

Wisconsin Debate Coaches Association

Minutes

May 7, 2011

Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton

Schools represented: West Bend, Brookfield East, Waukesha South, Janesville Parker, Mukwonago, Madison Memorial, Rufus King, Madison West, Appleton East, Nicolet, Muskego, Marquette, Appleton West, Cedarburg, Whitefish Bay, Middleton, Sheboygan North, Rhinelander, La Crosse Central

Rolland Faas representing WHSFA, Dave Denomie, Jim Disrude from UWW, Deano Pape from Ripon College, and Jason Chapman from MDL were also present.

President Doris Sexton called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

Officers and Committee Reports

Secretary

Brian Devine moved approval of the fall meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and **approved by voice vote.**

Treasurer

Steve Sexton distributed a written report. He indicated that following the payment of spring meeting expenses, it is likely WDCA will have lost money this year, although we did clear a small profit from the state tournament. The current balance is approximately \$5,900 at this moment.

Steve proposed that a dues increase would be appropriate, as the current amount is only \$30 per school. Nick Bubb moved to raise dues to \$50 per school, and the motion was seconded. After brief discussion, **the motion passed by voice vote.**

Past President

Nick Bubb indicated that the number of scholarships was not increased because of our money situation, but it will be reconsidered next year.

Nick mentioned that no Hall of Fame honoree was selected this year.

State Tournament

Tim Scheffler reported that the most difficult part of being on a college campus was the constraints it placed on food, necessitating a fee increase.

Tim reported that there were only three middle school teams from two schools, even though we were prepared to give four trophies. This resulted in WDCA taking a loss on trophy costs.

Tim moved that the separate middle school division be eliminated from the state tournament. The motion was seconded. Steve Gargo moved to table the motion until the fall meeting. The motion was seconded. **The motion to table passed by a two-thirds vote.**

Tim raised the issue of whether it is worth the \$800 or \$900 it typically costs to have an independent tournament director, although he praised the work of Adam Jacobi this year.

Other issues Tim suggested for discussion include contingency plans for one school having a large number of entries in a small division, power pairing round IV of novice, and looking at corporate or other sponsorships of tournament awards.

Dan Hansen introduced the following motion: "The novice tournament shall consist of three randomly paired rounds followed by one power-paired round. This round will be paired high-low using procedures and tie-breakers consistent with the policy four-person division." The motion was seconded. Ken Sajdak moved to amend that novice teams be treated as single entries, with no school protections. The motion failed for lack of a second. Discussion returned to Dan's motion. Tim clarified that this change would not significantly add to the length of the novice tournament. **The motion passed 14-3.**

Tim moved that the TPP committee, with the Executive Board, could make changes in the judge preferencing procedure as needed to make a division work, if the division is small and one school has many of the entries. The motion was seconded. Tim explained that this year, judges had to be pulled in from other divisions and the hired pool to judge LD, while LD judges had no work to do. Ken moved to table the motion, and the motion was seconded. **The motion to table passed by a two-thirds vote.**

Tim moved to change the constitution

SECTION VIII – TOURNAMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

The Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee shall consist of a chairperson, appointed by the President, who serves as ~~Operations~~ Tournament Director of the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament. The committee also consists of ~~the independent state Tournament~~ an Operations Director and another member appointed by the President. A fourth member of the committee might be the Tournament Host, as selected by the Executive Board. The committee shall research tournament practices and procedures and be responsible for providing support to members on tournament operations. The committee shall assist the ~~independent~~ state Tournament Director in the administration of the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament.

