

NMAA Commission Meeting

May 22, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

Hall of Pride and Honor

Welcome – The meeting was called to order by Mr. Gary Allison, Chairman of the Commission at 9:00 am. A roll call was conducted by Ms. Alissa Wesbrook, NMAA Assistant to the Executive Director, and the following members were present:

Mr. Ben Tensay (Large Area A)
Mr. Gary Allison (Small Area A) - *Chairman*
Mr. Robert Arreola (Large, Area B)
Mr. Dickie Roybal (Small, Area B)
Ms. Karen Nougues (Large, Area C)
Ms. Robbie Robinson (Small Area D)
Ms. Taryn Bachis (Non-Public Schools)
Ms. Isaac Gamboa (New Mexico High School Athletic Directors Association)
Mr. Roy Sanchez (New Mexico High School Coaches Association)
Mr. Adrian Pete (Jr. High/Middle School Committee)
Mr. Scott Affentranger (New Mexico Association of Secondary School Principals)
Mr. Jess Martinez (New Mexico Officials Association)
Mr. Earl James Martinez (New Mexico School Boards Association)
Ms. Mary Hahn (Activities Council) **via teleconference*

14 members were present representing a quorum.

Not Present:

Mr. Jory Mirabal (Small Area C)
Ms. Ann Stewart (Large Area D)

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the agenda, with an amendment to move the last three Action Items pertaining to bylaw revisions to Discussion Items. Mr. E. Martinez made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Mr. Roybal seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2024 NMAA Commission Meeting as presented. Mr. Tensay made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Gamboa seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

NMAA Director's Report:

Mr. Dusty Young, NMAA Associate Director, presented the Director's Report. He discussed four (4) items in his report: 1) stated spring sports wrapped up this past weekend and it was another successful year; 2) thanked Cleveland High School, Rio Rancho High School and ABQ Academy for hosting spring events; 3) provided results from the spring athletic director survey which included information pertaining to the NMAA calendar, boys' volleyball, sub-varsity officials assignments, state soccer tournament format, and basketball district tournaments; and 4) stated that the NMAA Foundation Golf Classic fundraiser will take place on June 24th at Tanoan Country Club.

NMAA Financial Report:

Ms. Shari Kessler-Schwamer, NMAA Business Manager, presented the NMAA Financial Report. She discussed two (2) items in her report: 1) presented box reports for all state championships

but stated winter and spring events have yet to be finalized; and 2) provided ticket sales information for all state championships.

NMAA Activities Report:

Ms. Tammy Richards, NMAA Assistant Director, presented the activities report. She discussed three (3) items in her report: 1) reported that FFA is the only activity that has yet to put on its State Event and that all have been successful up to this point; 2) stated participation numbers are continuing to grow in most activities; and 3) provided additional information pertaining to the 2024 NMAA Foundation Golf Classic fundraiser.

New Mexico Officials Association Report:

Mr. Zac Stevenson, NMAA Commissioner of Officials, presented the NMOA report. He discussed six (6) items in his report: 1) provided a recap of the hard work done by officials at the recent Spring Championships; 2) stated that NMOA elections will take place in the coming weeks for open positions, including officers; 3) reported that numerous NMOA bylaw revisions were approved, including a change in registration fees; 4) provided information regarding the Summer Collaborative Conference that will take place in July; 5) stated that New Mexico will be participating in a new pilot program with DragonFly as that platform continues to evolve, and 6) thanked Carl Vigil for all of his hard work during his first year working with the NMAA/NMOA.

General Discussion/Information Items

Softball: State Tournament Format - Ms. Sally Marquez, NMAA Executive Director, discussed the current state softball tournament format and logistical challenges that result from a double elimination bracket with so many games – especially in situations of inclement weather. She stated that based on the spring survey, athletic directors were in strong support of holding both the 1st round and quarterfinal games at host sites, with only the semis and finals being played at a central location. This would adjust the tournament format from the current double elimination bracket, and the group discussed moving to best of three in early rounds similar to baseball or keeping single elimination until the semifinals begin. General feedback was to continue to explore other options for the state softball tournament.

