

Meeting Minutes – General Membership Meeting
Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Softball League
Sunday, January 29, 2012
Baierl Center, Wexford, PA

Attendees:

Tony Goreczny – Fox Chapel (President)	Jim Schindler – Shaler (Vice-President)
Ed Vesely – North Hills (Secretary)	Bill Vodde – Hampton (Treasurer)
Renee Schopper - North Allegheny (Scorekeeper)	Ralph Pagone – North Allegheny (Exec. Board)
Frank Byers – Shaler (Exec. Board)	Doug Griffith – Fort Cherry
Brian Cronin - Montour	Craig Gray - Montour
Dave Steinmetz - Hampton	Gary McKee – Peters Township
Al Stricker – Peters Township	Martin DeGore – Plum
George Brinser – Seneca Valley	Al Pifer – West Allegheny
Joe Bolton – West Allegheny	Rick Bernardo – West Allegheny

Reports:

Approval of the July 30, 2011 Meeting Minutes: A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Meeting Minutes from July 17, 2011 general membership meeting.

President's Report: Tony Goreczny congratulated North Allegheny for winning the WPISL varsity championship in 2011. Tony stated that this was North Allegheny's third WPISL championship. Tony thanked Bill Vodde for running the t-shirt fundraiser. Due to Bill efforts and a successful fundraiser the WPISL is financially sound.

Vice - President's Report: Jim Schindler stated that he routinely sends out promotional WPISL information to organization leaders on e-mail distribution lists when he receives correspondence offering tournaments, clinics and other slow pitch softball related information.

Secretary's Report: Ed Vesely had nothing to report as secretary. Ed did add that he wanted to thank George Brinser and Seneca Valley for hosting the 2011 varsity playoffs. George and his staff did a wonderful job of maintaining the fields between games and scheduling games on the alternative weekend after the planned weekend for the playoffs was rained out. Ed also thanked Renee Schopper for providing concessions on Sunday of the playoff weekend.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Vodde handed out to those in attendance the Treasurer's Report that identifies the league's expenses and income for 2011 and the 2012 financial projections. At the end of 2011 the league had a balance of \$913.21. The 2012 budget includes the following team fee structure which is identical to the 2011 structure: \$70 for each varsity team, \$30 for each junior varsity team and \$30 for each junior high team. There was discussion that the fee structure may not be equitable in relation to varsity teams versus junior varsity and junior high team because the later teams do not have playoffs or have the opportunity to receive awards. The proposed fee structure was not voted on at the meeting and will be deferred until next General Membership Meeting. In the interim, Tony Goreczny will investigate if ASA fees are going to increase for 2012 and Ed Vesely is going to investigate how many scorebooks from 2011 may be available for 2012 distribution.

Secretary's note: 30 new scorebooks and 5 with scorebook with worn covers were received from Gary Keenan in September 2011 and remain after limited distribution during the 2011 season. The fees may need adjusted should umpire fees go up (applies for umpire fees paid by the league for non-opening round games during the varsity playoffs) or if there are some unforeseen reasons. Tom Meinert will be contacted by Tony Goreczny to see if there are any outstanding invoices for the web-site domain name and maintenance and what the projected web-site fees will be in 2012.

Scorekeeper Report: Renee Schopper said that having a scorekeeper at each level was a big help. She also commented that host teams were not always reporting the scores to their scorekeeper and copying her in a timely manner. She feels that it should not be the job of the scorekeepers to contact head coaches to track down score and coaches should be responsible to report their scores in a timely manner.

Rules Committee Report

Rick Bernardo reported that he is aware that certain rules will need to be looked into for the 2012 season including the way the league deals with forfeits. Following Rick's report members suggested the league look into the following rule changes:

Changing the current 10-run league rule to ASA rules. *Secretary's note: ASA Rule 5, Section 9 provides run ahead rules that shall be used in All National Tournaments. Since our games are not National Tournaments, the ASA run ahead rules do not apply unless the WPISL would adopt them in our league rules.*

Re-visit the roster rules and in particular that some teams have an over abundance of players at their games.

Comments were made by members and a discussion ensued about the player photo I.D. rule. After the discussion a motion was made, seconded and approved by the members present at the meeting to eliminate the current photo I.D. rule.