The motion was seconded. Rollie Faas suggested the WHSFA would likely object to this, and Steve Gargo indicated that based on his conversations with Chuck Malone, it

would likely lead to the WHSFA going back to having their own tournament. Doris pointed out that Chuck had declined the invitation to be the independent tournament director this year. Nick pointed out that WHSFA would still be included in running the tournament. Doris shared that while Adam Jacobi was willing to work for only \$150 this year, it has cost as much as \$1,300 in the past to have Tim Dale and an assistant serve in this capacity, and Adam indicated after the tournament this year that \$150 really was not enough. Steve pointed out that Adam lives in Ripon, so the costs were unusually low for the position this year. He also mentioned that the role is really not needed, given the number of qualified people we have who can help in running the meet. Ken pointed out there is still a great benefit to independence in running a meet, and that we should at least put people in charge of divisions who do not have teams in that division, and that this might satisfy WHSFA. Tim pointed out that if the change passes, we have the summer for both organizations to discuss it, and then at the fall meeting, the final decision could be made. **The motion passed 10-2.**

Tim reported that the Executive Committee felt we should not reduce qualification standards for the state tournament, despite the advantages it would offer.

Tim indicated that TPP will draft a standing rules change for the fall meeting to make permanent the policy of allowing a local tournament to provide one leg of a state qualification.

New Coaches

Dave Denomie asked for the support of all coaches in being available to help new coaches trying to get their programs off the ground.

Jason Chapman invited Dave to coordinate with the MDL and offered his help so that more Milwaukee-area schools can get involved with both the MDL and WDCA.

Judging Standards and Ethics

Dan encouraged coaches to make suggestions for any needed updates or changes on the judging handbook. The judge training video project is still a work in progress, and work will continue over the summer.

Angela Schaffer raised concerns about judge behavior during rounds, and Doris encouraged her and all other coaches to document instances and transmit the information to Dan.

Old Business

Doris introduced Deano Pape from Ripon College and Jim Disrude from UW-Whitewater to discuss possible state tournament locations.

Deano related some of the challenges that the state tournament posed, but he indicated that Ripon College is willing to offer the campus for next year's tournament should we wish to have it there. He told us that Ripon College will continue to support WDCA regardless of what decisions are made.

Jim distributed a site proposal for UW-Whitewater as a location for the state tournament. He pointed out that his campus is large with usable buildings clustered together and with good handicapped access. The university center could be used as tournament headquarters, and neighboring academic buildings could be used for additional space for rounds. He indicated that there have not been janitorial fees when similar tournaments have been held on campus in the past, and that a box lunch can be provided for \$5.50, with buffet and restaurant options also available.

In a response to a question from Nick about space for debaters and judges, Jim indicated that there are about five different large areas that could be used for congregating.

In a response to a question from Ken about dates, Jim explained that any dates when classes are in session would work and that he could check on other dates.

Doris offered West Bend as another option for the state tournament site.

The President-Elect, James Hoggatt, then assumed the chair for the discussion.

Chad Stoiber Soik expressed concern about handicapped accessibility at Ripon, as well as a lack of space for meeting with his team. There was also concern from several coaches about the lack of services (such as hotels and restaurants) in Ripon. James pointed out the cost of food services at Ripon was quite high as well. Ken expressed concern about the small size of the buildings at Ripon. Nick pointed out that we did not necessarily use the best buildings at Ripon and that it might not be as bad in the future.

The advantages of Ripon were seen to be the prestige of being on a college campus, the quality of the food, the direct interaction with the NFL staff, and its central location.

Dan pointed out that it would be good to have institutional support from UW-Whitewater and that this would afford a chance to start building that. James pointed out that the facilities appear good and the food more affordable.

Jason pointed out that the hotel situation for Whitewater is similar to that for Ripon.

Dan suggested that we might want to consider two campuses as alternating state locations, for geographical balance.

It was agreed that we all know enough about West Bend to have an idea of its advantages and disadvantages.

A straw poll was conducted, with voters expressing their preferences in order. **The straw poll resulted in a preference for Whitewater, with Ripon as the second choice.**

The President (Doris) assumed the chair.

Doris shared concerns of tournament hosts. She asked all coaches to observe registration deadlines and to provide all requested information when registering. She asked that coaches call in cancellations as soon as possible. Some schools did not bring their required number of judges. Some schools arrived late. And some payments have been arriving very late. Several coaches echoed these concerns.

