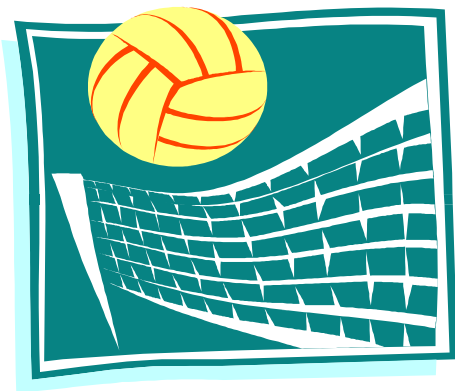


Between the Lines

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MGVCA Newsletter

Winter, 2002



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The MIAA Volleyball Committee will next meet on January 16, 2002 at the MIAA Headquarters in Franklin. Questions and issues which member coaches want made known at this meeting should be forwarded to MGVCA Rep. Tom Turco e-mail: (tturco@mediaone.net)

Rules battle escalates as Volleyball Committee meets

The MIAA Volleyball Committee, which will next meet on Wednesday, January 16, is likely to take a very hard look at the decision it has to make regarding which rules will govern the sport of high school volleyball in Massachusetts for 2002 and beyond. Although a final vote is not likely at this meeting, the clock is ticking on this very important and passionate issue.

As all coaches are well aware, 2001 was the last year that NAGWS underwrote its volleyball rules. Because of this, the options of National Federation or NCAA Rules have become the two viable choices now on the table. The MIAA has made no secret of its leaning towards National Federation. In fact, Dick Neal (Executive Director), made the following points known in writing:

"The MIAA Board of Directors reaffirmed during its August (2001) meeting its leadership position that MIAA should adopt high school volleyball rules as they are written by the National Federation. The board is open to consider modification of those rules if the Volleyball Committee finds need for such, which is common practice in most of our other sports.

We should not embrace NCAA college volleyball rules. In addition to lack of focus on high school student athletes, the NCAA has in recent years demonstrated disregard for the high school community of the Nation. The imposed core course requirements, followed by an attempt to deregulate amateur standards, and the institution of Friday night football all demonstrate a lack of appreciation for the high school community. To adopt the NCAA volleyball rules would be to overlook these damaging directions while sending a message of endorsement to the NCAA, and a rejection of the leadership and services which our own high school organization provides the sport of volleyball." (Richard F. Neal, September 12, 2001)

A volleyball subcommittee, chaired by Bill Nunnally (Dracut), has been formed by the MIAA to investigate the rules to be implemented in 2002. As of this writing, that subcommittee has been asked to review Federation Rules and propose modifications to the Volleyball Committee in January.

As it now stands, coaches and officials are standing firmly behind the NCAA Rules. The need for consistency in volleyball rules at all levels (youth, high school, college and international) as well as a vision for the future direction of the game itself support our basic argument.

Although the new NCAA rules will not be published until June, they are essentially the same rules which the NAGWS wrote for 2001. The NCAA has already voted to adopt the NAGWS Volleyball Rules book as the building block for the NCAA book. Marcia Altman, rules editor for the new NCAA text, notes that the only differences between the NAGWS rules from the past and the new NCAA Rules are "minor format changes." The initial draft of these rules is clear, user-friendly and consistent with other bodies of volleyball rules.

Despite the advantages of these new rules, we are fighting an

Full agenda at postseason gathering

Thompson, Curley are top All State selections

The MGVCA held its annual postseason meeting on Sunday, November 4 at the MIAA Headquarters in Franklin. Twenty-eight coaches attended the 4 PM meeting.

President Rob Slavin presided over the two-hour session by first updating membership information. Annual membership dues will be renewed in January, 2002 for our 150 member coaches. That number continues to rise as more coaches across the state become actively involved in the sport of volleyball.

The second item on the agenda concerned the status of the rules changes for 2002 (see front page). Coaches were given copies of the complete text of Richard Neal's remarks along with the major differences between National Federation and NAGWS Rules.

Slavin next addressed the association's by-laws. Copies of the four-page document were presented to the attendees. A great deal of this Constitution's body is in need of revision as it goes back over two decades.

A brief discussion followed concerning the coaches clinic for March, 2002. Wellesley College is the tentative site on Saturday, March 10.

The next order of business was the election of officers for the 2002-03 years. All of the standing officers had already been renominated in writing, thus a formal vote was not necessary. All were reinstated by acclamation.

Tammy Webber briefly spoke about the Hall of Fame induction slated for the fall of 2002. Three new members will join the inaugural inductees in a ceremony to be held at the State Finals.