Ed Vesely stated that he would like the Rules Committee to re-visit the relaxed step (straight ASA) rule.

Comments were made that a Code of Conduct should be developed by the league to address violations of any team using an ineligible player in a game. Ed Vesely made a motion, it was seconded and all members in attendance voted in favor of forming a temporary Code of Conduct Committee. Ed Vesely said that Bethel Park (BP) had provided him with Code of Conduct that they use in their community league. The BP code of Conduct includes separate documents for coaches, player and parents. Ed said he would forward them to the committee.

Tony Goreczny requested that if any members have suggestions for rule changes that they submit them to Rick Bernardo for consideration by the Rules Committee.

Publicity Committee Report

Tom Meinert the chair of the committee was not able to attend the meeting. Thus, no report was given. *Secretary's note: Tom was contacted after the meeting and wanted to thank Joe Bolton for*

getting the web-site up and running in September. He also wanted to let the membership know that two news articles regarding the WPISL were published in the Pittsburgh Tribune and links to those articles may be found on the league's web-site.

Fundraising Committee Report

Sue Shannon the chair of the committee was not able to attend the meeting. Thus, no report was given.

Secretary's note: Sue was contacted after the meeting. She said there is not much to report and that she will continue to look into potential fundraising ideas for the 2012 season and report back to the Board.

Scheduling Committee Report

Brian Cronin reported that in 2011 making the schedule and checking it was very difficult because the deadline for teams to commit to participating in the league was just days before the scheduling meeting. Brian also noted that the league allowed the deadline to move several times to accommodate a few associations who were trying to bring in teams to the league for the first time. Brian suggested that deadline of two (2) weeks before the scheduling meeting be established and that the league remains firm on the deadline once it is established.

Umpiring Committee Report

Ralph Pagone brought up that in light of recent public events that the WPISL should move toward requiring that all umpires have PIAA certification so our league can be assured that all umpires have clearances (Child Abuse, Criminal Record Check and FBI Fingerprinting). A discussion ensued on the benefits and potential costs of this requirement. At some point Tony asked for a show of hands on this issue. The results were approximately a 2 to 1 ratio that members in attendance wanted the clearances but didn't necessarily want to go the extra step to require the PIAA certification. The resolve of the discussion was that Frank Byers (Chair of the Umpiring Committee) was going to call the head umpires of each association that provides umpires for our league. The plan is for Frank to ask each head umpire if the WPISL required just the clearances or the PIAA certification how many umpires does each association have that fill each or both of these potential requirements.

Old Business:

Softballs for the 2012 Season

Tony Goreczny explained that Jim DeStout of the Sports Shop told him there may be an American manufacture of the softball that we are looking to use that that meets our league rules and could be stamped with a WPISL stamp by the manufacture. *Secretary's note: Based on a discussion after the meeting between Tony Goreczny and Ed Vesely, it was learned that Jim DeStout was not willing to order the WPISL stamped softballs from the overseas manufacture under the arrangement described in the notes from the July 17, 2011 WPISL meeting. Under that arrangement the Sports Shop was willing to purchase the minimum order of 100 dozen softballs for the WPISL and carry the financial burden by not charging our league to purchase all the balls when ordered. The Sports Shop will*

then sell each box of a dozen softballs to WPISL teams over the next two years until the supply runs out.

As a result of the information presented at the January 29, 2012 meeting, a discussion ensued about alternative softballs that could be provided by A.D. Star. Ed Vesely said that the information he saw regarding the softballs that A.D. Star could provide showed that the cover of the softball was not the same as the GPGSL softball used last year by the league. *Secretary's note: The GPGSL softball has a leather cover.* Renee Schopper said that A.D. Star can provide either the synthetic or leather covered softball and she had provided that information to Tony Goreczny last fall. Ed Vesely requested that Tony Goreczny provide that information to him.

Secretary's note: The WPISL rules require the WPISL Board to select the softball the league will use each season.

Code of Conduct

See Rules Committee Report above for discussion about the Code of Conduct.

Election of Officers

Below is a list of the candidates running for WPISL offices for based on nominations received prior to the election tonight.

President: George (Chico) Fiorentini, Tony Goreczny, and Ralph Pagone
Vice President: Jim Schindler
Secretary: Ed Vesely
Treasure: Bill Vodde
Scorekeeper: Joe Bolton and Renee Schopper

Since the offices for Vice-President, Secretary and Treasure were unopposed; Tony Goreczny declared those candidates the officers for those offices.