Football: Higher Seed Hosts All Rounds - Ms. Marquez discussed changing state football from past history hosting the semis and finals to the higher seed hosting all rounds. She reported that both athletic directors and coaches supported this in the spring surveys to schools. Mr. Young provided additional data as to how each classification voted within the coach survey – only 5A was not in favor of the change. Feedback generally supported the higher seed hosting.

Football: Neutral / Centralized Site for Finals - Ms. Marquez reported that both the coach and athletic director surveys supported the use of a central and/or neutral location for the state football finals. Mr. Young provided additional data for both, stating that the results were similar for central/neutral locations. He added that the 8-Man through 4A classifications were the only ones in favor of a central location. The group discussed this topic extensively, with both pros and cons to making a change of this magnitude. Pros included ensuring top of the line facilities for the championship games (especially with small schools) and creating a bigger event. Cons included loss of revenue due to travel and less ticket sales, not giving other communities around the state an opportunity to host, and moving away from a long-standing tradition. Mr. Allison recommended that a survey be sent out to the membership regarding a potential one-year trial utilizing a central location for all classes.

Swimming & Diving: Dual Participation - Ms. Marquez stated there have been difficulties with the club and high school seasons running concurrently. She stated that survey results were somewhat split with a small majority of athletic directors in favor of eliminating dual participation, thus forcing swimmers to choose either club or high school during the NMAA's official season.

Wrestling: Co-ops - Ms. Marquez stated athletic director survey results were in favor of allowing teams to co-op in wrestling due to the team component the sport offers. There are some concerns that although there is a team component, individual performance is what determines team champions similar to sports like track & field, cross country, golf, tennis, and swimming & diving. Feedback included some support but questioned whether opening this up for wrestling would lead to issues in other individual sports.

Participation vs. College Athletes/Teams - Ms. Marquez stated that there are currently bylaws in place regarding amateur status and students not being able to compete against any professionals or collegiate teams. However, bylaws do not reference an interscholastic student competing as “unattached” from their school in events like track meets that also feature “unattached” collegiate athletes. Feedback included continued discussion regarding this item.

Coaches Education Requirements - Ms. Marquez stated she met with NMPSIA regarding current coaching requirements that include taking courses for bullying and hazing and protecting students from abuse through the NFHS Learn platform. She said NMPSIA would be open to changing those requirements for coaches that are employees of a school and taking similar trainings through the school/district. Contract coaches, however, should still be required to complete the NFHS courses. Feedback included support for making these adjustments and including contract coaches that also take other trainings through their school/school district as a local requirement. The Commission recommended taking this to the Board of Directors as an action item at its next meeting.

Bylaw Revisions: Section 2, 6 and 13 (Board Meetings, Appeals, and Appeal Processes) - Ms. Marquez discussed proposed revisions to Sections 2, 6, and 13 that the NMAA staff has been working on based on member school feedback and assistance from legal counsel. These revisions would include the following items: Section 2 - Appeals are not open to the public; Appeals may not be heard after the deadline to appeal. Sending school will be notified of the appeal and can speak at the appeal in opposition. Appeal will be heard via Zoom or teleconference; Documents not included in the Appeal Review Committee appeal cannot be added to an appeal to the Board of Directors; Section 6 – Deleted student participation language to ensure that parents do not use this paragraph for reasoning not to follow eligibility bylaws. Student discipline is at the discretion of the school; Hardship Petition - Sending school will be notified and can oppose in front of the Hardship Committee. Parents sign off on Petition for Eligibility that all documents have been included in the Regular and Hardship petition; Determination of eligibility by the NMAA does not guarantee playing time. That is the discretion of the school; Section 13 – Request for appeals must be initiated by the school. No parent appeals. Request for appeal must be within 10 business days. NMAA must be in receipt of \$250 fee prior to the scheduled appeal. If the appeal is modified or overturned, the fee will be reimbursed. Parents must sign off that they have been notified that all documents must be presented to the Appeals Review Committee. Appeal hearing will be scheduled within 5 business days. Appeal hearing will be heard via Zoom or teleconference. Appeal hearings will be audio recorded. Sending school can write a statement that they object to, or they can be present at the hearing and make a statement as such; Hearings will be recorded. Hearings will be de novo (new information, testimony allowed). Will look at “gray.”; Five board members to hear the appeal on record (no new information, documents, testimony). In cases of appealing a sanction, testimony will be heard. Any evidence or testimony not at the Appeal Committee hearing will not be considered. No testimony will be heard. Board will review Appeals Committee decisions and all documents including the recording; Appeal must be requested within 10 business days. NMAA must be in receipt of \$500 fee prior to the scheduled appeal. If the appeal is modified or overturned, the fee will be reimbursed. Parent appeals will be considered by the Board, but the school must initiate the appeal and indicate it is a parent appeal; Five Board members will review Appeals Committee decisions and all documents

