

NMAA Commission Meeting
September 4, 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. Britt Cooper (Large, Area B)
Mr. Dickie Roybal (Small, Area B)
Mr. Jory Mirabal (Small, Area C)
Mr. Adrian Ortega (Large Area D)
Ms. Robbie Robinson (Small Area D)
Ms. Taryn Bachis (Non-Public Schools)
Ms. Isaac Gamboa (New Mexico High School Athletic Directors Association)
Mr. Adrian Pete (Jr. High/Middle School Committee) **arrived at 9:08am*
Mr. Scott Affentranger (New Mexico Association of Secondary School Principals)
Mr. Roy Sanchez (New Mexico High School Coaches Association)
Mr. David Briseno (New Mexico Officials Association)
Ms. Mary Hahn (Activities Council)
Mr. Earl James Martinez (New Mexico School Boards Association)

15 members were present representing a quorum.

Not Present:

Ms. Karen Nougues (Large, Area C)

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Martinez made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Robinson 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 May 22, 2024, Commission Meeting as presented. Mr. Martinez made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Roybal seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (14-0).

NMAA Director's Report:

Mr. Dusty Young, NMAA Associate Director, discussed four (4) items in his report: 1) introduced new members to the Commission - Mr. David Briseno representing the NMOA, Mr. Britt Cooper representing Large Area B and Mr. Adrian Ortega representing Large Area D; Small Area B will be open for election in October; 2) stated the Inaugural High School Sports Summer Conference took place in July which was very successful and received positive feedback from the membership; 3) reported that the NMAA Foundation had a very successful year in 2023-2024 and will continue its hard work to distribute even more funds back to the students of New Mexico this year through its school grant and scholarship programs and new initiatives to support athletic directors and officials; and 4) stated fall sport seasons are up and running and going well but some issues have come up with the sport of football and cancellations/reschedules because of weather. Mr. Tensay added that the membership should consider adopting a statewide weather app to help make decisions regarding lightning/weather delays.

Mr. Adrian Pete Joined the meeting.

NMAA Financial Report:

Ms. Shari Kessler-Schwamer, NMAA Business Manager, presented the NMAA Financial Report. She discussed two (2) items on her report: 1) provided final reports for all 2023-2024 State Championships which showed a decrease in income due to significant increases in overall event expenses; and 2) presented ticket sales information for all 2023-2024 State Championships.

NMAA Activities Report:

Ms. Jackie Martinez, NMAA Assistant Director, presented the NMAA Activities Report. She discussed four (4) items on her report: 1) stated that the annual Activities Council Meeting took place on September 3rd; 2) reported on increasing participation numbers in all activities and overall successes for 2023-2024; 3) provided information regarding the NMAA's inaugural State Marching Band Competition that will take place on October 26th; and 4) reported that State One Act Play will be the only other culminating event for activities this Fall with all others taking place in the spring.

New Mexico Officials Association Report:

Mr. Zac Stevenson, NMAA Director of Officiating Services, and Mr. Carl Vigil, NMAA Commissioner of Officials, presented the New Mexico Officials Association Report. Mr. Stevenson discussed four (4) items: 1) welcomed new NMOA President, David Briseno, to the Commission; 2) reported on the changes made to officials certification and advancement policies which will lead to more merit based selections for state championship assignments; 3) provided information regarding training/educational tools that are now integrated both on DragonFly and NFHS Learn; and 4) stated that there are 14 schools utilizing RefReps and several others considering the program.

Mr. Vigil discussed four (4) items: 1) reported on officials' numbers for Fall sports which are all at their highest levels since the pandemic; 2) stated that officials' registration fees will again be waived for member school students and staff; 3) provided information regarding increases to officials' registration fees approved by the NMOA Board that will provide individuals with a second sport free of charge; and 4) reported that less varsity football games have had to be rescheduled due to officials' assignment issues compared to previous years. Mr. Sanchez asked about the new changes for officials' advancement and how they may impact state championship assignments and state clinic attendance. Mr. Stevenson stated that the updates should not be an issue as they will still be part of the criteria used to select officials for state, while also not eliminating some stronger officials' because they cannot make meetings and/or clinics every week/year.

Discussion/Informational Items:

Esports: Use of Titles Like Overwatch - Mr. Young discussed the push from Esports coaches around the state to adopt an FPS title like Overwatch or Valorant as part of the NMAA's official spring season. He reported that the NMAA has been sensitive to this issue due to the nature of the games and FPS style within the school setting, but stated these particular titles are more objective based and animated in nature compared to stereotypical FPS titles. He also reported that many schools and students are already participating in these titles in other leagues, just not through the NMAA's Esports programs.

