

Wisconsin Debate Coaches Association

Minutes

May 16, 2015

Middleton High School

Voting Schools represented: West Bend, Brookfield East, Waukesha South, Rufus King, Sheboygan North, Sheboygan South, Whitefish Bay, Janesville Parker, Marquette, Golda Meir, Madison Memorial, Madison West, Mukwonago, Homestead, SPASH, Middleton, Milwaukee North Division

Emily Summers from the MDL was also with us.

The meeting was called to order by President Stephanie King at 9:20 a.m.

Secretary

Brian Devine moved adoption of the Fall 2014 minutes, and the motion was seconded. The motion was **adopted by voice vote**.

A tentative calendar was shared with the membership.

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|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| September 19 | Sheboygan South at Lakeland College |
| 26 | Rufus King |
| October 3 | Mukwonago |
| 9/10 | Waukesha South |
| 17 | Brookfield East |
| 24 | Whitefish Bay |
| 30/31 | La Crosse Central |
| November 7 | West Bend |
| 13/14 | Middleton/JMM |
| 21 | No Frills at West Bend |
| December 4/5 | Appleton East |
| 12 | (Sheboygan?/North Division?) |
| 19 | (Sheboygan?) |
| January 9 | NFL Qualifier* |
| 16 | CFL Qualifier at West Bend* |
| 23/24 | WSDT |

*not sanctioned meets, but included for informational purposes

Past President

John Knetzger thanked the membership for enabling him to serve in his leadership role.

Sharon Sharko, retired Greendale coach, is being inducted into the Hall of Fame. She will receive a plaque and our congratulations.

President

Stephanie had nothing to report.

New Coaches

Steve Goetsch had nothing to report.

Novice Packet

Dan Hansen was not present.

President-Elect

Shawn Matson assumed the chair as our new President. He began by thanking John for his service.

Shawn referred the membership to the written statement he submitted on behalf of the Executive Committee.

Shawn read aloud the letter of resignation from the Treasurer position submitted by Zack Vrana on March 18, 2015.

There were no questions from the membership regarding the disputed final PF round at state.

To complete the unexpired term of the office of Treasurer, John nominated Nick Bubb, and the motion was seconded. John moved that nominations be closed and that Nick be elected. The motion was seconded and **approved by voice vote.**

For the office of Secretary, Stephanie nominated Brian, and the motion was seconded. Stephanie moved that nominations be closed and that Brian be elected. The motion was seconded and **approved by voice vote.**

For the office of President Elect, Annie Robinson nominated Miloran Robinson. John nominated Steve G. Each candidate addressed the membership. Members voted by secret ballot. **Miloran was announced as the new President Elect.**

Treasurer

Nick explained that he has been in the office only a short time, so he is still getting everything figured out. He has set up a PO box. The application for incorporation as a nonprofit organization is still in progress. He indicated that it will be presented at the fall meeting, with a final vote on any constitutional changes occurring next spring.

TPP

Nick gave his last report as TPP chair, having now assumed the office of Treasurer.

Miloran asked if there was enough food at the state tournament because what she wanted was no longer available when she went to the cafeteria. Doris Sexton explained that there was enough, and Miloran agreed that she had eventually gotten what she wanted.

Judging Standards and Ethics

Tim Scheffler submitted a written summary of issues that had come up this year, and he spoke about how each was resolved.

Tim offered to discuss the final PF round dispute privately with anyone who had questions.

New Business

Doris spoke to the issue of first-year-out judges. She has observed that many of the ballots from these judges reflect a desire to debate rather than to judge it. She is also concerned that it creates discomfort because the judge will often have debated against the current competitors.

Nick spoke to the issue of using first-year-out judges in PF at state. He pointed out that there had been discussion in the past that led to the approach that there should not be restrictions on PF judges. He further said that not allowing first-year-out judges to be in the PF pool would make the state tournament much more difficult logistically.

Considerable discussion followed. Steve Sexton pointed out that if first-year-out judges are not allowed in PF, coaches will simply have to choose others to judge. He also mentioned that as PF becomes more evidence-based, it might be more important to have more experienced judges.

