



Vermont State Athletic Directors' Association

Minutes Sent-11/16/2023

Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 8th, 2023

Executive Committee Meeting: 9:30AM | VSADA Meeting: 10:00 AM

Location: Virtual | Google Meet

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/dnj-rmni-bhi>

Or dial: (US) +1 301-845-5093 PIN: 934 526 587#

Call to Order - Devin Wendel called the meeting to order at 10:05AM.

Congratulated everyone on great contests this fall. Thanked those who volunteered or offered field space to make the last round of playoffs a success. Should be some great games in Rutland. Thanked everyone for a great fall season. Asked those in attendance to put name and school in the chat.

- **Attendance, AD Introduction**

In Attendance: David Marlow from MMU, Mike Jabour from SBHS, Derek Dunning from U-32, Connor Bean from Bellows Falls, Heidi Wright from Oxbow, Quaron Pinckney from Burlington School District, Jack Boymer from Woodstock, Patrick Rainville from SJA, John Lumsden from Missisquoi Valley, Grayson Levy from Sharon Academy, Steven Keith from Otter Valley, Rich Saypack from Springfield, Randy Rathburn from Twinfield/Cabot/Danville, Renee Breault from CVU, Devin Wendel from Mt. Abraham, Nick Bent from Randolph, Chad DeMagistris from Colchester High School, Tyler Orton from Northfield and Williamstown, Ian Fraunfelder from Harwood, Pat Merriam from Essex HS, Troy Engle from St. Johnsbury, Sean Farrell from Middlebury, Kim Alexander from Fair Haven Union HS, Jefferson Goodrich from VSADA, Dan Marlow from Bellows Free Academy, Tim Perreault from White River Valley, Neil Brodeur from Rice Memorial, John Rhoades from White River Valley Middle School, Buddy Hayford from Twin Valley, Bri Barnes from Thetford Academy, Phil Joyal from North Country, Oluwadare Sowunmi-Hazen, Dave Miceli from BBA, Dan Elliott from MSJ, Dave Miceli, Lauren Thomas, Tammy Claussen, Geri Witalec Krupa, Derek Cipriano from Spaulding. Tim Albertson from Stowe, Gabriella Silva from Peoples.

- Secretary's Report-Derek Cipriano-The secretary report was linked in the agenda. Asked anyone if there were any questions. Motion made by Sean Farrel to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Second by Chad DeMagistris. **Motion Passed**
- Treasurer's Report-Sean Farrell- Had a chance to make some money with T-shirt sales, so thanks for those who stepped up to sell. The money from that event is not in the treasurer's report at this point. Still working out details. VSADA started a venmo account. Some money went into that. Will update the report once that's all done. Report is broken up differently this year. Broke out revenue and expenses for

the leadership conference. Important to see what total expenses are. Want to thank Jeff Goodrich for his \$10,000 donation he secured from Jersey Mikes. Last year checks were bounced to scholar athletes. Hopefully we will be in good shape this year. The only expense out so far has been for the scholar athletes. There are still a lot of outstanding invoices. Invoiced out over \$42,000. Understands that business offices are extremely busy. If you lost that email, let Sean know. To give an example, just the dinner costs \$29,000. That does not account for the hotel rooms. We don't have the bill yet from the hotel. Please make sure invoices get paid. The top income from outside of the conference is VSADA dues. Those are important to get in as well. We need those funds to do what we are trying to do. Motion by Dave Marlow to accept the treasurer's report. Second by Pat Merriam. **Motion Passed**

- **Executive Director's Report**-Jeff Goodrich- Looks forward to seeing a lot of you at national AD conference. Looking forward to seeing some at the leadership conference next week. Secured a \$500 donation from One Credit Union to go towards the conference.
- **NIAAA Liaison/Section 1 Report**-Geri Witalec-Krupa-Discussed the national conference. Large contingent heading down to Orlando. One thing we are planning on doing is getting together on one of the evenings. It is a chance to celebrate our association and pay memory to former AD Kevin Reil. Looking to have this happen on Sunday or Monday. It would be a happy hour at one of the restaurants at the hotel. Thanked everybody for submissions for the student-athlete scholarship this year. Last year, our numbers were significantly down. Smallest submissions in recent memory. Rebounded in force this year. This was the most qualified group to come through. This was very challenging for readers and the scholarship committee. Reinforces that we are in good hands with the future. If you had an applicant who did not win, please give them the certificate for meeting the criteria of the scholarship. If you have not, please give Sean total head count, and pictures to Dave Marlow as soon as possible. Look forward to the conference and will keep everyone posted on the Section 1 summer institute. They are working on a location. If they get it going, highly suggest registering and attending.
- **NFHS Coaching ED Report**-Dave Miceli-Thanked everyone for their patience making the new system work. There were twice as many schools as normal who had coaches who were not certified. If there is a problem accessing it, please let Dave Miceli know. Not sure what the next right step is. Unsure of why AD's have coaches who are not certified properly. If a fine does not matter, or the risk of coaches not being certified is not sufficient, do not know what we should be doing differently. Too many people seem ok with not having certified coaches.

