Wisconsin Debate Coaches Association

**Minutes**

May 1, 2021

Online Meeting

**Voting schools represented:** La Crosse Central, Golda Meir, West Bend, Brookfield East, Marquette, Homestead, Janesville Parker, Rufus King, Fort Atkinson, Appleton North, Reagan, Sheboygan North, Bradley Tech, Verona, Madison West, Milwaukee School of Languages, Brookfield Central, Edgewood

The meeting was called to order by President Ben Sauer at 11:08 a.m.

**President’s report**

Ben thanked everyone for their cooperation in the difficult year we just had. It is still too early to know what next season will look like in terms of format of meets. The Executive Board will likely have to decide this over the summer. He reported that the listserv had to be recreated because of some technical problems. The information about this meeting was sent through the listserv, and additional announcements were posted to Facebook last night.

**Treasurer’s report**

Dan Hansen reported that we netted about $600 on the state tournament. We were able to give a little more in terms of scholarships. We made about $4,000 over the course of the season. All checks that were sent to the previous Treasurer have been found. The previous Treasurer has not made any restitution payments to the organization since December, so Ben will be contacting our legal counsel about this. In response to a question from John Knetzger, Dan reported that we are still owed around $10,000 by the previous Treasurer.

**Judging Standards and Ethics**

Stephanie King reported on the work she and her committee did on dealing with judging problems in the past year. She explained how there would be opportunities monthly for judges to ask questions and get information about judging, especially with an evolving situation regarding meet formats. There will also be introductory videos on many aspects of debate that will be posted and available to all judges.

Stephanie mentioned that Milwaukee will be the site of the national topic selection committee August 5-8. She encouraged all coaches to come to the meeting to learn about the process and participate in the open parts of the process as well.

**Tournament Practices and Procedures**

John K. apologized for any delays in getting awards sent out after state and complimented the good job that Rudig did. We saved money because we did not have to order extra this year. There was a significant increase in cost due the addition of divisions but were able to handle this cost increase without a problem. He gave us a summary of how things went at state and reported that it went well overall.

One problem that occurred was the large number of last-minute judge changes. John has introduced a proposal to allow for fines to be assessed for late judge changes.

**Secretary**

Brian Devine moved the approval of the fall meeting minutes, and the motion was seconded. **They were approved by unanimous consent.**

**DEI Committee**

Sam Larson shared a PDF with all of us, summarizing the work the committee had done. A survey was given to all coaches, and nine coaches responded. Sam went through the results of the survey with percent breakdowns on the various questions. An executive summary was also shared, showing how coaches appear to feel about the priorities the DEI Committee should emphasize going forward. Sam wrapped up by inviting all coaches to consider whether they might wish to join the DEI to participate in helping the Committee move forward in seeking progress in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Constitutional Amendment**

We then moved on to consideration of the following amendment to the Constitutional Bylaws. Annabelle Arney moved adoption of the amendment, and the motion was seconded.

Article IX – ~~Coaching~~ Ethics

Section I – Recruitment If students are recruited by a coach from another program, a letter of such recruiting attempt should be sent to the WDCA Executive Committee and to the recruiting school’s principal.

Section II – ~~Coaches’~~ Code of Conduct Coaches, tournament directors, and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner including, but not limited to: refraining from illegal activities, behaving in a harassing and/or intimidating manner, and any other morally reprehensible behaviors as deemed by the association, in the context of WDCA activities, meeting, and tournaments.; ~~pending appropriate sanctioning from the Executive Board~~.

The WDCA Executive Board, upon receipt of a report alleging such behaviors, shall conduct an investigation. Thereafter, they shall determine appropriate consequences for such behavior up to and including banning persons from WDCA sanctioned events. In the event a person is banned, this fact will be published to the membership. A ⅔ vote of the membership at a meeting may overturn such a ban.

Dan explained the reasons for his introduction of this amendment, to provide clarity and a better opportunity for the membership to have the ability to address actions of the Executive Board.

**The amendment passed by unanimous consent.**

**New Business**

Annabelle Arney assumed the chair as our new President.

Annabelle asked for nominations for Judging Standards and Ethics Chair. John K. nominated Stephanie King, and the nomination was seconded. There were no other nominations. **Stephanie King was elected.**

Annabelle asked for nominations for Secretary. Sam nominated Justin Flynn, and the nomination was seconded. There were no other nominations. **Justin Flynn was elected.**

Annabelle asked for nominations for President Elect. There were no nominations. The election will be held in the fall instead.

We moved on to consideration of the fall calendar.

