

# N.E.P.S.S.A Fall League Coaches' Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: November 7, 2010

Location: Williston Northampton

Dear Coaches,

Please accept the following record of our league coaches' conversation from the fall. The most important item of that meeting was the NEPSAC athletic directors' association call to restructure the 2012 NEPSSA championship meet format. In order to accomplish this task, it will be necessary that full representations of coaches from league members attend a meeting in the spring. A date has not been set yet, but we are anticipating a Sunday afternoon in April.

As you will read below, several proposals were offered and discussed at the fall meeting. These were explained by each author and by way of handouts that will be available again, perhaps after some revision, and well in advance of our meeting in the spring. Please be sure you take some time to look this material over and plan to attend the spring meeting. Any and all proposals are welcome. Send these along with any questions or comments to Bob Tyler, NEPSSA President.

Please also note that there will be no changes to the 2011 championship meet to be held at Exeter March 4 & 5, 2011.

Last but not least, the 2010-2011 league dues are now due. Please see the dues invoice posted on the NEPSSA site for details.

Wishing you a successful season,

The NEPSSA Executive Committee

Bob Tyler, President

David Koritkoski, Vice-President

Sonja O'Donnell, Secretary-Treasurer

Schools (Coaches) in Attendance:

Exeter (Don Mills and Jean Chase Farnum)

Andover (Jacques Hugon)

Worcester (Barbara Gould)

Hopkins (Chuck Elrick)

Loomis (Fred Seebeck and Bob DeConinck)

Portsmouth Abbey (Robert and Christine Sahms)

Deerfield (John Burke and Sonja O'Donnell)

Suffield (Andy Lowe)

Miss Porter's (Ann Befroy and Katie Riccobon)

Williston (David Koritkoski)

Choate (Sara Massa)

Hotchkiss (Tom Trethaway)

Milton (Bob Tyler)

Eaglebrook (Bo Tanner)

NMH (Anne Atkins)

Kingswood-Oxford (Alex Krauss)

Avon Old Farms (Robin Ketcham)

Westminster (Grant Gritzmacher)

12:00 p.m. Bob Tyler, NEPSSA President, welcome.

Mark Conroy, head of NEPSAC AD's association to talk about the philosophy of the AD's perspective on the league championship meet.

Introductions

Huge thank you to Jacques for updates to NEPSSA website, new and improved yet again.

Jacques:

- Apology for the long email
- Brief overview of new features: see handouts from Jacques, note changes
- Incredible resource for depth chart and season bests
- Do the same thing with rosters; just provide the Hytek version—upload the Hytek file and we are done; once published it will read the athletes to see if any of the athletes are already present in the database. The software will automatically recognize the name, so we need not verify names used for athletes. All names in database from 2007. Only athletes to register will need to be eventually just the new athletes.
- The only change for dual meet: upload the pdf and the Hytek meet manager results' file—just upload it and Jacques will take care of publishing it. This will produce a depth chart for your team.
- Get rosters in shape.

Bob, wow! It only works if everyone does her/his part by uploading results, rosters, etc...

For those not present, please update all coaches' information and do your part.

Question: If diving is part of the Hytek results' file, it will be uploaded and recorded for divers too. Input manually—send to Jacques.

2009-2010 Budget approved.

Add a line item for website management: All accepted! Establish funds for the future of this work that Jacques has created for our purposes.

Bob and the Championship Meet: Concern.. The meet has grown and we cannot run the meet as it has been run in the past. 2011—the meet will be at Exeter, Saturday and Sunday! March 4 and 5. We cannot change for this season's meet. Going forward for 2012 championships and beyond...

Mark Conroy, Williston, President of NEPSAC, shares the ADs' perspective followed by Q&A:

- Goals of the board: consistency in the way post season tournaments are run.
- Bob Tyler represented NEPSSA and attended the fall meeting of the NEPSAC ADs
- Executive board found two primary factors; ancillary factors
  - Length of the days: Maintain the student-athlete and the experience; concern about the impact on students as many are in trimesters; the impact on the adults—student impact and academic experience are primary.
  - Cost factor: Impact of the economy, shrinking budgets within the he current format in terms of lodging and travel expenses

- Ancillary factors: Unlike other “individual “sports in NESAC (wrestling, squash, track, cc), this particular sport (swimming) has been dominated by just a few schools. This is the only sport other than wrestling that has one championship. Cross Country will have a meet of champions the following Saturday. The CC championships will have their New Englands in five divisions and then a meet of champions. Swimming is the only sport with one championship event.
- The challenge with the swimming event is Sunday.
- The different pressures, but we (NEPSAC) feel we are at a place now that we’d like to have the coaches’ association consider the format and the length of day.
- Creating divisions is up for consideration: What is the experience of all the athletes in the sport? What is the difference? Are we serving the most kids we can? Are we serving the small schools as much as we can?

