

CONNYLACROSSE

03 DECEMBER 2008 MEETING of the CONNY BOARD of DIRECTORS

The CONNY Board of Directors met on Wednesday, December 3, 2008 in the Boardroom of the Pitt Center, at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. A quorum being present, President Bob Russell called the meeting to order at 7:36 P.M.

A. ATTENDANCE

Program/Position	Name	Program	Name
President	Bob Russell	Hamden	Tom Geirin
VP-League Play	Rich Greenwood	Harrison	Bob Cipolla
AVP-Tournaments	Paul Farren	Madison	Paul Alberti
Secretary	Jack Couch	New Milford	Mac McDermott
Brewster	Mark Dingee	Newtown	Robert Marusi
Bronxville	Jim Lilly	North Haven	Mark Butterworth
Chappaqua	Dave Baum	Norwalk	Chris Plumb
CT River-Old Lyme	Mark Fader	Ridgefield	Jim Philbin
Danbury	Phil Roberts	Stamford	Bob Cavaliero
	Mike Gillotti	Trumbull	Paul A. Watson
Darien	Jim Book	Watertown	Peter Logue
Eastchester	Joe Pash	West Haven	Pat Reed
	Jack Brewster	Weston	Jim Smith
Eli	Fred Groen	Westport	Steve Orban
Fairfield-Wakeman	Rich Greenwood	Wilton	David Koch
Guilford	Paul Farren		Jim Bordnell
		Wolcott	Mike Whitney

B. MINUTES

1. Minutes of October 30, 2008 Meeting

Approval of these minutes as presented was moved, seconded, and carried (msc).

2. President's and Executive Committee Report

President Russell had nothing to report that is not covered elsewhere in these minutes.

3. Treasurer's Report—In the absence of a treasurer, no treasurer's report was given.

4. Secretary's Report—Secretary Jack Couch presented written membership applications from Harrison, NY and West Haven, CT. After Bob Cipolla described the Harrison program, their application for membership was msc unanimously. Patrick Reed described the start-up West Haven program, and their application also was msc unanimously. Secretary Couch had nothing else to report that is not covered elsewhere in these minutes.

5. Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee recommended that all 2008 officers be retained in their positions for the 2009 season, except that a replacement is needed for Rob Campbell who has resigned after ten years of exemplary service. President Russell solicited volunteers for this critical position, saying that without a volunteer, CONNY will have to hire someone to fill the role ... at a cost that will impact all members' dues. Thus, the slate for the Board's approval. The is:

President	Bob Russell	Madison
VP-Communications	Woody Thompson	Newtown
VP-Competition	Charlie Dear	Guilford
AVP-Competition/Tournaments	Paul Farren	Guilford
AVP-Competition/Selects	Steve Makowski	Amity
VP-League Play	Rich Greenwood	Fairfield-Wakeman
AVP-League Play/Seeding	Glen Maiorano	Redding-Easton
AVP-League Play/Systems & Scheduling	Andrew Barnard	Darien
AVP-League Play/Lightning Level Play	Pat Coleman	Greenwich
Treasurer	VACANT	
Secretary	Jack Couch	Norwalk

There being no additional nominations or discussion, the Board msc'd the recommended slate unanimously. These officers, plus immediate past president Rich Heritage, constitute the

Executive Committee as provided for in the Bylaws. The Board may appoint additional officers as needed throughout the year.

6. **Vendor Relations Committee**—Paul Farren, Rich Greenwood, and Mac McDermott reported that negotiations with Commonwealth Lacrosse in Massachusetts are proceeding smoothly and a final contract should be executed before the January 15, 2009 meeting of the Board. The committee, and probably representatives of Commonwealth Lacrosse, will report at that meeting.

7. **Competition Committee Reports**

2009 CONNY Tournaments: Paul Farren reported briefly that the Yale negotiations and other plans are proceeding satisfactorily. The event is scheduled for June 13-14 (Yale preference). He did note that Yale has already been consulted about relevant elements of the Commonwealth Lacrosse agreement, and sees no serious issues. He will make a more comprehensive report on plans at Yale and satellite venues at the January 15, 2009 Board meeting.

2009 CONNY Lightning Festivals: Discussion of these events was deferred to the Board's next meeting.

2009 CONNY East-West All-Star Classic: Westport volunteered to repeat as host of this event, which will be celebrating its fifteenth year. The date will be June 20 or 21. The Board will vote on Westport's offer at its January 15, 2009 meeting.

2009 US Lacrosse Festival Teams: With its dates now confirmed for June 13-14, the CONNY Tournaments again will conflict with the US Lacrosse U-13 National Youth Festival, June 12-14, at King's Island, Ohio. CONNY has no substantial conflict with the US Lacrosse U-15 National Youth Festival, June 19-21, at Lake George, NY. All other discussion of any CONNY involvement with the Connecticut Chapter sponsored festival teams was deferred to the Board's next meeting.