Stephanie mentioned that some first-year-out judges are actually very good. Steve G. mentioned that some of them actually maintain strong friendships and even share evidence with debaters.

Emily suggested having mandatory training for first-year-out judges.

Annie asked if there is an ethical obligation for judges to recuse themselves if they know the competitors. Shawn explained that this has not been an expectation, but that an actual problem should always be reported.

Doris asked if coaches could request no first-year-out judges. Shawn responded that it might work better to have a strike system that could be used for that or other purposes to be fair to all coaches.

Brian pointed out that not allowing first-year-out judges in PF could lead to a return to the original idea of using more lay judges in PF.

Miloran asked if PF and LD could share judges. Nick pointed out that that would not work with LD judge preferencing.

Zack questioned whether making former debaters wait a year to judge PF would result in better judging. He expressed concern about finding judges if first-year-out judges are eliminated for PF.

Nick reported that at this year's WSDT, there were 26 judges in PF, at least 6 of whom were first-year-out.

Shawn pointed out that he has had even more problems with non-first-year-out judges, suggesting that this may not be the actual issue with our judging quality.

Mel Townes spoke to the benefit of finding more judges from the community, which could be done to replace first-year-out judges if they are eliminated.

Shawn expressed the concern that under the scenario Mel mentions, it would be difficult for him to find the number of judges he needs to hire. Annie expressed that this was true of her as well.

Miloran indicated that PF has changed and that lay judges are no longer appropriate. Shawn disagreed with eliminating lay judges but said we should not eliminate first-year-out judges either.

Doris moved 1. that all first year judges in PF be labelled with the words "first year" behind their name on the strike sheet and 2. that each school be allowed four PF strikes. The motion was seconded.

Tim mentioned that he thinks lay judges are often worse than first-year-out judges, so he is ok with the four strikes, but he warned that this might hold schools longer after they are eliminated due to judging obligations. Nick pointed out that judges are currently obligated one round past the award ceremony. Doris further pointed out that this issue of staying longer would not be any worse than in the status quo.

Shawn moved the previous question, and it was seconded. The previous question passed with **no objection**. Doris's motion then passed on a **vote of 8-5-3**.

Nick asked what would happen if four strikes would not be feasible considering the numbers. Shawn responded that the tournament might need to hire more judges.

The Past President (Stephanie) temporarily assumed the chair.

John moved to amend the standing rules to read "No judge who completed his or her high school studies during the previous academic year may be used to judge any varsity policy or Lincoln Douglas round at the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament." The motion **passed 12-0-1**.

The President (Shawn) resumed the chair.

John introduced in writing a proposed rule change for grievance procedures for the WSDT. John and Nick responded to questions for clarification. The idea is to separate procedures for ethical issues and evidence issues. John explained that the current procedure is very cumbersome and not practical for a small organization.

John explained the basic idea behind the proposal. Nick suggested restructuring the proposal to differentiate between judge-originated and coach-originated complaints. Emily and Stephanie both spoke to the need to make clear what a challenge really is. Zack asked for clarity in how asking for evidence should impact prep time. He also suggested there should be a penalty for raising a frivolous complaint. Nick pointed out that the NDCA has a strict policy on this very issue. Dave Henning spoke to the difficulty of verifying evidence in some cases.

Shawn explained that on the national circuit, a challenge to evidence results in the resolution of the dispute determining the winner of the round, but this only works if there is a strong judging pool and judge preferencing. Zack responded that having rules written down gives judge a procedure they have to follow. Shawn cautioned that lay judges may not follow rules as precisely, which could result in many overturned ballots.

Miloran expressed concern that taking wins away from student for plagiarism humiliates them. There was considerable response from other coaches that this is to be expected for doing something as serious as plagiarizing evidence.

Annie indicated that she would offer kudos to debaters who had the ability to write convincing fake cards but acknowledged there needed to be a slap on the wrist given.