Dan Marlow-Do we still have access to the VPA site?

Dav Miceli-No. The spreadsheets that were shared have that information in there in tabs for each season.

Dan Marlow-The spreadsheet shared from back in the fall?

Dave Miceli-In the shared resource folder.

Devin Wendel-Appreciate the new format and the ease it was to use. Worked well for other schools as well. How many coaches are there collectively?

Dave Miceli-Several Thousand. Will not be sending the monthly report any more. Everyone can see people turn red when they expire.

Devin Wendel-Thought format was great.

- [Activity Standards Report](#)-Heidi Wright & Jake Eaton-Only had two meetings since last AD meeting. Activity Standards heard a hardship request from Green Mountain. Also heard the officials request for an increase in base pay and mileage.

Devin Wendel-One quick question, does the base pay assume middle school?

Heidi Wright-Thats assuming the JV level, some schools pay JV rate. It is left to the school to decide how to pay Middle School Officials.

Devin Wendel-For schools that are Middle School and High School, can we keep the old rate?

Lauren Thomas-There is not a set amount for Middle Schools. Not all MS are members of the VPA. Would have to be careful about how to go about it.

- **Announcement of Scholarship Winner**-Devin Wendel-Congratulations to Heidi Wright who will be joining the national conference in Orlando.
- **State Conference Information**-David Marlow-If you have cornhole boards you can bring to the Student leadership conference please let him know. Connected with Mark Leinweaver. Talks about identifying leadership qualities in self. He came at a super discounted rate and more information will be available at the January meeting. If you have any new vendors for the state conference, send David an email.
- **Student Leadership Conference**-Dave Miceli-Excited to get leadership conference rolling. Number 1 thing is to get a check to Sean Farrell for the cost of registration. Number 2, please check the file sent to you called 2023 leadership conference registration for AD's. It shows who has registered. Will update at the end of the meeting. Please make sure everyone is registered. Also, check and see that parent permission has been given. If not, please send it out one more time. This is different from the survey. Lastly, Lauren is running a survey as part of her graduate class. The graduate class needs an assent and consent form for students to participate. Everyone needs to collect a physical copy and bring it with them or send it with someone to the conference. Lauren, does it matter if it's physical or digital?

Lauren Thomas-Can be either physical or digital. It is about getting kids input on if we are creating safe spaces and gathering other ideas.

Sean Farrell-Put the links to the forms in the chat.

- **Professional Development**-Devin Wendel. Wants these meetings to be meaningful. Turned it over to Dave Miceli to run through the first one of the year.

Dave Miceli-Talked about using artificial intelligence. Threw in a couple of scenarios into Chat GPT. Every time you have a session you start brand new. Had Chat GPT write a memo to coaches reminding them of the policies and rules. Chat GPT created a memo that could be shared. Next task put into Chat GPT was to create a policy for overnight trips with high school athletic teams. ChatGPT created a policy that is similar to what a group of humans created. May start using to originate some policies. Last thing put into Chat GPT was to create a basketball practice schedule for the gym. Outlined the parameters. Spent an hour trying to get it to fit what he needed. Oddly enough, thought the schedules would work best, but worked better on policies and letters. Put a link in chat for what he did. Asked it to create chants to do at games. ChatGPT provided the cheers. That was his experience with AI. Would like to hear what others are doing with it.

Devin Wendel-Thanked Dave for showing everyone that. Asked it to do agendas and it did a great job of bulleting key points of the topics, and there were a couple new ones that it added in. Used it to talk to coaches. Can be a really good resource.

Sean Farrell-If you get a writers block, it can get you rolling on what you want to say. Then you can send it back though and it makes you look smart when you are done. Use it for a newsletter.

