

**VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE
Debate, Drama & Forensics Advisory Committee
May 20, 2008**

MINUTES

Present: Deon Garner, Jenny Johnson, Kimberly Kemp, Ron Richards, Tina Tapp, Jan Thompson and Lisa Giles (VHSL Ex Officio)

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m., introductions were made and the minutes from April 25, 2006 were reviewed and accepted.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The committee discussed recommendations for Richards' successor, who must be experienced primarily in debate and represent Region I or III. Bill Wonneburger of Turner Ashby was recommended.

CALENDAR REVIEW

Adopted calendars for 2008-09 and 2009-10 were reviewed. Dates were proposed for 2010-11 and 2011-12 with considerations given for known conflicts when possible.

RULES CLINICS

The proposed rules clinic calendar for 2008-09 was reviewed and accepted.

RECOGNITION

The committee discussed recommendations for the NFHS Section 2 Speech Coach of the Year Award and the Virginia High School Hall of Fame. B.J. Carroll of Galax and Martha Lee of Woodson were recommended, respectively. Tapp/Johnson will submit the Carroll nomination and Richards will submit the Lee nomination.

The 2008 winners of the VHSL/Allstate Achievement Award for academic activities were reviewed and it was noted that this year's winners were multi-activity participants.

VHSL WEBSITE REDESIGN AND MVP 2.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Giles discussed the VHSL website redesign and MVP 2.0 implementation to be in place beginning fall 2008. The MVP 2.0 username and password area will facilitate communication. Online rules clinics also become a stronger possibility, and with that, the need for coaches to participate in electronic surveys. Committee recommended imbedding survey questions into rules clinic exam to achieve both ends. In-person clinics will continue to be offered at VASDDC conference.

VASDDC CONFERENCE

This year's conference will be held on October 3-4 at the English Inn in Charlottesville. Giles discussed how the VHSL works with VASDDC and how coaches' participation makes it stronger. Johnson elaborated on what the association does and how it operates. Giles recommended that organization begin earlier and consider larger venue as conference grows.

DEBATE

Legislation submitted to the VHSL Executive Committee during 2007-08 was reviewed.

Concerns from various districts were reviewed including a low-point win situation. Committee supported the current rule of allowing low-point wins in Policy only.

Sportsmanship violations (discretionary drops after deadline) continue to be a concern at state. Committee recommended that coaches have team members sign a contract at the beginning of the season, committing them to all dates. Committee also recommended having an administrator be part of that meeting.

Forfeits continue to occur at the state tournament. Committee recommended amending the forfeit rule whereby a forfeit of a single round eliminates a student from the entire tournament. It is also to be understood that a forfeit is a sportsmanship violation.

Committee discussed the disqualifications in state Student Congress this year. Committee recommended: (1) stressing that the penalty for violating any rule, unless prescribed otherwise, results in disqualification, (2) continuing to post due dates and times on the website and sending in reminder e-mail (since publishing in handbook and manual is not feasible), (3) establishing uniformity between regional and state procedures, (4) making website place for legislation submission only and linking to VHSL website for rules, and (5) stressing need for coaches to know rule differences among the various leagues.

Committee discussed the large number of mathematical errors on Student Congress ballots at state. Committee recommended (1) in the judges' meeting stressing the need to write legibly and not use fractions or decimals and (2) removing the total line and leaving the totaling to tab, as they verify the numbers anyway.

Committee recommended establishing a low score in Congress (60) and increasing the scale from 30 possible points to 100 possible points, which would reduce the number of potential ties and is also closer in line with the point ranges permitted in forensics and theatre.

Committee discussed participation numbers which reflect growth in Congress and Lincoln-Douglass, but lower numbers in Policy, particularly in Contemporary. Possibilities of moving to an unclassified format or eliminating Policy due to low numbers were discussed. Committee was provided with models from Oregon and Kansas for viewing and for immediate action recommended adjusting the following rule to include consideration of low numbers in Group AAA: "If Group A and/or Group AA is unable to certify at least six regional qualifiers to state in Classic and/or Contemporary Policy debate, the qualifiers in the two groups will be combined into one state competition..."

The 2007-08 rules clinic survey, completed by 37 coaches, was reviewed and discussed. Committee was made aware that Lorraine Delgrosso of Massaponax and Bill Florer of Battlefield are working on a proposal to add Public Forum to debate offering. Committee discussed possible impact of adding Public Forum given low number of Policy participants; demand on students already participating; financial, judge and facilities requirements; and other factors.

