

## Minutes from the Special Meeting of the New England Prep School Swimming Association

April 10, 2011

---

11:00 a.m., Bob Tyler, President, welcomed all and opened the meeting to discuss the championship meet and league structure: Bob reminded the group of our mandated task to “shorten” the meet and find ways to best serve our student-athletes at all our schools.

Schools Represented: (Please note that no formal attendance was taken; let us know if we unintentionally omitted any school attending the meeting):

Westminster  
NMH  
Avon  
Kent  
Williston  
Kingswood-Oxford  
Deerfield  
Eaglebrook  
Wilbraham Monson  
Hopkins  
Miss Porters  
Andover  
Canterbury  
Cheshire  
Suffield  
Miss Porter’s  
Hotchkiss  
Portsmouth Abbey  
Loomis  
Worcester  
Choate  
Exeter  
Milton  
Winsor  
St. George’s

Before the discussion, a brief overview of recent developments in league finances and potential implications as we look ahead:

1. The Exeter bill...All sorts of issues cropped up here including unprecedented billing for janitorial, dumpster, police, security, and fire for the championship weekend. The total bill amounts to nearly the entire league budget. The executive committee will communicate with the Exeter administration, but whatever we decide today and put into effect as a league may cost us— implications for league dues and entry fees, neither of which have changed in years.
2. Billing from USS Swimming: We received a bill for \$800 for USS swimmers to have their times absorbed into the USS swimming database. Should teams or athletes be charged for those

swims? As we move forward, each school will be billed for this “service” fee”—USS Officials are voluntary. All the public HS meets are observed.

Other matters for the league:

1. The absence of a coaches’ meeting at the championship meet this year was very much missed-- (Fred). Let’s do this next year just to get some eye to eye and make sure we are all a unit for a brief while.
  - a. There has to be a venue for coaches to nominate for Babcock and Robertson award. We need to do due diligence for the kids who are up for those awards—we didn’t do that this year.

The League and New England Swimming and Diving Championships: David Koritkoski (Williston) and Clay Miles (K-O) led the discussion from information gathered by way of a recent coaches’ surveys and several proposals submitted.

David K: Conversation with the new NEPSAC Chair (Suffield AD), the issues to consider for the league and its championships are: expenses, time schedule, small vs. large schools. ADs along the way: comments...currently wrestling and swimming operate without divisions, which is OK but more than anything else is the late weekend, travel, safety, return to school exam week or vacation week, the overall time demand over the weekend. This year’s girls’ meet ended 10:20 p.m. Sunday.

David’s slides: 5 options emerged from the research, survey and proposals—these are skeleton options. The idea is to choose one option or general format, then we need to figure how to run the meet.

Comment: (MPS) AD perspective question...Do ADs have a sense of what they want from us, from the meet, to be a collective or 16 best?

David: They want us to do it however we want it. But, here is the list of criteria to meet; each school to speak, clearly make our thoughts known, keeping points of view moving. Narrow down...we cannot table this issue this year.

Review of the five skeletal proposals with some precisions (see slide):

1. Geography for regional meets all timed finals and co-ed.
2. Division meet and champs and no open venue: large school meet and small school meet Saturday to Saturday.
3. New venue: need cut times
4. Like #1 but divisions vs. regional.
5. Some variation on what we have now but need to end Sunday. (EX trials on Saturday; finals Sunday co-ed end by mid-Sunday) Cut times would have to be faster.
  - We are driven by Federation Rules. Federation is very specific on diving championships .
  - Let’s select the option first and then fit in diving (after we decide the general format). We have the power to alter federation rules by our league.
  - In number three, could we also use two different sites?

- Finals took 4 hours for each gender at the current meet.
- Barbara's proposal?
- Number 5 does not reduce costs for teams (AD question).
- The Wednesday –Saturday proposal was removed from the options.
- Diving trials on a different day. Where diving goes is a huge aspect of the time.
- Could regional meets be Bud Erich/Founders?
- Confused on the process: We have 5 skeletons and we are going to vote on what we like and then tweak that?
- Yes. Get the list down to two or three options/choices.
- Maybe a committee with the coaching group could put together a proposal to the ADs.
- The ADs do not want it.
- Exeter AD is expecting to see something to be voted on by the ADs.
- David spoke with everyone on the executive committee...
- We want your opinion and we want you to decide re ADs
- Big picture item to decide on: regional or division? Then go from there.
- Survey data: priorities expressed; 9 large schools, 17 medium/small schools replied.
- The choices are the whole picture that David put together. Let's not get into our own way.
- Do we all agree that we want an open meet: an opportunity for the fastest 16-32 swimmers to swim against each other from all swimming programs/schools; one site, fastest swimmers (co-ed)?