including the recording within 5 days of the appeal. The board can review independently prior to the scheduled hearing; Parents and school can attend the hearing but not make a statement. The Board decides whether the Executive Director and Appeals Committee applied bylaws correctly; Definitions – BUSINESS DAY - Weekdays that are not state or federal holidays or when the NMAA Offices are closed; RECORD - The record is all materials and testimony (as recorded) provided to the Appeals Review Committee or the Board of Directors for consideration during an appeal hearing; RECORDS - All types of materials containing information, including without limitation, educational records maintained by a school or health care provider, electronic or hard copy documents, emails, social media posts, other electronically stored information, photographs, videos, on which information is included. Feedback included unanimous support for all of these revisions. The Commission recommended that these be taken to the Board of Directors for action at their next meeting.

Action Items

Football: Seeding/Selection Criteria - Mr. Isaac Gamboa, representing the NMAA Football Sports Specific Committee, presented a proposal to consider removing “Wins vs. District Champions” from the criteria used to seed/select teams for the state football championships. Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Tensay made the motion to approve the proposal. Mr. E. Martinez seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

Soccer: Regular Season Tournament Tie Breakers - Mr. Chris Kedge, NMAA Assistant Director, presented a proposal to consider adding verbiage to Bylaw 7.17.1 G so that teams are credited with a win/loss to their record if a winner is determined via overtime or shootout during a regular season soccer tournament. Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Pete made the motion to approve the proposal. Ms. Bachis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

NMAA Bylaw 3.1: Governance Structure - Mr. Young presented a proposal to update section 3.1 of the NMAA Handbook (NMAA Governance Structure) based on school movement up/down within the 2024-2026 classification & alignment block. Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Pete made the motion to approve the proposal. Mr. E. Martinez seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

Air Quality: Consider Adoption of Policy - Mr. Scott Owen, NMAA Assistant Director, presented a proposal to implement an “Air Quality” policy to provide guidance for schools when air quality is questionable. The new policy would read as follows in Bylaw 7.6.23: During periods of poor air quality, the local AQI (Air Quality Index) should be monitored. The AQI for your current location and time can be located by entering your zip code into the [Airnow.gov](https://airnow.gov) website. Exposure to air should be managed more carefully for students with pre-existing lung or heart conditions. When the AQI rises above 100 schools should consider removing such athletes at risk from practice or competition. At AQI values above 150 serious consideration should be given to rescheduling the activity or moving it indoors if possible. Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Gamboa made the motion to approve the proposal. Mr. Arreola seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

Heat Illness: Consider Adjustments to Current Policy - Mr. Owen presented a policy to Update current Heat Illness Prevention Protocol to 1) include Wet Bulb Globe Temperature as an alternative to Heat Index and 2) include required activity restrictions at specific heat measurement thresholds. The proposed policy is as follows:

7.6.21 Heat Illness Prevention Protocol

Each school is responsible for obtaining either a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature or Heat Index reading at the site of practices and competitions. Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) considers more environmental factors than heat index and should be a school's first choice when evaluating conditions and planning activities. In the absence of a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature reading, a digital psychrometer or other instrument may be used at the site of the activity to measure the heat index. The use of a weather app on a cell phone is permissible to measure heat index if no other instrument is available to measure heat index at the site of the practice or competition.