- **DEI Committee**-Mike Jabour-The committee has been working on the oversight of assignors. It is something we are pushing for. There is a committee within DEI that is looking into it. One assignor has reached out, and wants to be a part of it. Feels it is strongly needed. There are times when you get a note from a coach who is upset about an official, and when it is shared with the assignor, it was shared with the official and was not kept confidential. When there are issues with officials, would like there to be someone to go to to share concerns about officials or assignors. Somewhere that can appeal a red card. What the committee has noticed is that assignors are a good boys network and buddies are assigned to championship games. Sometimes when you complain, you are complaining about their good friend. It is important to look into and discuss. In a previous year, had a basketball player talk about feeling that an official was targeting them, and then that official was hired as the assignor. No rhyme or reason on how these are happening. Hopes to have something in place by next year

Sean Farrell-Agrees that there is a major issue. We have had situations where we had evaluations of officials. There needs to be something across all sports. His Soccer coach wants to evaluate the officials. Huge proponent of assignors not being an active official. There needs to be an evaluation side of it. We don't know why they pick what they pick. Hockey does a good job of it. There has to be a system. What is an evaluation tool that can be used across all sports?

Mike Jabour- There also needs to be a voice for officials that are feeling slighted and a place to go. It can help with retaining officials. There are younger officials that are keeping up with play and doing well, but not getting playoff assignments. Something that is strongly needed and wants to do it right as we move forward.

Quaron Pinckney -To reinforce the implementation of systems, one of the other committees was putting together a document on best practices. Last year's situation with CVU basketball created a bit of chaos in the Metro. Now when things happen off the playing surface, they are creating a guide or resource to make the best educated decision to protect student athletes and hold folks accountable. Will be sending out surveys to the association to collect data around the coaching pool. How many bipoc and female coaches do people have on their staff? They had a conversation about the playing of the national anthem at games. How does that differ from larger to smaller schools. A Few years back, at a UVM game, St. Mikes players took a knee, and just the response from the larger Vermont community hits home for him. If Players do elect to take a knee, wants to protect them from that level of scrutiny.

Jim Hubbard-There was an evaluation process that we had. It would show all of the officials and coaches could rate the officials towards the end of the season. Higher rated officials should get the playoff games. Fairness is needed so that our voice can be heard. We only see our coaches half the time, so it is important to share with other AD's about coach behavior.

Quaron Pinckney-As we talk about a larger system of oversight, those are things that we will look to bring back. When we can implement a system about how it has to be done, and here is the why, we can bring it back. Looking to have it in place for the 2024-2025 school year.

- **VPA Report**-Lauren Thomas-Thanked those who hosted playoff games. They did outstanding jobs. Wished the universities could see the great job our schools did hosting. It was really nice to be greeted with warmth. The pre-game conference call helped mitigate any issues. There is a Women in Athletics meeting on December 8th prior to the NIAAA meeting. D1 soccer State Championship games on a Sunday night was a huge hit. The girls game outsold the boys game in digital tickets. There was an estimated attendance of around 1600 in each game. Tried to avoid doubling up schools when scheduling. Moved things around as best as possible. Look forward to the winter season, but word to wise, any issues in fan sections have not magically cleared themselves between seasons. Work with your communities in the down time to repair relationships. Do the work now so it pays off in the end. Please make sure the kids are not bringing their own speakers to VPA events. It is hard to make sure the songs are appropriate. It is a huge safety risk for fans rushing the court/field. It steals the spotlight from the athletes. A rope or barrier between the stands and the court can be really helpful. Sometimes admin do not take the active supervision roles. Make sure they know the gameday management expectations.
- **Out of Season Coaching Survey**-Devin Wendel-A survey was sent out to the association. 44 individuals completed the survey. Shared computer screen with the survey responses. It is not something that is going to dictate the exact direction. It was meant to get the state of things, collect data, and get pulse of what the association is thinking. It is important to know that the Executive Committee decided to create a sub-committee to further scrutinize the policy which will go to the VPA and eventually on to Activity Standards. The sub-committee will be open to anyone in the association. Hoping to have a broad group of applications from all divisions and regions in the state. Wants a mix between large and small populated areas. Encouraged people to apply. Some people want to stop talking about this and move on, but it is important to take the time now to discuss it so we can move on. We are at a crossroads. Some people want to see it go away, some are neutral, and some want to see changes to the