Around the room:

1. Kids want to get to the pinnacle. Kids want to go as a team. I'm between the two.
2. We want our cake and eat it too. The current meet does not serve the smaller teams well. Divisions. We have to make a decision here. Why are we reinventing the wheel; just split the wheel in half.
3. Divisions and the fastest. So at the end of it you can say I am the fastest team in New England.
4. I am looking for a format that will allow for a team experience and the swimmers to go up against the fastest. I like 1 and 4. You can create avenues so the top kids can compete against the best.
5. Timing with exams and making decisions about travel plans for spring break. Enforce strict cut-off times.
6. Number 1 and 4. Division 1 perspective...It will be pretty much the same the next weekend with a smattering of other kids. Lean towards regional meets. But open meet at the end. We have a special tradition with this meet. 49 of these meets.
7. Boys meet was pretty exciting this year. Let's not throw the baby out with the bath water because it all happens on one day. With a qualifying meet, some kids wouldn't know until the week before if they were going to the open meet, a very important point (brought up by Kent). Divisions are tricky. It is important for the best kids to compete against each other. 4 entries per team question. We compete each year with three entries. 20% trim down right there. B relays have got to go. This is a trimming down approach. Geography is an issue—many

outliers for some teams in terms of travel. We will likely have to spend the night. But that's what we deal with each year (coming from Hotchkiss)—we spend 2 nights at Exeter. Some schools will just have to bear an expense. Diving, we can be creative about. Let's keep figuring this out. Founders meet is great because it is a league and it is an old one. We have a founder's league champion etc. It's great. (Hotchkiss)

8. Competing challenges to trim the meet and be inclusive. Sensitive to small school disenfranchised. Endorse open meet. We need some kind of qualifying event previous. Endorse a neutral site. Central location. Get into Sunday if we could finish early enough. Diving Saturday night. Go into Sunday. 1 and 4 look good. 3 neutral site. I am speaking as a fat cat. (Deerfield)
9. We'd like to keep it to four entries for the same reason others want to have participation (Andover).
10. NMH: Founder's league and Bud Erich...we sort of have a good set up already.
11. I agree. Eaglebrook is an exception. It's a big deal; top ten kids go; can cut down to less...2 kids made consols this year, which is a first. Relays—those are huge and big part of the excitement; they go for the relays. Relays in the finals helps out with the smaller schools. Qual times. If ADS OK Saturday and Sunday. Trials and Finals one each day.
12. (Suffield) Many formats are attractive. Regional is good for travel time. Good venues for divisional format would be very attractive. Number 4: 12 teams at Bud Erich is a big day. Perhaps three meets. Relays in the open meet you will have inclusion for all the teams.
13. (Milton) Time finals vs. trials/finals...What would that be like? I am connected to a trials finals meet. I think this makes our league stronger. To attract the real quality kids to our league. There is no way to do it on one day co-ed.
14. (David) Numbers...a unique perspective...Williston has gone from winning to a small size program, small school division champs...Hopkins/Williston: won both big and small teams. (Bob: there are NEPSAC rules for divisions.) Some numbers (not relays): 12 girls' teams had a swimmer in finals ; include consolations 21 girls' teams...relays are important for my kids; but hard to keep the girls there all day. Everyone has to come back on Sunday with the co-ed meet. Cut times and a max number of swimmers to bring to the meet. Some college leagues limit to 18 swimmers and 3 divers...Etc. Many leagues cap the total number of swimmers a team can bring. This is an interesting opportunity. Bigger picture.
15. (Loomis) Number 4 with Andy's 3 divisional meets...Top 4 finishers from every meet should go to the last meet. You only need 16 swimmers to fill a meet. Score through 24<sup>th</sup> place at the open meet.
16. (Hopkins) Different events weekend to weekend but with divisions, we cannot do that. Go to regional with the Founders. There is a small school champ meet in CT; expand it and take advantage of that. Hold on to a taper weekend to weekend? Championships are not inclusive. NCAAs are not inclusive. Trim down. Hold a championship meet. It excludes people. That's why we have the other meets the weekend before.
17. (Choate) Chuck clarifies my thinking. I would be sorry to see the loss of that team meet at the Founder's League...Rather see a more selective NEs meet. Calendar: with open meet, an

athlete not knowing if he is going is a disaster for our schools where kids live all over the world. Difficult to imagine this scenario. Trim NEs.

