

The Minnesota State High School League provides educational opportunities for students through interscholastic athletic and fine arts programs and provides leadership and support for member schools.



Member of the National Federation of State High School Associations

Minnesota State High School League
Board of Directors Meeting
Dec. 2, 2010

Meeting Synopsis

Action Items

- The approval of what is called Zero Week scheduling for football came at the Oct. 7 Board meeting. Schools that have had difficulty finding opponents to fill regular-season schedules may apply to employ the Zero Week option. It will give approved schools the chance to start their season one week earlier, schedule a regular-season game that wouldn't normally be available, and then have a bye – or Zero Week – later on during the season. The option will be made available for the 2011 football season. Today, unanimous approval was given to specific details pertaining to implementation of Zero Week: 1) applications may be submitted immediately for 2011 and on or after Sept. 1, 2011, for the following year; 2) a committee of two coaches, two athletic administrators and one League staff member will review and rule on each application; 3) approved teams must start conditioning one week earlier than the official date (Aug. 8 in 2011), and still must complete one week of conditioning and two weeks of practice prior to its first game; 4) approved teams must schedule a Zero Week (bye week) and may hold normal practice on only three of the days Monday through Friday, with Saturdays available for team meetings, lower level games or for strength training; 5) every application will be reviewed on its own merits, with care taken by the review committee to prevent manipulation of the scheduling option to gain a competitive advantage.
- Unanimous approval was also given to a simplified policy that pertains to assignment of member schools to administrative regions, the assignment of teams to competitive sections, and to the definitions of how activities are conducted by classes in terms of the number of competing teams. The amended policy will be employed in 2011 when teams are reassigned to competitive sections based on the latest enrollment figures provided by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Three schools – Grand Rapids, Duluth Denfeld and Duluth East – that were unsuccessful in finding a new football conference now have one. The Board placed Grand Rapids in the Central Lakes Conference, and the two Duluth high schools were placed in the Mississippi 8 Conference.
- The Board gave unanimous approval to a staff recommendation to return the State Wrestling Tournament to a three-day event, Thursday through Saturday. The tournament was expanded to include a Wednesday evening session in 2007. The schedule change is effective with the upcoming 2011 state tournament.
- Upon the recommendation of the Board's Eligibility Committee, an amendment of the Fair Hearing Policy was approved that defines the circumstances of intolerable conditions that could lead to a grant of a full-eligibility transfer. The amendment calls for reasonable and believable substantiation of the alleged intolerable conditions.

Discussion Items

- Associate Director Kevin Merkle briefed the Board on the most current alternative playoff proposal for football that is being discussed by the task force. It basically has teams qualifying for the playoffs based on their regular season performance against schools in their section. He presented numerous pros and cons regarding the proposal, as well as some illustrative maps of how sections might look, especially if Class AAAAA were reduced to fewer schools so that the enrollment differential from smallest to largest in that class wasn't so great. The issue, Merkle emphasized, boils down to whether this proposed solution to scheduling and conference shuffling outweighs increased travel for some teams and elimination of some traditional rivalry games. The Board will be asked to address an alternative playoff proposal at its January meeting, and if adopted, then several other issues will need to be addressed, including how the classes are structured and how many teams would advance to the playoffs.
- Associate Director Jody Redman briefed the Board on the development of a continuing education requirement for coaches with implementation scheduled for the 2011-2012 school year. The online education components will take an estimated two-to-three hour maximum time commitment and will be required to be renewed every three years. The policy, which will be put on the action agenda for the January Board meeting, also expands requirements for sub-varsity coaches to attend annual rules meetings and also meet the continuing education requirements.
- League staff recommended the Board address a bylaw amendment that tightens the deadlines for creating or dissolving cooperative agreements. The current language allows such actions to be taken as late as the first day of practice for a sport season. The recommendation, which will ease the process of equitable section assignments, is to revert to the former policy of an April 1 deadline for fall and winter activities of the following year and November 15 for spring activities of the same school year. Action is expected in January. If accepted and approved by the Board, it will be forwarded to the Representative Assembly for action.
- Associate Director Craig Perry said negotiations are continuing with a company that offers online capabilities of completing and storing the health questionnaire, part of the sports qualifying physical examination and required annually thereafter. The goal is to pilot the system nationally for the company.

Board Committee Reports

Eligibility Committee

The Board adopted six separate eligibility recommendations from the committee, four of which accepted the findings of the League's fair hearing officer.

Audit/Finance Committee

The Board approved the financial statements for the months of September and October. Finance Director Rich Matter also reported that the November financial statement will likely reflect a budget deficit of an estimated \$50,000 based on a decline in fall tournament attendance to the third lowest level of the past 10 years. The committee also met with a representative of the State Auditor's after the Board meeting to discuss any findings resulting from the annual audit.

Marketing Committee

The committee was briefed on current talks with several corporate partners regarding renewal of agreements. The committee also spent considerable time reviewing the findings of a survey taken at the Fall Area Meetings that identified values of League programs and services. Staff briefed the committee on development of a survey of 160 random constituents around the state in an effort to affirm the findings of the marketing report provide by Tunheim Partners.

Technology/Coaches and Officials Education Committee

The committee reviewed the ongoing efforts of the separate coaches and officials education programs. Staff reported that the numbers of both utilizing online rules meetings continues to increase and the committee is recommending that at some point in the future that in-person meetings be discontinued. The committee also is recommending that the seeding policy required at the subsection and section level be amended to make head-to-head competition the first tie-breaking procedure.

Extra Points

- Legislative lobbyist and legal counsel Roger Aronson reported that he and League staff are working to ensure that the current exemption of state sales tax on tournament tickets, as well as regular season tickets sold by member schools, is extended.
- The Executive Committee of the Board continues to discuss the current voluntary submission of competition results and statistics on the League Web site by member schools. The committee is also exploring the possibility of partnering with several outside organizations that sponsor academic competitions such as robotics.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the League Board of Directors is Monday, January 24, 2011, at the League office.