Ed Vesely made a nomination that Board Members Bill Vodde and Frank Byers distribute the ballots, collect the ballots, and tally the votes from the lead representatives of ten member schools in good standing present at the meeting to vote for those offices with more than one candidate seeking election. The motion was seconded and all in favor voted in favor of the motion.

Based on the outcome of the secret ballot Joe Bolton was elected Scorekeeper. There was a tie for President between Chico Fiorentini and Tony Goreczny.

A second vote for President was taken with members only being allowed to vote for Chico Fiorentini or Tony Goreczny in an effort to break the tie.

Based on the outcome of the second secret ballot there again was a tie between Chico Fiorentini and Tony Goreczny.

After further consideration; Tony Goreczny decided to withdraw his candidacy and Chico Fiorentini was declared the President of the WPISL for 2012.

Tony Goreczny said that even though the WPISL Constitution states, “Association Representatives of each member school shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and League Scorekeeper annually in January whose terms begin upon election”, he decided for the continuity of the meeting that he would continue to preside over the remaining matters on the agenda. Tony recommended the rules re-write the above passage so the newly elected officers would take office at the conclusion of the annual reorganization meeting.

New Business

Host for the 2012 Varsity Playoffs

Tony Goreczny informed the membership that Peters Township will not be able to host the 2012 varsity playoffs. Instead Montour has agreed to host the 2012 varsity playoffs. Tony asked that members from the north consider whether they would be interested in hosting the 2013 varsity playoffs. Bill Vodde said that he will investigate the possibility of hosting the playoffs at the McCully Complex.

Frank Byers said that if any member is interested in hosting a tournament for the junior varsity (or junior high) level to please let the membership know.

Update on the web-site and what can be done to improve it.

Joe Bolton took over as web-master at the beginning of the fall season. The web-site uses league line-up to organize the league’s published information. The web-site can be accessed through league line-up or the domain names our organization has purchased, i.e., wpisg.org and wpisl.com. Joe said with the league line-up software, each member organization/club could have their own web-page or a link from WPISL web-site could be provided to each member’s own web-site. Joe Bolton said the pictures could be added to the web-site too. Ed Vesely suggested each member consider sending team pictures to Joe to be placed on the web-site, but without the names of players to protect their identity.

Discussion about Make-up Games

Ed Vesely stated some statistical information about the league from 2011 season.

- 1) At the varsity level of the 84 games scheduled 78 were played (93 percent).
- 2) At the junior varsity level of the 84 scheduled games 66 were played (79 percent).
- 3) At the junior high level of the 112 scheduled games 94 were played (84 percent).
- 4) League wide there were 280 games scheduled and 238 were played (85 percent).
- 5) Ed Vesely stated that all the games on the weekend of October 1-2 were rained out.
- 6) At the Varsity level of the 12 games rained out on October 1-2, four of them were not made up.
- 7) Between the junior varsity and junior high levels the only two teams that were made up both of their games from the October 1-2 weekend were between Fort Cherry junior high and West Allegheny junior high. Both organizations and teams should be commended.

Ed Vesely asked the membership at the meeting if these were acceptable numbers. The membership all agreed that these were unacceptable and something needs to be done to achieve a higher percentage of completed games with the goal being 100 percent. *Secretary's note: Games that were forfeited are not considered games played for the purpose of the statistics above. In all, six games were forfeited this past season, two games at each level.*

A discussion ensued about making up games after these statistics were reported and the following comments were made.

Frank Byers suggested that if games are rained out (or cancelled for any other reason other than a forfeit) they should be made up within two weeks of the cancellation. Frank also suggested if games are not scheduled within the two-week time frame that the teams should be required to submit an explanation to a panel of members for a resolution.

Tony Goreczny agreed with Frank suggestion for a panel for resolution. However Tony said that the scheduling a make up games within two weeks of the cancellation is too restrictive and teams should be allowed to select dates throughout the season to reschedule games. Tony went on to suggest that games rained out (or cancelled for any other reason other than a forfeit) should be scheduled by the two teams involved within 72 hours of the rainout/cancellation.