Scheduling and Systems Committee— In the unavoidable absence of committee co-chairs Andrew Barnard and Pat Coleman, Jack Couch presented the committee's recommendations for 2009 CONNY scheduling procedures (see Appendix). After discussion, the recommended procedures were msc unanimously. These include the following due dates and requirements:

JANUARY 5, 2009—Scheduling Contacts and Team Profile and Competitive Tier

Estimates due for every Senior, Junior, and Lightning team entered in CONNY play.

Games scheduled with teams that have not submitted these forms will not be accepted for posting and confirmation on CONNYlacrosse.org.

JANUARY 14, 2009—Scheduling Contact Information and Team Profile and Competitive Tier Estimates distributed to all designated scheduling contacts.

JANUARY 15 to FEBRUARY 12—Preliminary Scheduling Period

Schedulers should seek to complete about two-thirds of their schedules before the Scheduling Scramble on Thursday, February 12. See the Appendix at the end of these minutes for suggestions on how to use this period.

FEBRUARY 12, probably at SHU—Scheduling Scramble

This will be the time to fill in the remaining games on your schedules.

FEBRUARY 12 to MARCH 15—Post and Confirm Games on CONNYlacrosse.org.

This is especially important for member programs that use WCLOA officials and count on automatic assignment via the CONNY website. Teams formed subsequent to the original scheduling process due to unanticipated late registrations must submit their Team Profile and Competitive Tier Estimates to the Secretary before they can post and confirm games on the CONNYlacrosse.org.

APRIL 1—Start of Regular Season

Dues, Rosters, Actual Team Profiles, and Revised Competitive Tier Estimates must be submitted by this date, or before teams play games that they want to count for CONNY Tournaments qualification, All-Star allocation, etc. Roster revisions are permitted after initial submission. Team Profiles based on actual rosters and Revised Competitive Tier Estimates must be submitted using the same forms as the original profiles and tier estimates in early January. *Failure to submit rosters, revised team*

profiles, and competitive tier estimates will exclude a team from online score reporting on CONNYlacrosse.org.

MAY 14—Last Day to Declare Teams for CONNY Postseason Events. This declaration is irrevocable. At the time they declare teams for participation in the 2009 CONNY Tournaments or Lightning Festivals, member programs must send a check to cover each team's event officials' fees. *If a team withdraws after declaring for an event, or fails to show for the event, its officials' fees will be forfeit.*

Along with its declaration, teams must submit final team profiles and tier estimates based on actual competitive experience. These and game results will guide CONNY Tournaments pre-seeding and final bracket assignment. *Failure to submit final team profiles and tier estimates will exclude a team from CONNY postseason events.*

8. Rules Committee

Rules Committee Chairman Jack Couch asked coaches and officials to send him any suggested changes to the CONNY Rules of Play and Rules of Bantam Play.

9. Sportsmanship, Safety, and Training Committee

All coaches on a CONNY sideline must complete approved coaches training before their second year of coaching, and then take additional training at least every other year thereafter. To fulfill its coaches training requirements, CONNY recognizes the following programs:

- US Lacrosse Level I and Level II Online Courses and/ Instructional Clinics' CONNY and US Lacrosse will co-host a US Lacrosse CEP Level I Instructional Clinic (men's lax only) on January 24, 2009. The Connecticut Chapter of US Lacrosse will also host men's and women's CEP Level 1 clinics on March 7, 2009 at Western Connecticut State University.
- PCA Double Goal Coaches Course – online and/or in-person
- Other case-by-case qualifications (e.g., CIAC or comparable NY certification)

C. FUTURE MEETINGS

February 12; Tuesday, March 10; Thursday, April 16; and Thursday, May 7.

D. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Couch, Secretary

APPENDIX

Date: December 3, 2008
To: CONNY Board of Directors
From: Scheduling and Systems Committee
Subject: 2009 CONNY Scheduling Procedures

Details of the recommendations are below. In summary, this recommends that:

1. CONNY member programs form informal, ad hoc “forums” with similar programs and/or teams to exchange information and accomplish core scheduling before the CONNY Scheduling Scramble.
2. CONNY require that member programs submit good faith and detailed team profiles and competitive tier estimates, in a common format, at three points before and during the season: best-guess estimates prior to preseason scheduling, actual profiles when rosters are submitted, and revised competitive tier estimates based on actual competitive experience at the time teams formally declare for CONNY postseason tournaments and festivals. Failure to comply will jeopardize online scheduling and postseason event participation.
3. CONNY require that at the time they declare teams for participation in CONNY postseason tournaments or festivals, member programs must submit a check to cover officials’ fees for the event. If the team later withdraws, or fails to show for the event, the fees will be forfeit.
4. CONNY provide separate CONNY Tournaments brackets for 7th Grade Only, 6th Grade Only, and 5th Grade Only teams, assuming there is sufficient demand.
5. CONNY permit grade-based teams to schedule games against age-appropriate opponents both in their actual age division (as determined by their oldest player’s birth year), and in the age division determined by the ages of the preponderance of their players, but this second category of games will not count for CONNY Tournaments qualification for either team.