- Question: What is the value of the championship experience, the purpose? Is it to prepare for college?
- Response: That is secondary. The experience for the teams and the student-athletes are primary.
- Question: Facilities have guided us here. We have three venues. If we have three different meets do we have three different management groups running those meets?
- Response: Track and Field moves from east to west. There is a burden on the school that hosts. It’s a community effort. Jobs are split up by schools. All hands on deck.
- David K: We do that right now. If we went to divisions, would this body be able to cover?
- Response: There is one coaches’ association but there are two classes, class A and B. There is one association and consistency the way the events are run.
- Question: We have a facility problem.
- Consider an off-site venue: Wesleyan site (Sara’s research): Two years ago about \$1500 for rental of the facility for the weekend. Every fourth year Wesleyan would be hosting NESAC.
- Could we use college facilities?
- Response: In general we like to host these events on our campuses, but every sport has its difficult circumstances. But, if we do not have a school that could host this, it is perfectly reasonable to consider this option.
- Sara: This is a big issue.
- David: But we could host a class meet at many schools, even six-lane schools.
- But cost. Three venues will triple costs. Travel may be less, etc, but costs will be high for the league.
- Sarah: Near Cromwell and Middletown there are many low cost hotels for a single meet option in a larger pool.
- Each meet will be one day and so the costs won’t triple but will be more.
- Are we married to the trial finals format? Top 16 are the top seeds.
- Championship meets are trials and finals. This is part of the sport.
- Inconsistencies in division qualifying meets are of concern.
- A timed-final meet would get a meet in one day.
- Format ideas—from Andy Lowe.
- Are there any other schools using collegiate facilities?
- Answer: Ice hockey.
- Are there any liability issues?
- Answer: usually schools have to provide insurance certificates.
- Prep-school trainers have to travel to the competition. Our philosophy is that the school participating provides their own trainers. But for track, we do pay for trainers at that event.

- Let's say if the Wesleyan ideas was the one we accepted. Would we contribute dues and divvy up dues to off-set travel, etc for teams coming from a farther distance.
- Response: Dues do not cover championship expenses. They are usually a separate entity. Would there be a way to have a kiddy to share the expense?
- Are there tax implications to schools with the income?
- There are ways to allow for this to take place.
- Try not to move off our campuses. It's exciting to have such an event.
- The pool itself has its own requirements for national standards and safety, etc.
- If we were to go to divisions, how or what would the NEPSAC say about setting that?
- There is no consistency to how that is done. Enrollment, strength of schedule, and program history.

End Q&A with Mark. General discussion:

Fred: Before we start talking about proposals, let's talk about what we want to keep and what are we willing to let go? What do we want to make work? How can we make this work? We have to find ways to make it work rather than find ways not to make it work.

- Fundamental: the students!
- By-laws: We need to not make any decision today that will be binding. Another meeting to make the decision. Bob's thought is that this will be a 12-month process. We need to have time to think.
- This does need 100% participation from the coaches.
- What are the guiding principles for our athletes and program:
  - We want to have an end of season goal for each athlete; the ability to taper, shave and race at the end of the season. The format does not matter as much. The notion that half the team will not participate. Swimming is different from other sports. There is that sense that you are tapering and not offering that meet to everyone is not serving them.
  - Barbara: We could take our best kids to this meet and all the kids participate. The meet and swimming have gotten bigger especially for the girls. Provide the opportunity for the best swimmers to swim at a championship. The star swimmers from each team should be able to compete against one another.
  - Even on a small team, we want all to compete against the top swimmers in the league. Even a small team who might have a top swimmer.
  - Participation for as many as possible at the right level.
  - Diving will be tricky with comparing two sites and judges scores. We'd have to have a minimum score to hit twice in the season, for instance. It would take a well thought out plan. I don't want diving to be eliminated from swimming finals. If so, we would further marginalize divers. Doing some dives at finals is helpful to the athletes.
  - Separate day for diving trials; same judges.
  - What do we want from this meet; what do we want to keep?
    - include diving
    - most kids possible
    - a trials-finals meet either one day or on separate days
    - inclusive
    - 350 boys/400+ girls last NEs
    - There are a lot of kids that do not participate already.
    - If we want more inclusive for small teams, we need divisions.