A cold-water immersion tub or other form of rapid on-site cooling should be available for all warm-weather practices. If exertional heat stroke is suspected, use immersion for on-site cooling before transporting to the hospital. Access to water should always be available to all athletes.

1. Practice Protocols

- a. WBGT < 87 or Heat Index < 95 Degrees
 - i. Provide at least 10 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout each hour of practice. Recommend at least two to three separate rest breaks each hour.
- b. WBGT 87 to 89.9 or Heat Index of 95 Degrees to 99 Degrees
 - i. Maximum practice time is 2 hours.
 - ii. For All Sports: Provide at least 15 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout each hour of practice. Recommend at least three to four separate rest breaks each hour.
 - iii. For Football: Players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice that does not involve contact, and all protective equipment must be removed during conditioning activities. If the Heat Index/WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing football pants without changing to shorts.
- c. WBGT 90 to 92 or Heat Index of 100 Degrees to 104 Degrees
 - i. Maximum practice time is 1 hour.
 - ii. For All Sports: There must be 20 minutes of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice and no conditioning activities.
 - iii. For Football: No protective equipment may be worn during practice that does not involve contact.
- d. Above 92.0 WBGT or Heat Index Above 104 Degrees
 - i. No outdoor practice. Outdoor practice cannot take place until WBGT level is 92.0 or below or heat index is 104 or below.

2. Competition Protocols

- a. WBGT > 87 or Heat Index > 95
 - i. Soccer Modification - The referee shall stop the game for a heat time-out lasting no less than five minutes during the first and second half. The time-out will be called at the first logical time to stop play after the 20-minute mark of each half.
 - ii. Football Modification - Officials shall stop the game for a heat time-out at the first dead ball after the halfway point of each quarter. If either team has possession of the ball inside the other team's twenty-yard line, officials may delay this time out until either the offensive team scores or the ball is turned over.
- b. Above 92.0 WBGT or Heat Index Above 104 Degrees
 - i. No outdoor competition. An outdoor competition cannot take

place until WBGT level is 92.0 or below or heat index is 104 or below.

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. E. Martinez made the motion to approve the proposal. Mr. Sanchez seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

Eligibility: Transferring After Tryouts - Ms. Marquez presented a proposal to update current policy to provide additional opportunities for students who transfer after being cut or before they've participated in a sanctioned NMAA competition in that sport. Bylaw 6.13.1 Season/Championship Limit shall read as follows:

A. A Senior High Student is eligible for no more than four (4) seasons in any sport unless that student participated at the senior high level during his/her 8th grade year in which he/she is eligible for no more than five (5) seasons. A Junior High/Middle School Student shall not participate for more than three (3) seasons in a given sport, regardless of circumstances (7th, 8th, and 9th for junior high and/or 6th, 7th and 8th for middle schools).

B. A Student is limited to one (1) season per school year in a specific sport. This applies to Students transferring from another state where the season may have already occurred in that sport.

C. It shall be considered a season of participation when a student participates in an NMAA sanctioned competition, at any level, in that sport. (See Appendices for definitions of participant, participation, and practice.)

D. Students who transfer after participating in tryouts or after practicing at that school for five (5) or more days after the official practice start date will be ineligible for varsity participation in that sport at the new school for the remainder of the school year.

E. Students who transfer after participating in an NMAA sanctioned competition, at any level, will be ineligible for participation at any level in that sport at the new school for the remainder of the school year.

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Pete made the motion to approve the proposal. Mr. Sanchez seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

Ms. Hahn stated that Rio Rancho High School and the New Mexico Student Council Association will be hosting the VISION National Conference June 21-23, 2024.

Consider Adjournment:

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Tensay made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 a.m. Mr. Gamboa seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).