BACKGROUND

At the September 18, 2008 meeting of the Board, President Russell asked the Scheduling and Systems Committee to explore the advisability and feasibility of reorganizing CONNY scheduling and competition into divisions to streamline the scheduling process and increase communication among programs. While the committee was not charged to reconsider CONNY’s conversion from grade-based to age-based competition in 2007, it was asked to seek ways to accommodate programs that choose to continue organizing their teams primarily around grade. The committee co-chairs were Andrew Barnard of Darien and Pat Coleman of Greenwich.

The committee reported to the Board at its October 30 meeting (see Appendix 1) that it found widespread agreement across CONNY that some sort of divisional structure would increase communication and improve scheduling, but little agreement as to how those divisions should be structured. The committee also noted that its membership came almost exclusively from CONNY’s largest member programs. Therefore, they asked for volunteers from small and medium sized programs to join the committee and committed to present firm recommendations at the next meeting of the Board. Such volunteers being forthcoming, President Russell agreed, and the Board voted to add an additional meeting to the schedule during the first week of December to act on the committee’s recommendations.

During November, as the expanded committee was deliberating, US Lacrosse announced that it is conducting a national survey and review of the age-based versus grade-based teams issue.

FINDINGS

The committee received literally dozens of pages of comment and suggestions. After reviewing all this material and additional deliberation, the expanded committee determined that:

1. CONNY members’ primary concern is to simplify scheduling, with improved safeguards to help avoid serious mismatches during the regular season and at CONNY postseason events.
2. Reliable and relevant information about potential opponents is essential and central to good scheduling. Many members commented positively on the birth-year profiles and competitive tier

- estimates introduced in 2008, and expressed hope that the process will be expanded and improved for 2009.
3. Most established member programs have long belonged to “whisper forums” of similar programs and traditional opponents that exchange information and schedule games before the CONNY Scheduling Scramble. New and geographically remote members often don’t have the benefit of such informal arrangements. As a result, they can have a difficult time compiling appropriate schedules at the Scheduling Scramble, and must accept games with whatever teams still have available open dates. Too often, this results in mismatches (one way or the other). To address this issue, in the past CONNY has tried to limit pre-Scramble scheduling, but to no avail.
 4. While there is wide agreement that some sort of decentralized divisional structure might streamline scheduling, etc., there is no agreement as to whether such divisions should be based on geography, demography (e.g., program size), organizing principle (i.e., grade vs. age), team development level, some combination of these, or something else entirely. Moreover, a given member might choose to have some of their teams participate in one “division,” while other of their teams participate in another, based on how the divisions are drawn.
 5. Last minute cancellations and no-shows at the CONNY Tournaments for U-15 Seniors and U-13 Juniors and the CONNY U-11 Lightning Festivals cause major dislocations for organizers and other teams. Last minute scrambles to compensate for these cancellations too often result in ugly mismatches.
 6. Some member programs plan to organize their teams around grade, rather than age, in 2009. Most of these will be the big programs that never changed from grade to age-based teams in 2008. These programs generally have enough players that they can field several single-grade teams at each level, so the maximum age spread of the players on each team is limited to the spread within a single grade ... for CONNY teams, typically eighteen to twenty-four months. Smaller programs that cannot readily field single-grade teams accomplish the same age range by scheduling age-based opponents that share common twenty-four month birth windows (U-15, U-13, etc.).
 7. CONNY is large and flexible enough to accommodate both age-based and grade-based organizing principles (so long as they are in line with CONNY's mission and spirit), while not changing the essence of the four-division, age-based format we adopted last year.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATIONALE

1. **CONNY recommends that member programs form informal, ad hoc “forums” with similar programs and/or teams.** These forums may be based on geographic proximity, traditional rivalries, team organization principles (i.e., age-based or grade-based teams), or any other considerations that seem appropriate to the members. Forums should meet early in the scheduling process to exchange information and accomplish core scheduling before the CONNY Scheduling Scramble.