- Three trials meets and top 8 or 16 go off to championship meets Saturday. Split regionally and likely no more than 10 teams per site. Wednesday travel will be an hour.
- Allow the best kids to compete against one another.
- We do not need to have diving during the finals meet. Perhaps it is important to get diving done somewhere else with consistency.
- Diving is part of the swim and dive competition.
- Typically 16 divers at NEs for “finals” lasts 45 minutes.
- Keep B relays! To have kids swim lifetime bests.
- Diving always get second shaft. If diving was scored separately wouldn't it draw more people?
- Diving would die. Swimming sustains diving. No one will hire a coach for six athletes.
- Unusual vis-a-vis other discussions, I did not hear that this meet is a showcase for our athletes to make AA cuts, etc.
- College: Keep in the back of our mind, what we need to do, what is best to allow our swimmers to be as successful as they can possibly be. How can we get our kids to swim as fast as possible within the parameters?
- Regional vs. Division: If the accent weren't so much on team scoring and bringing the best to finals.
- What time do we feel is acceptable a time to finish on Sunday evening?
- ADs do not want Sunday. If we were done by 6 that would be fine?

Let Andy, Dave, and Barbara highlight their proposals:

1. Andy: See handout
  - a. Diving: having a smaller number of divers attend a Friday trials meet is a trade off for missing school that day. Maybe even do all eleven dives and get it done or 8 dives and the three at finals.
2. Dave: See handout and email; very similar to Andy's proposal.
  - a. If we don't go to divisions, teams that do not have qualifiers may not attend the meet.
  - b. The Wednesday trials will be long.
  - c. What are you gaining if you take a day of swimming on a Wednesday? The only way we see this happening is a Saturday-Saturday a week apart.
  - d. Do we need to have the relays in the event on Wednesday? Wednesday is just individual.
  - e. But if I only have a B relay, I am not going to go.
  - f. Consistency? What are we willing to sacrifice? We haven't talked about it.
  - g. Wed-Sat is better for taper but not for inclusion.
  - h. Hybrid: the last Saturday in February—lose other meets and host regional meets; timed finals; diving on Friday; everyone goes; top 24 times from across those meets and top 24 divers—figure that out—no B relays.
  - i. Location is a better more effective way to organize.
3. Barbara: We need to go to two divisions. Multiple sites do not allow a true championship meet. I will not travel to the next meet with my one or two athletes. Two meets, trials and finals; two classes or three classes (Class A, Class B and Class C).
  - a. Many times decisions have been made for the benefit of the larger schools; disappointed the small teams aren't present here.
  - b. The economy is limiting swimmers and the sport.
  - c. Additional teams added to the league—larger unwieldy meet; no JV programs; discouraging for athletes.
  - d. Smaller school financially supporting the meet with little payback.

- e. Two two-day meets, co-ed in events!
  - f. Two separate meets!
  - g. I want all the best swimmers to be at the meet.
  - h. But not at the expense of the team.
  - i. We need to serve ourselves better? We need to communicate better. Divisions would provide the promotional opportunity.
  - j. Promote our swimmers/divers.
4. Alex: Another proposal; offers three divisions!
5. We have to decide if we are going to continue as one large group or two+ groups. Divide the league into Classes:
- a. Divide by location or class/division
  - b. If we go to two-day meet close together, we can do divisions.
  - c. Can we get this settled soon before we go forward?
  - d. Division question settled first and foremost?
  - e. Decide divisions first and then logistics next.
  - f. How do we make division? Main ingredient enrollment. Be careful—ex. top ten teams, top twenty teams as medium and small.
  - g. Schools can petition to be in a division and this is accepted by the governing body.
  - h. Divisions for boys and girls—this is not always the same. But perhaps this is less an issue these days.
  - i. Look at results from the last five years to establish divisions?
  - j. Which concept to use to divide the league into division?
  - k. What are we voting for if we vote for division?
  - l. Vote on if we want an all-inclusive meet? Straw poll on several issues to circulate form this meeting?

Formulate Questions for a Straw Poll from all individuals in the room: Can we get a feeling from the people in the room after having heard all the compelling arguments?

Do we want an open meet (all-inclusive)?

Do we want divisions (regional)? If we go to a divisional meet and open meet, we would give up Bud Erich, Founders, and other meets?

Divisions only no overall/open?

Make sure all coaches communicate with ADs as to what is working for your school and what is not working as well as communicating with us (the league). I think ADs think the meet is going in one direction for their athletes but is not from this perspective.

Use survey monkey to canvass the constituency.

What are we going to have to give up?

Meeting in the spring?

Move to absorb the cost of USS swimming officials and observations.