Bill Vodde made the suggestion to resolve some scheduling issues that junior varsity/varsity games be piggy backed where the all 4 games would be played consecutively on the same day at the same field. Members present at the meeting who were in favor of such arrangement included Hampton, Fox Chapel and Plum. Some members said that playing four games consecutively for a few players would be too much and would prefer not to play four consecutive games on the same day.

Ralph Pagone said that he would like something done to avoid a situation like last year where North Allegheny did not receive points for games that were rained out and was not replayed. Ralph said that he did not care if that meant changing the point system or coming up with a new system to determine standings.

Ed Vesely stated that under the current league by-laws "Any high school team forfeiting more than one game in a season will have to reapply in writing for membership before the next season." Ed stated although that seems like a good rule there is not enough specific information regarding this rule for consequences should a team forfeit one or more games other than they must reapply.

The discussion continued and shifted to the scheduling of games. Bill Vodde suggested having a weekend before the end of the playoffs set aside for make-up games. Ed Vesely suggested that the league change the mind-set of players, parents and coaches that games must be scheduled and played on the weekends only. Ed Vesely said that we play games all the time in the spring on weekdays and it is not necessary to play double-headers all the time. Other members suggested starting the season earlier and playing on Labor Day weekend or the weekend before Labor Day.

Tony Goreczny asked by a show of hands who preferred a 12-game versus a 14-game varsity schedule for the 2012 season. A majority of the members present preferred a 14-game varsity schedule, however the vote was close.

In conclusion after the discussion, Tony Goreczny deferred the issues raised to the rules and scheduling committees.

Discussion about Player Eligibility

Ed Vesely reminded the membership that the by-laws were modified by the members for the 2011 season only to allow 8th graders to be included on JV rosters and 6th graders to be included on junior high rosters. At the conclusion of the 2011 season the by-laws revert back to original roster rules which are cited below for reference:

- Varsity – 9th – 12 graders
- JV – 9th – 11th graders
- Junior High – 7th – 9th graders

A discussion ensued on roster rules and the following comments were made.

Many members felt that it is necessary to include 6th graders so that members can field teams at each level. At most members schools their Middle Schools house 6th through 8th graders and it is logical for those 6th graders to be included in their school district sports. Some members said that if 6th graders are not included in the WPISL that their community based leagues do not offer fall slow pitch softball programs, so those students do not have a place to play. Ed Vesely stated that he would like to see the GPGSL league move to a 5-6th, 3-4th, 1-2nd grade based system in the fall rather than the 12U, 10U, and 8U system. WPISL members from the south and west do not participate in the GPGSL, so even if they had teams there would be no one geographically close to play.

Some members suggested that if 6th graders are allowed to participate in 2012 that teams should be limited to the number of 9th graders participating in junior high games.

One member said under WPIAL rules once a 9th grader is assigned to the varsity/jv team they are no longer eligible to participate in junior high games. *Secretary's note: the WPISL Board Members have discussed PIAA/WPIAL rules regarding rosters. Several Board Members have done exhaustive searches on the PIAA/WPIAL web-site and could not find their roster rules. Ed Vesely asked the North Hills School District Athletic Department for the PIAA/WPIAL rules regarding rosters and they could not produce them.*

Jim Schindler would like to see rules in place to limit the number of players that can be brought to and participate in games.

In conclusion after the discussion, Tony Goreczny deferred the issues raised to the rules committee for resolution.

Discussion about rectifying different versions of the Constitution, By-laws and Rules

Tony Goreczny brought to the membership that there are two different versions of the Constitution, By-laws and Rules. Apparently the adopted version in 2011 did not include a few changes that were adopted by the membership in 2010 at the scheduling meeting. There are about three (3) items that are different including the use of illegal bats. Tony Goreczny asked that the rules committee address this issue for resolution.

Discussion about a 12 vs. 14-game Varsity Schedule

Please see New Business – Make-up games for a discussion and membership vote on this matter.

Discussion about scheduling Varsity/JV games together

Please see New Business – Make-up games for a discussion on this matter.