CONNY will use the 2009 experience with these “forums” to guide a potential formal decentralization of CONNY into a divisional or conference scheme in 2010 and beyond.
2. **CONNY requires that member programs submit good faith and detailed team profiles and competitive tier estimates, in a common format, three times before and during the season:**
 - **Initial submission** by Monday, January 5, so they can be published to everyone in advance of scheduling (target date January 14, with the aim to have teams use the informal forums and one-on-one contact to pre-schedule 50%-70% of their games before the Scheduling Scramble on February 12). *Failure to submit the initial team profile and tier estimates will exclude a team from participation in CONNY scheduling, including online schedule posting and confirmation on CONNYlacrosse.org.*
 - **First revised submission**, to show actual team composition, when rosters are submitted to the CONNY Secretary (due April 1, or prior to the first game a program wants to count). These profiles and tier estimates will facilitate the inevitable schedule revisions as reality intrudes upon expectation/hope. *Failure to submit the revised team profile and tier estimates will exclude a team from online score reporting on CONNYlacrosse.org.*

- **Final revised submission** based on competitive experience, due May 7, 2009, when the team declares irrevocably that it will participate in the CONNY Tournaments or Lightning Festivals (these last profiles and tier estimates will be combined with game results for CONNY Tournaments pre-seeding and final bracket assignment). *Failure to submit final team profiles and tier estimates will exclude a team from CONNY postseason events.*

This procedure seeks to build on the team profiles and competitive tier estimates introduced in 2008. This year, the team-by-team profile format includes the team's organizing principle (age-based or grade-based) and the number of players by grade, as well as the number of players by birth-year (see recommended format and example attached). The objective is to give the scheduler all the information possible in a succinct format to achieve fair match-ups.

There will be a mechanism to accommodate, without penalty, teams formed after preseason scheduling due to late player registrations.

3. **For 2009, CONNY requires that at the time they declare teams for participation in CONNY postseason tournaments or festivals, member programs must send a check to CONNY to cover officials' fees for each team they enter in the event.** *If the team later withdraws, or fails to show for the event, the fees will be forfeit.* This addresses a serious problem for event organizers and victim teams in the case of late cancellations and no-shows.
4. **CONNY will remain an age-based league for 2009, but will provide separate brackets for 7th Grade Only, 6th Grade Only, and 5th Grade Only teams at the CONNY Tournaments, assuming there is sufficient demand.** In addition to allowing single-grade teams to play similarly organized opponents, these brackets provide an additional benefit to tournament organizers, since the brackets can be assigned to play on either Saturday or Sunday to balance the number of brackets between days. In the likely event that there are not even multiples of four teams in each of these grades, excess single-grade teams will be placed into mixed brackets with teams that match up appropriately with their birth-year profiles (e.g., a 7th grade team with only one or two U-15 eligible players might be placed with U-13 teams, if it otherwise matches up well with them; but if it is half U-15 eligible players it will be placed in a U-15 bracket).
5. **Grade-based teams will be permitted to schedule games against age-appropriate opponents both in their actual age division (as determined by their oldest player's birth year), and in the age division determined by the ages of the preponderance of their players.** If technically feasible, games and results outside the team's actual age division will be shown on CONNYlacrosse.org schedules, but will not count for CONNY Tournaments qualification for either team (this should not present a problem given the low 6-game qualification threshold). In these cases, great care must be taken, using birth-year and grade profiles and other information, to avoid mismatches.

This procedure will allow programs to continue traditional rivalries with programs that organize their teams differently.

For these games, the rules governing the younger/lower grade team will be in effect.

SUMMARY

When our committee undertook this mission, we sought to streamline the scheduling process and procedures, increase communication among programs, and continue to create a safe and fun environment for our athletes. We believe that these recommendations pursue these goals, but recognize that we have put off the idea of formal decentralization of CONNY into divisions until at least 2010. We simply could not find anything approaching a consensus on the basis for divisions. Our hope is that the experience of forming the "forums" for early scheduling this year will allow natural constituencies to coalesce. If so, they may suggest possible divisional or conference alignments for the future.

The nuts and bolts recommendations for sharing information in the team profiles and competitive tier estimates are the heart of our hopes for 2009. In 2008, some programs didn't seem to understand how the profiles were intended to work, and others simply didn't bother. That's why we recommend somewhat draconian penalties for not submitting the materials. Appendix 2 provides the tentative 2009 CONNY Schedule of Events, which summarizes the key points in the scheduling and postseason processes.

One caveat ... there were situations in 2008 in which it appeared that schedulers or coaches might have used the abundant information in the team profiles to create mismatches in favor of their teams. The CONNY Scheduling and Systems Committee and the CONNY Sportsmanship and Safety Committee will watch closely for any such shenanigans. If a pattern of match-ups or scores ... when compared with the profiles and tier estimates on record ... suggests that an individual, team, or program is abusing these procedures to achieve a consistent competitive advantage, Sportsmanship and Safety Committee procedures will be invoked. There will be no witch-hunts, but we don't want misplaced priorities among a minority to sour the experience for the majority.

Respectfully submitted,

CONNYS Scheduling and Systems Committee
03 December 2008