September 11 Fall meeting

September 18 Marquette

September 25 Rufus King

October 2 Brookfield East

October 9 Fort Atkinson

October 16 Neenah

October 23 OPEN

October 30 Reagan/La Crosse Central

November 6 West Bend

November 12-13 Bagerland

November 20 Sheboygan North

November 27 THANKSGIVING BREAK

December 4 Milwaukee School of Languages

December 11 Brookfield Central

December 18 MDL Open

December 25 WINTER BREAK

January 1 WINTER BREAK

January 8 MCFL Qualifier/Last Ditch

January 15-16 Wisconsin State Debate Tournament

January 22 NSDA Qualifier/Madison Public Schools

**The calendar as modified above was approved by unanimous consent.**

John moved to add the following to 310.30 of the Standing Rules:

Schools with judge changes after the judge registration deadline may be charged a $35 fee per change at the discretion of the WSDT Director.

and the motion was seconded. **The change was approved by unanimous consent.**

John moved to add the following to 330.30 of the Standing Rules:

All entries will be coded as School Name + Entry initials. The WSDT Director may shorten a long school name to a shorter version or abbreviation.

and the motion was seconded. John explained a number of reasons he thought that reverting to our previous practice would be a good idea.

Ernest Chomicki argued against this because of the impossibility of eliminating judge bias. He indicated he noticed more equity and better critiques for his students when codes were used. He pointed out that CFL and NSDA use codes, so it appears to be a good practice.

Sam argued in support of reverting to school names, pointing out that some teams share codes and others do not, introducing a whole new type of inequity. TOC and national circuit tournaments use school names, and CFL and NSDA do not mainly because of their basis in forensics.

Stephanie pointed out that CFL is moving away from codes. She further explained that it hurts her students’ ability to do pre-round prep if they are not allowed to know who they will be debating, and she has found this to be disturbing to her students. There is a lot of inequity with code sharing, and it makes it harder to detect targeting of teams by judges.

Ben S. spoke in favor of school names because it makes it hard to prep when these are not known. In a small state program like ours, judges get to know what students are from which schools very quickly regardless. Codes also tend to lead to more tabbing errors.

Jeff Hannan spoke in opposition to using school names. It may be hard for judges to control their biases, and school names may trigger those biases.

Sara Van Winkle acknowledged that coding is not perfect but expressed her view that elimination of bias is important given our commitment to equity and inclusion. She suggested asking the DEI Committee be tasked with looking at this issue.

Dan H. stressed that we should put equity before competition and that codes do help with this. He also acknowledged that not knowing who they are about to face can also produce an equity issue for some students. He suggested we might want to facilitate code sharing for students while not having judges know who they will be judging.

Ben S. moved to call the question, and the motion was seconded. **The motion to call the question failed.**

Ernest argued against school names for a number of reasons, including bias and the NSDA’s use of codes. He pointed out that codes minimize bias, even if they do not eliminate it.

Sam responded that codes are not effective and that code sharing is very widespread. School names eliminates this disparity in who has access to this information. NSDA is the odd one out on this issue.

Jeff acknowledged the equity issue on code sharing is a valid point, but that the bigger equity issue is bias based on schools. He pointed out that it is hard for any judge to set biases aside.

Ben Hamburger suggested working on some compromise approaches and perhaps waiting on this issue rather than acting now would make sense.

John K. pointed out that codes are broken in a widespread fashion and that the codes really are not useful. He offered to withdraw the motion to allow more work to be done on this over the summer, but he pointed out that the current rules do not require any specific way of coding entries.

John K. withdrew his motion to allow for this.

Sam moved to add to 100.10 of the standing rules:

These dues shall not apply to programs in their first year of competition with the organization.

and the motion was seconded.

Ben S. expressed concern that there might be ambiguity about what constitutes a new program.

Sam agreed to modify his proposal to say

These dues shall not apply to a school competing that has never previously registered for an event in the WDCA.

**The motion as modified passed by unanimous consent.**

Sam moved to modify 200.60 of the standing rules:

1. Tournament directors not receiving payment of entry fees or proof of postmarked entry fees within two months of the conclusion of the tournament should first inquire with the coach of record. If an expedient resolution cannot be found, the director should write the principal of the nonpaying school requesting payment. If this yields no response, then they should write the superintendent of the school district.
2. Teams in their first year of competition with the WDCA that need assistance in paying tournament directors may ask the WDCA Executive Board for financial help in doing so. The Board shall set aside a fund each year for this exact purpose. The size of this fund is up to the discretion of the Board based on resources and number of new teams. The treasurer shall make new teams aware of this fund.
3. If tournament fees have not been paid after completing the above steps, the host school will have the option of reporting the delinquent payment to the WDCA Executive Committee. This could result in the delinquent school being ineligible for that year’s WSDT.

and the motion was seconded.

**The motion was passed by unanimous consent.**

There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Devine

WDCA Secretary