policy. This is one of the last times it will be brought up as a big group. Will turn it over to the sub-committee. Went through the survey and responses on screen Included the results in excel format, which was shared with association. 93.2% agree that Athletic Directors understand the rule. There is a lot of confidence that they can enforce the rule. Only 70.5% of responses believe they have tools to enforce the rule. On the topic of being comfortable reporting potential violations, the numbers started to dip down. As Athletic Directors, they understand the intent of rule. 63% of responses agree that they support the intent of the rule. Over 50% agree it is important to have the rule. The survey is missing 30-40 responses. With the more responses we get, the better information we would have. Over 80% of responses agreed that there is room for improvement. Over 70% of responses feel supported by VPA when they have questions. When asked whether the rule is currently being enforced, the percentage was much lower. The association has a feeling that there is no enforcement. A majority of Athletic Directors feel it protects athletes from playing year-round. Many also believe it doesn't allow the most qualified coaches from working with athletes outside of the season. Took time last night to break down some of the challenges and issues people saw. Some of the major themes were around enforcement. It was the most commonly used word. One other big theme was the disparity between high and low population areas and how the rule impacts them. Often times high school coaches are the best candidate to coach in and out of season. In highly populated areas, issues trending around the number of opportunities and coach's agendas. Other issues brought up were around the lack of oversight. When asked for suggestions for changes, one resounding one was adding tennis and golf pros to the exemption list. Many also would like to see the addition and enforcement of a reporting procedure. Many responses mentioned an all or nothing mentality. Either enforce and support it, or do away with it. Some clarification was sought whether coaches should be considered year round employees from the time they are hired. If they are your coach during the year, they are your coach. Also, there were questions asking for clarification between volunteers and paid coaches. There was conversation about how fall sports have an unfair advantage with the two months of summer. Some responses suggested sanctions which included a Suspension letter or probation. Many people suggested implementing an anonymous reporting form. The topic was discussed during the Executive Committee meeting. We will not ask teams to be punished for something their adult coach did. Many people would rather have the people they hired and vetted working with kids rather than a club coach with a different agenda. The climate around club sports has changed. Some responses feel it should be left up to local control. One unintended consequence brought up is the shrinking pool of people that can work with students. Others brought up the fact that we wouldn't discourage kids from seeking extra music or math help.

Marcel Choquette- Thinks it is a great summary. We could spend the next 90 minutes on our own professional opinions. The only thing that he would advise the committee to look at is we talk about sanctions to coaches, but AD's need to enforce it as well. Understands the rural needs. Us looking to the VPA to solve this is mission impossible.

Dan Marlow- The landscape has changed tremendously. Everybody has an AAU team and elite programs in soccer, baseball, and lacrosse. How do we control the people that are running the programs from recruiting kids? The influence that these guys have running the program are on a different playing field than we have. The people that are running the programs have access and ability to control younger kids, and kids show up at the school where their club coach was from. This issue did not happen 25 years ago. It Forces us to recruit our own kids. Our coaches can't make contact with 8th graders. It is not a level playing field. We have restrictions on the people that understand the rule, but it is not being followed everywhere. Tries to explain to coaches why some are getting away with it. We've never had to recruit our own kids to stay, but do not have the same access to the kids.

Marcel Choquette- That is why the rule was put into place 15 years ago, before students had school choice. The current rule is not feasible. Does not disagree about having to recruiting own

kids. Now hockey academies are popping up. Philosophically, can we compete with the opportunities that kids and clubs have? How do we create a better experience for kids that can compete with a club? Does not think there is a simple answer. School choice has put a monkey wrench into this procedure.

Dan Marlow-What about the disparity that is happening now, what do we do now until there is a new policy.

Devin Wendel-It is not a VDADA policy it is a VPA policy

Lauren Thomas-The VPA policy is in effect as written. The VPA follows up on reports that come in. The VPA does not get a large number of complaints. Some of them are in limbo at the moment. The VPA works with the Athletic Director to let them know what the VPA is hearing and looking at.

Dan Marlow-There is plenty of proof that high school coaches are coaching teams right now, but when it is brought up, nothing is happening. It has been a frustration since day 1.

Lauren Thomas-It is not a huge problem with the number of complaints that are brought to the VPA.

