate coach. Lynne Coyne will also be leaving the MFL board. We need to replace both of them. If anyone is interested in an at-large position or the position of Chair of Debate, contact Chris via e-mail ASAP.

NEW BUSINESS

Greg asks, Is it time to raise tournament fees? We haven't raised fees for about 10 years. From a tournament management point of view it is harder to buy trophies – especially for the smaller tournaments. This is a tournament host decision, but coaches appeared to understand the need for some hosts, particularly those with very small entry numbers, to raise fees next season by a small amount (maybe charge \$6) in order to cover their expenses.

Jonathan asks, “How can we make the weekday afternoon debate scrimmage schedule more appealing somehow?” Currently they are on Wednesdays. Tim Averill (Waring) and Jonathan (M-E) are willing to continue running them for free, but they would like in increase participation. Would another day of the week be better? If they add events would more people come? Congress has already been added.

Bob asks regarding the issue with States judging – can we hire some judges with some of the MFL money? This would increase the number of judges available that can judge any event and also give the students some new judges who haven't seen them yet during the season.

Rob asks, “What is the philosophy of the league regarding the number of students who will advance to finals in events at local tournaments and States – particularly in multiple?” It would be a good idea to stipulate in the invitation what the criteria will be. Will it be 4? 6? Where the first clean-break occurs? By stipulating in the invitation, there will be no misunderstandings and everyone will understand up front how the decision will be made. We will tournament directors to put SOMETHING in the invitation like, “Due to the uncertainty of the nature of the event, the number of multiple entries that will advance to finals will be determined on the day of the tournament by the tournament director.”

Dan – is it time to reexamine the rules for multiple? (No real response to this.)

Motion to adjourn – Hull 4:05
2nd – Bob

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Honeyman

VP/Secretary