MINUTES OF THE MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION SWIM COMMITTEE MARCH 27, 2019

A meeting of the MPA Swim Committee was held on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. at the MPA office.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jason Fuller, Amy Ketch (Chair), and Jeff Thoreck.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Butler and Heath Kennie.

LIAISONS PRESENT: Duffy Akerley, Chris Branch, Kathleen Leahy, and Scott Morrison.

STAFF PRESENT: Michael Bisson.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair Amy Ketch.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: On a MOTION by Fuller/Ketch, the minutes of the January 8, 2019 meeting were UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

On a MOTION by Fuller/Ketch, the minutes of the GoToMeeting on February 7, 2019 meeting were UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

CORRESPONDENCE: Michael Bisson shared the following pieces of correspondence:

- An email exchange from Lynn Ruddy regarding an elderly gentleman that was unruly. Recommendation is to not allow anyone in for one heat to watch a family member.
- Discussion of illegal Arena suits at the Class A Girl’s meet at Bowdoin.
- A number of emails regarding five swimmers that violated the Bona Fide Team Rule.
- A revision to the Bona Fide Team Rule granting a 2nd waiver and approved by the Interscholastic Management Committee was presented to the committee, due to legislative action.
- Mr. Bisson shared a series of other emails with the committee that were reviewed and placed on file at the MPA. No official action was taken on any of the correspondence.

SCHOOL HEARINGS FOR BONA FIDE TEAM VIOLATIONS: The Swim Committee heard from Cape Elizabeth High School and South Portland High School regarding the violations from the past season.

Deering High School provided a written report with action they will take to prevent this type of incident:

- Review our internal procedures for educating ALL coaches regarding the Bona Fide Team Rule.
- Make sure we have a process in place for coaches to clearly communicate to student-athletes about B.F.T.R. Clear communication between student-athlete, coaches, and AD are critical anytime practice or competition time is missed to ensure we are upholding all MPA and local policies/procedures.
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• The above steps will be taken with EVERY sport in the Deering Athletic Department regardless of any or no consequences for Owen. It is situations such as this that provide us those opportunities to be better.

South Portland High School provided a written report with action they will take to prevent this type of incident:

• First and foremost, I would like to extend my apologies to the MPA and members of the Swim Committee that this incident occurred in the first place. I have always taken my role leading the South Portland athletic department very seriously and with integrity, but in this situation I've failed. While it would be very simple to "pass the buck" in this situation, as the leader of South Portland High School athletics I take full responsibility.

• When you first contacted me about the South Portland swimmers violating the Bona Fide Team Rule, I immediately went to see Coach Green to discuss the situation. It didn't take long to realize that we played a role in manipulating the system to circumvent the rule, which was very difficult to learn. As we worked our way through the process, Coach Green suggested he might like to appeal the suspensions. I swiftly informed him that we would do no such thing. While I am all for advocating for our student-athletes it was very clear that the adults had enabled the swimmers (whom I'm certain know the rule) to circumvent the Bona Fide Team Rule by handing down team rule consequences. In fact, I told Coach Green that we would look like "fools" going in front of the Interscholastic Management Committee during a hearing knowing the facts.

• I did submit the appeal for Mitchell as that aligns with my philosophy of supporting student-athletes in hopes that perhaps he wouldn't be punished due to mistakes/decisions made by the adults in this situation.

• While Coach Green and I haven't had the opportunity to discuss the email he sent on February 10th to the Class A and southern Maine coaches, I can assure you that it will be addressed during our post-season evaluative meeting. Of particular concern to me is where he stated "Do I believe that we violated the letter of the rule? No, I do not. Did I deliberately sidestep the rule in order to try and do the right thing for a student/athlete in a difficult situation? Yes, I did. I acted unethically in that moment, and for that I am sorry". I understand why this would be of concern to the MPA and Swim Committee and I myself would like for him to explain to me why he thinks we didn't violate the letter of the rule.

• I can assure you that moving forward the South Portland swimming program will adhere to all rules relative to student-athlete eligibility and the Bona Fide Team Rule.