18. (Choate; Ben Small) Divers want an open champ for divers. This is important. 25 boys, 35 girls.
19. MPS: Echo Ben; easy for divers to not feel part of the team. See the divers working with swimmers as one—NEs come together that way. I like number 3, cuts down the expenses the most.
20. (Ethel Walker) We are a new school in the league, a small school, 1 and 4 appealing.
21. (Portsmouth Abbey) Small school; number 6—two separate champs, class A and Class B. Any of the times accomplished, compile top 16 as All-New England times.
22. (SGs) We are not all going to be happy; I want my kids to swim against the fastest swimmers. Psyche sheet is seeing who made top 40 and for our team that is exciting. Trials and finals. Challenge of the trials. Most significant experience for the most kids...Fun! End of season and feeling good about something, not just watching the big kids do well and wishing that we could do well. Best sport in the world. It's about the people that try.
23. (Exeter) Number 5! Some variation of what we have. Don: my experience is sheer joy at the end of the meet. We need to be prepared for the final meet. What schools can hold the taper. Split will sacrifice the special energy.
24. (Winsor) smaller school; 4 is great but the Sat before we have the EILs, smaller meet before. Cut times could be faster or stricter. Score to 24...
25. (KO--Clay) Number 6, the phantom proposal; two quality meets and experiences. One travel weekend. Not having that one overall meet. That's the real travel and money saver. The cleaner solution. One weekend. Go to where your school fits. I think the status quo is deeply unfair. There are a lot of kids that swim in the league. We are denying those kids a team experience. Clay and I have coached a lot of kids who have meaningful experiences. End of season lives. Kids who are not served don't have swimming lives. That's our job. (Many of our best swimmers have swimming lives outside our meet.) What is meaningful and fair for all our member schools? Something involving divisions. Score to 24. Timed finals. Trials and finals...You gain a lot more. Competition between heats. Deaden lanes. Sustained energy. Number 4. Score top 24. We serve a lot of populations. If we preserve this mega meet, we are not really being bold and not changing enough. Top vote goes to Barbara's proposal. I think those kids have other swimming lives.
26. (KO—Miles) 15 teams when I swam; we are not that league any more. We are hanging onto something that doesn't exist. If we go to divisions, we would be flat for a year. And/Ex will still live and live big.
27. What would it be like to go from a D I Championship to an Open meet? Make it a different experience from one week to the next.

1:00 p.m. End around-the-room sharing.

Proposal Number 6 (Barbara's original proposal that did not make the list): divisions, co-ed trials and co-ed finals and finish in one day. David on Barbara's option number 6.

How many more schools might join the meet?

Proposal #6. Trials and Finals on first Saturday of March to be swum by division at 2-3 different sites concurrently. Co-ed meet.

Leave behind anecdotal sharing.

Many questions: one diving meet; protect integrity of diving.

Votes on option: each school votes for 2 options:

Number 1: 11

~~Number 2: 3~~

~~Number 3: 2~~

Number 4: 14

~~Number 5: 7~~

Number 6: 10

New Options:

1: 3-5 Regional meets on the last weekend in February. These would be coed meets with no limit on entries for teams and could be run in a 6-lane pool. Top 16-32 qualifiers would swim in an open meet first weekend of March (timed finals).

2: Division 1 and Div 2/3 meet held on the last Saturday in February. Top 16-32 qualifiers could move to a coed open meet on the first Saturday of March (timed finals). [Trials and finals option not out of the question here. What "qualifies" could be determined.]

3: Trials and Finals on first Saturday of March to be swum by divisions at 2-3 different sites concurrently. Co-ed meet. [Cut times by division]

Any of the options could have an All-New England list.

Around the room:

1. KO (Alex): Still at the skeleton stage. Still ways to make them fit our needs. Vote according to the philosophical reasons vs. practical problems we perceive. Don't worry about the details. Divisions are the best way to broaden the end of season education experience .
2. Exeter: Support number 3 with the option of having Sunday the finals day. 1 and 2 would possibly expand the league. (Number three would only be a division one meet.)
3. SG: support number 3...
4. PA: support number 3...
5. EW: Regional would be more cost effective; how does diving fit in? {Bob: cost-benefit would pool all the current meets.]