Considerable discussion ensued about how to handle these problems within the tournament given the time constraints. Doris asked about a mechanism for a debate to make a complaint directly to an ombudsman. Zack asked about allowing assistant coaches to initiate a complaint, since head coaches may not be available at the moment

the issue comes up. It was clarified that all Executive Committee members need to stay for the duration of the entire WSDT to be available to address complaints. There was considerable opposition expressed to allowing debaters who had falsified evidence to continue debating in prelims.

The lack of specific sanctions in the proposed procedures was discussed, with a variety of opinions expressed.

John's proposal will be open for suggestions and improvements over the summer, with a vote to be taken at the fall meeting.

Shawn reported that the Executive Committee is inclined to return to West Bend for the WSDT. Doris indicated that reservations of hotel blocks will take place this summer. There was a consensus that West Bend was a good choice.

Dave spoke to the issue of judges texting during rounds and even during speeches and asked for discussion. Miloran explained that there are many reasons she texts while she judges, many of which are important. Mel pointed out that she has encountered judges playing games on their phones.

John made the point that judges should be devoting their time to the kids in the room and trying to give them the most education possible. Dave explained that he does not know how to approach the issue when he sees it happening it in a round. Shawn emphasized that regardless of what rules we adopt, it is more important for the hiring coaches to address the issue head-on with their judges.

Shawn indicated that paperless guidelines, including jump/flash time, will be addressed as a summer project.

Stephanie proposed that the Novice Packet Committee no longer offer a packet, but rather three binding affirmative plan texts and a binding counterplan text. The committee would need to verify that evidence for these areas is available, and they would write up synopses for each as well. Nick and Stephanie explained that the amount of time being spent on the packet is making it impractical, especially since so much evidence is now freely available. Stephanie also pointed out that it will make a more natural transition from novice to varsity than having the students rely on a packet of evidence. Some options for helping new coaches with evidence, such as a novice drop-box, were discussed.

John moved to amend the standing rules as follows:

200.51 NOVICE POLICY DEBATE ARGUMENT LIMITS

(1) ~~Until a date determined by the Executive Committee, arguments~~ **Plan texts** in the novice division are restricted to those contained in the official novice evidence packet. ~~Following that date, packet restrictions are removed but affirmatives remain limited to the plan texts specified in~~

~~the novice evidence packet.~~ **Until a date determined by the Executive Committee, the counterplan may not be run.**

(2) The use of kritiks is not permitted. In the event that ~~an argument~~ a **negative counterplan text** is presented from outside the novice evidence packet, the judge should not consider that argument in their decision, regardless of whether the issue is raised in the debate. If the affirmative team presents a plan that is not found in the novice evidence packet **or if a negative team presents a kritik**, they should receive a loss. **It is not required for the opposing team to make this claim to the judge. Judges must know what the approved texts are and should give a loss and notify the tabroom of any infraction.**

(3) Tournament directors should enforce these novice evidence packet restrictions.

John's motion was seconded. The motion **passed 10-2-5.**

John introduced proposed changes to the Adjudicator Guidelines. They will be looked at over the summer.

Steve G. asked that the issue of scouting be addressed, as there seems to be confusion about what is or is not allowed. Nick responded that kids who have a bye should not be observing other rounds. Steve G. responded that it does happen. Zack and Dave both spoke to the benefits of students watching rounds when they are not debating. Nick spoke against allowing a competitive advantage to students using their bye to gain information from other teams' competition. He clarified that students not debating at all are allowed to watch rounds. Stephanie pointed out that such observers should not be sharing what they learned with others not in the round.

Nick suggested work continue on this during the summer.

John is proposing that the V4 contingency policy also apply to N4. This will be worked on over the summer.

Shawn announced that Steve G. would be continuing as New Coaches Chair. He then appointed Tim as TPP Chair and Emily as Judging and Ethics Chair.

In response to a question from Steve S., Shawn explained that the work going on over the summer will be accessible to all coaches by means of a link to Google docs. There was a consensus that a final draft could be ready by two weeks before the fall meeting.

The fall meeting will be on September 12.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Devine, WDCA Secretary