Cape Elizabeth High School provided a verbal report from the athletic administrator and committee member Jeff Thoreck. Jeff agrees with the points made by Todd Livingston. Jeff will be making sure that the Bona Fide Team Rule will be shared during his presentation at the parent meeting and by the Cape Elizabeth coaches at their coaches’ meetings. He will also make this a priority item at his meetings with the coaches.

On a MOTION by Fuller/Ketch the committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to accept the reports from the schools.
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STATE MEET REVIEW 2019:

- Scott Morrison reported that Cheverus Boys won Boys Class A and Nathaniel Berry (Cony) won the Swimmer of the Meet.
- Chris Branch reported that at Girls Class A we had an issue with the number of divers (15). When it got to 9:30 we would put swimmers in the pool. Chris had to stop the swim warm up, as it was too noisy for the divers. The meet started about 20-minutes late. It was a very competitive meet between Cony and Bangor with Bangor winning. Co-Swimmers of the Meet were Cecelia Guadalupi and Gabby Low (both Cony).
- Duffy Akerley had Boys and Girls B at Orono. Below capacity with 40 boys and 50 girls on deck. 360 tickets sold on Saturday and 390 on Monday. MDI won the boys and Cape Elizabeth won the girls. Swimmer of the Meet was Liam Sullivan (MDI) for the boys and Olivia Tighe (Cape Elizabeth) for the girls. Duffy reported that UMaine staff was super to work with.
- Jeff Thoreck received feedback regarding a lack of signage for bathrooms at UMaine.
- Kathy Leahy reported that more numbers and better judging at the diving events.
- Kathy also reported a process to clean up the process for ribbons with written steps.

COACHES REPORT: Kathy Leahy reported the following:

- Coaches banquet was on a Sunday with snow. Good attendance in spite of the weather.
- Pete Small has changed the website and it will be linked to the MPA website. They would like the team picture of the state champions and rotate the pictures.
- Working to build an email database to contact college coaches to promote our swimmers.
- Conference Championships KVAC and PVC went well. Southwestern meet was more problematic by using two different venues at South Portland and Cape Elizabeth. Thursday night at South Southwestern meet had delay after delay after delay. At the North Southwestern meet there is a concern with upholding rules. Meet information needs to come out earlier.
- The Southwestern meet is run by the officials and provides scholarships and not by the WMC and SMAA. Jeff will work with the communication piece. Scott will try to schedule a meeting with the officials, WMC, and SMAA swim liaisons, and Kathy.
- Clarification on cooperative teams and cooperative individuals. Cooperative Individuals don’t score during the regular season. The cost of officials for a “tri-meet” is a factor. Additional heats are charged after ten additional heats. Tri-heat expenses for additional teams are not part of the official’s contract with the MPA anymore.

OFFICIALS REPORT: Scott Morrison reported the following:

- Many of the issues that the officials have dealt with were covered in the correspondence.
- Background checks are moving forward and will be in place for the fall of 2019.


- Removed the requirement to fax entries to the MPA.
- The committee would like to award Sportsmanship for both classes and to award in the North and South.
NFHS COACH OF THE YEAR NOMINATION: The committee developed a list of potential nominees for the annual NFHS Coach of the Year for Swimming and Diving.

MISL Coaches of the Year are Cindy Howard, Bangor Girls and Kevin Haley, Cheverus Boys. The committee will vote electronically from the nominations made to the MISL.

ELECTION OF CHAIR: The committee thanked Jason Fuller for his six years of service to the MPA Swim Committee. On a MOTION by Thoreck/Fuller, and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, the committee approved Amy Ketch as the Chair of the Swim Committee.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS:

- Scoring for Cooperative Individuals.
- Sportsmanship for North and South in Class A and B.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting of the Swim Committee will be held on Monday, September 30, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. at the MPA office.

ADJOURNMENT: On a MOTION by from Fuller/Ketch, the meeting adjourned UNANIMOUSLY at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Bisson
Assistant Executive Director

/tjm
3/27/19

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