Devin Wendel- Now is not the time to make a complaint or report. Has self reported coaches before in the past. It is an issue. Does think that working closely with Laurent and the VPA on this is important. Does not want to call out specifics or certain schools right now.

Dan Marlow-How do we navigate things that are happening right now? Not in a particular sport, or school. It impacts everybody else. The point now is you have to recruit kids to stay in your school.

Jim Hubbard-There is a wide spectrum. Some minor violations and some major violations. One of the most disappointing things was heard was that 13 girls competed on the varsity soccer team. 6 of them were 8th graders. The girls came from sending schools in the district. They went to play in the quarter-final soccer game. Found out three days ago that 5 of those girls had to go to a mini-metro practice after the game. Believes in team sports and community. being pulled in to practice after a playoff game was sad to hear.

- **Celebrations & Recognitions**-Devin Wendel-Shoutout to Jeff Moreno for hosting their quarter-final field hockey game. Jeff and his staff run a top notch operation. Also a shoutout to Jeff for helping host the soccer finals. Shoutout to Mike Norman for allowing the state to use Rutland for the football finals and to Sean Farrell for literally everything you do. Those that are new would be blown away by the number of hats that Sean wears to help students. We have a great association. We're not alone or on an island.

Tim Albertson-Soutout to Kim Alexander for adjusting their field hockey game so that their students could still take the ACT's. Shoutout to Geri Witalec-Krupa who did a great job with hosting playoff games. Thanks to Quaron Pinckney and Mike Jabour for all their work in letting us use fields during the tournament. Thanks to Lauren Thomas for being at every event she possibly could

Sean Farrell-Shoutout to Geri Witalec-Krupa for the scholarship process. It was daunting, but she did a great job organizing it all. Thanks to Dave Miceli for the leadership conference on Monday. There was a ton to be done behind the scenes.

Mike Jabour-Thanks to Lauren Thomas for everything she is doing. Knowing that he can be heard when frustrated. Even during a game, being able to text back and understand where he's coming from. To Devin Wendel, appreciate all the work you do for the VSADA. To Quaron Pinckney-for having to work with multiple venues. Appreciate all the work you have to do with the moving pieces.

Lauren-Thanks to Renee , Mike , and Chad for stepping in and ensuring a smooth changeover at their schools.

Chad DeMagistris -Oluwadare Sowunmi has been hired as the new interim athletics director at Colchester. 11/27 is his new start date.

Gabriella Silva-Thanks to Tim Albertson. There was a lot of rivalry on Friday night and it was cool to come together and reflect on the chaos.

- **Arbiter Review/Procedure**-Devin Wendel- Would like to open up the floor for any thoughts on Arbiter. Would like to clarify across all sports what assignors want to do for cancellations. How do we get all assignors on the same procedure?

Lauren Thomas- It sounds like we need an assignor meeting to go through Arbiter best practices.

Devin Wendel-Would like the master document of all the assignors with the codes so they can add the code to the resources page in Arbiter.

Sean Farrell-Fear is in the spring that there are so many Assignors. We need to try to start tying names to the code.

Devin Wendel-Lauren dropped the master list of Assignors and codes into the chat.

- **Request for Rosters on Directory**-Devin Wendel-There was a lot of success adding rosters to the VSADA directory. We lose the connection on getting rosters when not sending weekly confirmations. It is helpful to have a roster link baked into the directory. You can create a folder for fall, winter, and spring that can be updated seasonally. It can be uploaded to the website directory to be shared with the media.

Sean Farrell-Please avoid using PDF. We have to hand type it in when they are sent that way. It is easy to manipulate a google sheet. It would be helpful to add a logo in as well. Will have sharper looking rosters for the games.

- **Basketball Bonus Rule Change - Reprogramming Scoreboards**-Devin Wendel- There are several basketball rule changes. Be prepared to update scoreboards. Posting in the chat two resources David Marlow shared with how to update scoreboards to reflect the new rules. If coaches did not attend the coaches clinic, there is a video they posted on their website about the rule changes. A lot of people might be surprised if they did not attend the clinic.

Future Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, January 16th | Virtual

Tuesday, March 12th | Double Tree South Burlington VT

Tuesday, May 14th | Chandler Arts Center Randolph VT

Meeting Dates are in person, Except November/January Meetings Will be Via Google Meet

Meeting Times: 9:30 am Executive Committee | 10:00 am VSADA