Committee discussed Bruce Gregg's recommendation to establish seeding for purposes of seating in Student Congress. Committee recommended to not adopt Gregg's proposal, but to amend the current procedure to give Clerk of Congress direction to prevent, when possible, too many students from the same schools competing in the same chamber randomly and not with regard to regional placement as proposed.

Committee discussed feasibility of beginning Congress at the district level and did not recommend doing so. Committee also discussed potential high numbers at regionals and recommend monitoring those numbers and tabling further discussion until such numbers present concerns and/or until Groups meet their 48-student maximum at state.

FORENSICS

Legislation submitted to the VHSL Executive Committee during 2007-08 was reviewed, noting the implementation of multiple character works and increased movement in duo to take effect in 2008-09. With increased movement taking effect, committee strongly discourages even any appearance of eye contact.

Concerns from various districts were reviewed including a forfeit and scheduling conflict. Committee recommended establishing a forfeit rule to mimic debate forfeit rule. Committee also supported tournament directors enforcing registration and tournament deadlines.

Regional concerns were reviewed and included numerous discretionary drops after deadline. As with debate, committee recommended that coaches have team members sign a contract at the beginning of the season, committing them to all dates, and have an administrator be part of that process. Committee also discussed obligation of tournament directors to report district/region sportsmanship violations to VHSL and recommended that procedures for doing such be delineated in the Director's Kits (for all events).

Regional concerns also included whether time signals were appropriate in events other than extemp and impromptu. Committee recommended amending legislation to reflect that they are not.

Regional concerns also included gratuitous language and choreography. Committee recommended stressing that "content should be appropriate to the speaker and to the audience in support of contemporary community values."

Discretionary drops after deadline continue to plague state. Other state concerns included a judge questioning an oratory contestant as one might in extemp. Committee recommended reiterating at judges' meetings and in the manual that this is not appropriate. *Note: Post-meeting review of handbook and manual reveals that rules do provide for questioning in oratory. Therefore, coaches and students must plan accordingly.*

The 2007-08 rules clinic survey, completed by 101 coaches, was reviewed and discussed. Committee supported clinic results which reflected that coaches did not want each contestant in impromptu rounds to have a different topic (but to maintain same three topics per round). Committee also supported clinic results which reflected that 83% of responding coaches wanted to combine domestic and foreign extemp. Committee recommended doing such and keeping a semblance of both events by alternating the rounds with domestic followed by foreign topics, if approved. Committee also recommended taking final survey to rules clinics asking coaches their preference of a replacement category being a duo split (serious/humorous) or adopting radio announcing.

To the question, "Can [extemp] students take notes in, highlight or mark their magazines prior to the competition?" the committee's interpretation of the rule was no notes or markings, but highlighting is permitted. Committee recommended covering this in rules clinics and with extemp prep persons.

THEATRE

There was no legislation for review.

District concerns were reviewed. Committee advises directors to be aware that there is potential to receive a low (but not lower than 14) ensemble effect score if doing a one-person show.

The 2007-08 rules clinic survey, completed by 101 coaches, was reviewed and discussed, with timing extension from 35 to 45 minutes now being considered dead having failed in advisory and executive committee last year. Committee also discussed the outstanding ensemble (actor) issue based on survey results and as tabled from last year. Committee ultimately recommended removing potential for outstanding ensemble recognition.

Committee recommended change to rule 101-2-2 as follows: Four critic judges shall be used at all League theatre festivals; however, if a ~~district or regional~~ festival director cannot secure four critic judges, or a secured judge cancels at the last minute, he/she may go ahead with the festival with three judges with the unanimous consent notification of all participating schools ~~or petition the Executive Director who is authorized to permit individual exceptions when a valid reason for doing so is presented.~~

Committee discussed the limits of the school director's participation in a theatre festival and recommended interpretation of rule 101-2-1 ("All members of the cast and crew, as well as any person providing live music as part of the performance, must meet eligibility requirements.") to mean that it is not appropriate for a director to take part in any aspect of a performance, but to essentially observe as part of the audience.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Kemp inquired about districting issues, and Giles referred her to her administration to share concerns with Redistricting and Reclassification committee when reviewed every two years.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.