Football: State Playoff Host Site Requirements - Mr. Young stated that the NMAA Board of Directors wanted to revisit the issue pertaining to host sites utilized during State Football and the ability of certain communities/facilities to provide a first-class venue/experience for participants and spectators. He presented information regarding guidelines the Football Sports

Specific Committee discussed at a previous meeting but stated it may be difficult to apply them statewide due to the significant differences between small and large school playoff games. Feedback was that schools earn the opportunity to host playoff games and should not be penalized for their facility when funding to make certain upgrades may not be attainable.

Softball: State Tournament Format - Ms. Sally Marquez, NMAA Executive Director, discussed possible updates to the State Softball Tournament that would move the first round and quarterfinals to single elimination matchups at host school sites – potentially four schools playing at the site of the higher seeds (1-4). The semifinals and finals would then be held in the Albuquerque metro area and would utilize a double elimination format. This proposal will move forward to the NMAA Board for discussion with possible action taking place in November / December for the 2025 championships. Softball coaches will also be surveyed regarding the issue prior to the next Commission/Board Meetings.

Bylaw 3.11.1: Game Contracts - Ms. Marquez discussed Bylaw 3.11.1 which currently allows either administrators or designated school employees to enter into game contracts. She stated this has caused some issues where coaches are now scheduling and possibly dropping out of games/tournaments. The group agreed this was an issue and felt that scheduling should be in the hands of the athletic director. The importance of the A.D. role was also discussed, and the group feels this should be promoted throughout the state. Ms. Marquez stated she will echo this sentiment during the upcoming New Mexico School Board Association regional meetings that the NMAA presents at each Fall.

Scholastic Eligibility: Removal of Clean Slate - Ms. Marquez discussed Bylaws 6.2.1 D and 9.4 regarding the clean slate rule and the possibility of eliminating and/or adjusting this. She stated that a recent survey showed that 75% of athletic directors wanted to leave the bylaws as is.

Eligibility of Head Coaches Children - Ms. Marquez reported that the Appeals Committee has asked the NMAA to consider adding specific verbiage to the NMAA Handbook that would address eligibility of students transferring to a new school with their mother/father that has been hired as a head coach at the new school. There has been an uptick in these types of eligibility requests that have traditionally been granted by the appeals committee and feedback is needed from the membership to see where the NMAA goes with this issue – many of these requests are using this ruling to take advantage of the situation. Feedback included leaving things as is because there are so many different situations to look at and adding a rule may negatively impact a student that is simply transferring for reasons out of their control.

Middle School Cross Country Invitational - Ms. Marquez stated the inaugural Middle School Cross Country Invitational will take place on October 18th at St. Pius High School. Many schools have already shown interest in attending and it should be an exciting/successful event.

NMAA Annual Meeting - Ms. Marquez stated the NMAA's Annual Meeting of Schools will take place this year on September 25th via zoom. The change to a virtual meeting will be made due to the new summer conference that included athletic director training throughout the event.

Sportsmanship / Compete with Class - Mr. Allison discussed some of the unsportsmanlike behavior being displayed at volleyball matches and other sporting events where negative comments are made directly at students from the opposing team. Feedback included the need for administrators to take responsibility for this at the local level, communicating early and often with coaches, parents, and students that this type of behavior is unacceptable. This also feeds into the conversation the group had regarding the importance of the athletic director role.

Action Items

Marching Band & JROTC: Physicals, EAPs, Heat Illness - Ms. Marquez presented a proposal to update bylaw 8.1.3 to include Marching Band along with heat illness prevention and air quality guidance in the activities of JROTC and Marching Band.

8.1.3 Physicals/Insurance/Catastrophic Insurance Requirements.

CURRENT Bowling and JROTC participants must maintain an annual physical that is kept on file with the local school (Please see 6.15 for specific guidelines). Bowling and JROTC participants must also have insurance coverage on file with the school as specified in 6.16.

8.1.3 Health and Safety Requirements.

PROPOSED Bowling, Marching Band, and JROTC participants must maintain an annual physical that is kept on file with the local school as per 6.15 and must also have insurance coverage on file with the school as per 6.16. Additionally, JROTC and Marching band must adhere to heat illness prevention protocols as per 7.6.21 and be aware of air quality guidance as per 7.6.23.

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Tensay made the motion to approve the proposal. Ms. Bachis seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (15-0).

Consider Adjournment

Mr. Allison asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Roybal made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously (15-0).