6. MPS: One weekend would be more cost effective; diving will be a problem and most complicated for number three. Diving may not be sustainable on its own at division level.
7. CRH: 2 is the least appealing because of the similarity statistically; 1 is a more interesting option; more in favor of 3, build on the strength of the Founders, Bud Erich, etc...
8. Loomis: Number 3; we can preserve the other meets (Founders, Bud Erich, etc) but we would lose the individual stars from the smaller schools.
9. WSN: Dave...Co-ed meet, only run the final heat for number 3. Be conscious of how many athletes and how long to do trials and finals in one day. Still score the meet to 16 or 24 but the final 8 would swim again. (Run events like the 500 at NEs)
10. Chuck: number three, you need three divisions; division one: Andover-Exeter dual meet. Middle size schools will not be there. What will you have in the finals there? Number 1 still provides for the Founder's League but same events weekend to weekend. Number 1 is the same as number 2. [How do we decide small school and large school? Petition to shift from class a to class b, etc...and/or require to participate three years in a class and then move again possibly? I would hope this body would rubber stamp a coaches' petition otherwise this would lead to in-fighting. Would divisions be program specific? Gender specific? Yes. Wait. Some of us coach both gender. The character is going to co-ed. But we are in the situation of programs being very different. This is the next step.
11. Bob: Leaning towards number 3—I like trials and finals and not locking in kids from one weekend to the next. 1 & 2 lock us in; but 1 & 2 preserve the top in the league competing against the top of the league and this is not at the top of my priority. Divers can be incorporated into Friday night. 7 a.m. trials start. But, having Sunday—this is an option. These are the details. Easiest way to incorporate diving is number 3.
12. Andy: Each has merits and demerits; third option I would miss other schools there. Largest loss is number 3. But each could be an improvement over what we have.
13. Bo: I can support any of them.
14. NMH: Rank all swimmers even if divisions. Lean to number 1 and number 2. Expanding the scoring gives more participation.
15. Andover: number 3—best job of addressing the concerns of the ADs. I hope there would be three divisions. How many hosts can there be? We can trim the meet particularly in finals. I don't think it (Div I) would be just an Exeter, Andover meet.
16. Deer (John): Preserve trials and finals; I think we need to limit to Saturday. Lean towards three. Redundancy in 2 is a drawback for me; 3 divisions could enfranchise those teams that do not feel invested.
17. Hotch: trouble with number 2—travel two weekends in a row; lean towards number 1 with one shift: look towards the open meet in March; we wouldn't need to hold the kids to the same events (any time in the season could be the entry). If we go to number 3, we do need to consider the three current host schools would all be in division one or class A. Who will host class b? It is a bigger deal than we thought it was.
18. Westy: supports option 1; I see it related to preservation of Bud Erich and Founders league; we can open it up and have founder's champ from it if we wanted. I do like the opportunity to swim together again at an open meet; it is electric from all sorts of small schools—it is great to

see kids from other teams get into the top 16 and top 8. My kids are energized. Westy is a small school and we are trying to become a “big” school; we would be out of the equation trying to land some of the talented kids. We have a tradition of good meets—use top 32 times form the season so the kid knows he has a shot of going to the meet; option one cuts travel time; founder’s league has dues; value of having our top winners under one roof is exciting, is really special; I am perfectly content having my swimmers going for it; college coaches

19. KENT: 1 or 3; open week before decision—have the previous season’s time form the year before—know cut off times in advance.
20. Titans: echo Kent and Westy; qual times set before the season times for our kids who travel. I like the regional meets—it gives the kids an experience of being together; they get excited as a team no matter where they are; also have top swimmers under one roof; there could e creative ways to work within that. Maybe relay-only swimmers: one individual and one relay minimum. The size of the meet wouldn’t explode. Three divisions concern would be logistics. Division 2 and 3 at the same spot, 30 schools and the bottom heats will be slow—trials could be 8 hours. No access to a ten or eight lane pool. Dave’s suggestion is a good one—top 8 finals—would expand.
21. Avon: personally number 2 but 3 is a strong contender here; I am not in favor of teams picking their league; model from professional leagues—go up and down top teams and bottoms teas.
22. Worcester: number 3 involves one overnight and other meets can keep going; issues with the other two options. Can you run finals without consoles? Federation rules.
23. Canterbury: Like 1 leaning to 3; 1 keeping the same for us; stay in the Bud Erich; number 3 would build my program; we could be a big fish in a small pond.

We can vote 1 or 2: Both Saturday to Saturday meet (1 and 2 could both be tweaked to allow for trials and finals for that one Saturday). 32 qualifiers... Have people vote for top 2:

1: 18

2: 8

3: more!