Discussion about requiring masks for pitchers

Tony Goreczny brought to the membership that starting in 2012 the GPGSL will require the pitchers in slow pitch softball games to wear a face mask. Tony Goreczny stated for safety reasons that the WPISL should consider adopting this rule. One member brought up that ASA may be adopting this rule as well. *Secretary's note: In checking the ASA web-site after the meeting there was no indication that ASA is considering adopt a rule that pitchers must wear face masks.* Tony Goreczny asked that the rules committee address this issue for resolution.

Discussion about constitutional changes regarding when new elected officers take office

Please see Election of Officers above for comments made on this matter.

Committees and Committee Chairs

A sign-up sheet was distributed at the meeting to allow members in attendance to sign-up for the following committees.

1. Rules Committee.
2. Scheduling Committee.
3. Fundraising Committee
4. Umpire
5. Code of Conduct

Ed Vesely said that after the meeting he will send out an e-mail to all coaches and other representatives on the WPISL distribution list to see who may want to sign-up to serve on the committees.

Miscellaneous Comments

Marty DeGore was pleased to announce that Plum will be joining the WPISL this fall as a recognized club sport in their school district. Although the school board has not voted yet on the matter, Marty said at this point that is just a formality as he has the support of the Athletic Director. Marty said at a minimum that Plum will be entering a varsity team. He said that they will be having a meeting next week to see if Plum will be entering sub-varsity teams this fall. Ed Vesely asked if as discussed at the last WPISL meeting whether the Plum teams could play only other club teams. He said that is no longer a requirement.

Tony Goreczny stated that he has had discussion with representatives from Mount Lebanon and there is a good possibility that they may join the league as well in the fall of 2012.

Joe Bolton stated he wants to centralize the scorekeeping procedure and it will not be necessary to have separate scorekeepers at each level. Joe said he will create an e-mail box where all scores can be reported to separate them from other league correspondence and his own personal e-mail address. *Update from Joe Bolton: Scores in 2012 should be reported to:*

wpisl@yahoo.com

Ralph Pagone asked the members in the room who had not achieved club status yet to provide a brief update on their efforts to be recognized by their school district as a club sport. Below is an update from those members in attendance

Fort Cherry - Doug Griffith reported he is unaware of the effort that is going on and that Fort Cherry's Varsity Manager George Brown may have more knowledge on the matter.

Fox Chapel – Tony Goreczny reported that their athletic director and superintendent are opposed to them becoming a club sport. Tony has made contact with one school board member about the matter.

Montour - Brian Cronin reported that their sport is on a five-year waiting list to become a club.

Peters Township – Al Stricker reported that they have had discussion with their athletic director and are working on the matter.

Seneca Valley - George Brinser had left the meeting, so there is nothing to report.

Shaler - Jim Schindler reported that their athletic director is opposed to them becoming a club sport. The district's superintendent who was willing to discuss the matter has recently retired. Due to this he must restart his efforts with the new superintendent and/or other officials within the district.

West Allegheny - Rick Bernardo reported that although West Allegheny has not achieved club status they are permitted to advertise their sport within the schools and the teams will have their pictures in the year book. The student-athletes however will not receive letters for participating in their sport.

Ralph also wanted members to know if they needed any assistance with their efforts to become a club to please contact him as he is a member of the North Allegheny School Board and attends meetings with school board members and superintendents from other school districts.

The PIAA ruling of 2011 that distinguished fast-pitch as a sanctioned sport as opposed to softball was discussed. Several members expressed they were unaware of this ruling and asked that the information be forwarded to them by the league. Ed Vesely stated he would forward that information.

Dan Mackulin of Thomas Jefferson who could not attend the meeting asked that the following questions would be asked to enlighten him on how other members operate.

1. Do your 15U teams participate in tournaments? About half of the member associations present answered yes. Some members commented that they limit the number of tournaments they do at that age and don't participate in tournaments after the first of August so the players have time off before the fall season and don't get burned out on softball.
2. Do you have any players that play fast pitch softball too? Only Tony Goreczny responded that he had several. *Secretary's note: Jim Schindler after the meeting said he has one player who participated in both fast-pitch and slow pitch last year..*

A motion was made by Ed Vesely to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and all voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

The information contained in these minutes represents the Secretary's interpretation and understanding of the discussions and decisions that occurred during the meeting. Any clarifications or corrections to these minutes should be submitted in writing to the Secretary within five calendar days of the issued date of these minutes. No response implies that the information contained herein is agreed to be correct as written.