Doris raised the issue of mixed school teams, which would include students from different schools combining to form a team, or it could also include homeschool students. Paige Pritchard mentioned that there are Milwaukee schools where this type of cooperative effort might be desired. Ken mentioned that co-op situations are really up to the various districts, and not something that WDCA can control. He further said that his main concern with the homeschool students was liability. Dan mentioned that other activities require approval from the governing agency for combining of schools for teams. Nick offered the opinion that it would make a difference as to whether the schools are in the same district or not. He offered support for creative arrangements if it meant more students could participate in debate. Linda Burgan stressed that districts vary so much in size that limiting mixed teams to intra-district would be unnecessarily limiting. Doris pointed out that she sought approval from the WDCA before combining the two West Bend school teams. Sean Matson pointed out that the difficulty was in determining where to draw the line for legitimate needs for co-op opportunities.

Justice Platt moved to allow Sheboygan North and Sheboygan South to combine their teams. Ken moved to amend to make the approval contingent on the approval of the principals of the schools. The amendment was seconded. **The amendment was approved by voice vote. The amended motion was then adopted 12-4.**

Nick Bubb offered a proposal to expand the debate season into January. He expressed concern that our calendar is too compressed, especially for PF and that it would add more opportunities for debate in Wisconsin. The date of the state tournament would be the weekend of January 21. In response to questions, Doris indicated this would be the same weekend as the first forensics tournament. Nick pointed out that forensics only moved to that date when debate previously retreated from it. Sean indicated that it is a small forensics tournament and that this would not be a serious problem for the host affected.

James pointed out that the current date of state puts a lot of pressure on students to have to attend all the meets leading up to that meet, even at the risk of their academics or other responsibilities. Ken added that despite it representing a pay cut, he favors the idea because his students would be better prepared for state.

Steve Sexton responded that academically, the proposed date is around the time of semester exams for all schools and that there is not a need for a longer season. Doris added that it would add stress on budgets and would add to weather concerns. She pointed out that we have trouble finding enough hosts even with our current schedule.

Nick responded that the schedule generally does fill out by the time of the fall meeting and that regional meets are beginning to gain interest and would be more possible under the proposed change.

Sean responded that expanding the schedule would afford teams a chance to take a weekend off in the fall.

Steve pointed out that there could be a month off before state if teams do not participate in national tournaments, NFL, or CFL qualifiers

Tim mentioned that judges are more available in January due to college schedules. He pointed out that the tournaments early in the year are typically poorly attended. The proposed change would allow for a more gradual start for teams.

Dan said he would vote for an expanded schedule, but not if the state tournament were right after exams.

The question was called. **The motion passed 10-8.**

The calendar was presented, with Mukwonago changed to October 8. Tentative dates for MDL were given as: September 23/24, October 21/22, November 18/19, December 16/17, January 20/21, February 17/18, March 23/24, and dates in April and May to be announced. Ben Schultz withdrew Marquette from the September 16/17 date.

Jason and Ken both suggested moving the workshop to September 17. Nick moved to have the fall meeting on September 10 and the workshop on September 17. He explained this would work better for getting new coaches started, and that coaches would not have to choose between participating in the meeting or leading workshop sessions. **The motion was approved by voice vote.**

Nick asked whether on November 18/19 (which is Glenbrooks and MDL, but with no WDCA meets on the calendar), there could be a joint MDL-WDCA meet that weekend. Jason said he could make no promises but would advocate for it.

Greg Schams expressed concern about remote schools like his being able to host meets. Angela echoed Greg's concern and stressed that WDCA members need to make a commitment to attend a meet in a remote location to keep debate viable in other parts of the state.

Steve Sexton pointed out that with the expanded season, it is more likely schools may opt to choose to take the most expensive weekend off, which would be the remote

location. Nick responded that if we put remote meets on the calendar with no one opposite them, more people will attend them.

Brian Devine was re-elected as Secretary by unanimous consent.

Mike Traas was elected President-Elect by unanimous consent.

The new President (James) assumed the chair.

James appointed Dan Hansen to chair the Novice Packet Committee.

James mentioned Steve Gargo's email expressing a number of concerns. Justice moved to table the issue until Steve was available to discuss it. (He had to leave for another meeting.) The motion was seconded. **The motion to table was passed by voice vote.**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Devine, WDCA Secretary