Now we are cooking: precisions/clarifications/comments...

1. Number 1 would be a timed final champ meet; predict who would finish in top 32, not an issue; cut times—we couldn’t predict the number of athletes; there are still lots of questions.
2. If we go with cuts that could be made during the year, no need for number 1; go with stiff cuts, three entries, bang—have cuts, do the meet... If the regional meets are not qualifiers why are we having number one...Regional meet qualify as culminating experiences...
3. We could make cut times for each division (number 3); suggested cut times for some of the swing athletes; put in cut times from number 2.
4. You need cut times and a small meet. You will have regional meets in both scenarios.
5. We do not currently have an eastern regional meet unless we can have some team/school host the meet.

6. Bob: numbers....600 entries; 7-8 large (200); 250 medium; 150-200 small. We cannot do two divisions.
7. Vote either one as a framework...And then modify it for the best way of the kids.
8. Are we happy with multiple NE champions? Important is that we are going into an experience that is equitable within a group of schools.
9. Concern with number 2 is the gender inequities; it can't be worked out if the coach is the same for both genders.

One vote per school: 1 or 2?

1: 12

2: 12

Comment: Back to Don's point...Maybe we go to the ADs and let them pick the framework? (Keith). That is gutless on our part (Dave).

Around the room: Where do we go now?

1. Fred: We like the trial and finals as we have them—2 preserves the meet as it has been; takes away from the all-inclusive but we like it; we can still have founder's etc.
2. Tom (CRH): number 3; we have to give up something.
3. Chuck: number 3 like what we have done in the past vs. the drastic change of seeing everyone. Number 1 with faster cuts I'd be happy.
4. MPS: number 2 is complicated with diving. Smaller schools can get their class champs. Div 2 would be in the realm of possibility.
5. Meaningful experience for the swimmers, number 1.
6. Portsmouth: number 2 is the simplest. All New England option.
7. SG: The most for the most swimmers is number 2.
8. Exeter: closest to what we do now.
9. Number 1 (Winsor)
10. Diving option.
11. KO: Best for the most swimmers.
12. Cant: like number 2 and we have something new.
13. Barb: number 2 provides the most swimmers the most opportunities to swim. Top swimmers have had many outlets to swim against top swimmers; USS times for college coaches; trials finals meet!
14. Avon: number 2 gets my swimmers involved.
15. Titans: logistical concerns for number 2—three venues; the numbers could potentially explode. I like the idea of having top kids having that experience (Dave: number 2—we will have to have cut times!)
16. Claire (Kent): gender difference makes number one best option.
17. Westy: If we divide now we will never get together again; larger schools will get better talent; quality of swimming will lessen.

18. Hotch: agree with Grant; trim the fat at these meets.
19. Deer (John): number 2—messy; support number one for reasons Grant and Keith point out; I'd like to see us stay together! Ensuring quality from top to bottom in the league
20. Andover: Question of process. Have proponents of number one sketch these out and vote on line! This is a lot of progress but I am hesitant to vote either way without knowing the consequences.
21. NMH: biggest cost for number 2 would lose the excitement; we can change the scoring and have class champions; 3-5 regional meets—emphasis to score at a meet.
22. Bob: medium and small schools—one or two of the small schools have diving. Number 1 does not bring us together. What we had already was already equally inclusive. Number 1 brings the fastest teams together and the option for our teams to have a meaningful meet. I do not believe the division three meet will not have as much spirit. In either scenario we are no longer going to be a group of coaches around a table. Option one will be the final swims of the year for the vast majority of the kids at NEs.

Final Vote (Part Two) : Between 1 and 2

1: 3-5 Regional meets on the last weekend in February. These would be coed meets with no limit on entries for teams and could be run in a 6-lane pool. Top 16-32 qualifiers would swim in an open meet first weekend of March (timed finals).

2: Trials and Finals on first Saturday of March to be swum by divisions at 2-3 different sites concurrently. Co-ed meet. [Cut times by division]

We engaged in procedure to move to accept the results of the above vote—option number 2 garnered the vast majority of votes .

Moving forward to the 2012: The New England Prep School Swimming and Diving Association will now prepare to hold three class meets on the first weekend of March. We will need to call together committee(s) with representatives from all classes/divisions to design the new format for the meet to be replicated at three venues. The league will publish an All-New England designation for the top 16 times for each event taken from these three meets.

Meeting adjourned with claps from around the room.

4 p.m.