The treasury showed a balance of \$2,340. Recent expenses included the fall newsletter and the purchase of a nine-set video addition to the video library. A suggestion was made that the association invest some of its funds toward the creation of its web site.

The majority of the meeting, as is

almost always the case at the postseason gathering, then focused on the selection of the MGVCA All State teams. A total of 32 nominations, both mail-in and from the 28 coaches present, were then discussed and voted upon.

The top twelve candidates on an initial vote were accorded First Team status. Two follow-up votes were then necessary to field a Second Team (see results below).

Student-athletes on the First Team were presented plaques while members of the Second Team received certificates.

As in the past, selections were made available to the local media. Most of our selections are represented on the Boston

Globe and/or Boston Herald All Scholastic teams.

It should be noted that the process of selecting any All State team is somewhat subjective. There is, of course, no perfect way to assemble such a team.

That said, advocacy is certainly a large part of this process. Many leagues throughout the state were not even represented at the meeting, thus the selection process becomes that much more difficult.

We would appreciate the constructive input from all coaches regarding the selection of these teams. More important than that, however, is an active presence at our meetings.

MGVCA 2001 All State Selections

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Liz Curley | Junior | Barnstable High School |
| Makini Thompson | Junior | North Quincy High School |
| Julianne Marvin | Senior | Andover High School |
| Christina Nikolaidis | Senior | Bourne High School |
| Kristen Wong | Senior | Medway High School |
| Krista Sudjanen | Senior | Medfield High School |
| Becky Ciulla | Senior | Chelmsford High School |
| Kathleen McCarthy | Junior | North Quincy High School |
| Tricia Carlson | Senior | Weymouth High School |
| Sara Rabinovitch | Senior | Newton North High School |
| Lauren Messer | Senior | Milford High School |
| Elyse Estrella | Senior | Barnstable High School |

Second Team

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Rachael Ziminsky | Senior | Chelmsford High School |
| Melissa Machado | Senior | Fairhaven High School |
| Whitney O'Leary | Senior | Bourne High School |
| Betsy Hurley | Junior | Sacred Heart High School |
| Jenna Thurston | Senior | Case High School |
| Kristen Kelly | Senior | Medway High School |
| Kyla McCartney | Senior | Newton South High School |
| Liz Bartoloni | Senior | Milton High School |
| Kassie Moore | Junior | Bourne High School |
| Lindsey Marts | Senior | Milford High School |
| Gwen Brown | Senior | Cambridge R&L High |
| Liane Kilmain | Senior | Holliston High School |

The 2001 AVCA Convention

San Diego

Returning to a warmer climate for 2001, the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) held its 20th annual National Convention in San Diego, California from December 17-22.

The New England area, as always, was well-represented. MGVCA coaches making an appearance included David Moore (Bourne), Joe Reardon (Bishop Feehan), Jack Hastings (Medfield), Tom Turco (Barnstable), Bill McShane (Dennis-Yarmouth) and Rob Slavin (Sacred Heart).

Area collegiate coaches featured Ken Nichols (Northeastern), Jill Hirschburger (University of New Hampshire), Theresa Garlacy (Bryant), Bob Schneck (University of Rhode Island), Bonnie Kenny (UMass) and Karen McNulty (UMass-Lowell). Hirschburger was also one of the presenters during a well-attended Friday afternoon on-court session.

Recent cold-weather AVCA sites - including Richmond, Spokane (WA), Cleveland, Madison (WI) and Springfield (MA) - became distant memories as over 800 college and high school coaches from around the country arrived at the spectacular Marriott-San Diego for this annual rite of December.

And like Honolulu, the 1999 site, this particular venue offered certain amenities which are not always available at AVCA conventions. Because of this, many coaches toiled along their golf clubs and scheduled a little extra vacation time to explore this beautiful left coast city.

The host hotel was the most stunning facility which AVCA has chosen in the recent past. Two twenty-five story towers overlooked beautiful San Diego Harbor and adjacent Coronado.

Much of the immediate downtown area is within easy walking or "trolley" distance, and San Diego is a city which is impeccably clean and "tourist" friendly. The Gaslight District is a particularly handsome restaurant district which has been recently renovated.

The freeway hassles of Los Angeles

are not to be found in this southernmost California city, so getting around to the world famous San Diego Zoo, Sea World, Qualcomm Park (home of the Chargers) or San Diego State University (host of the final four) is not difficult.

Wednesday's activities included meetings of the country's major conferences and 90-minute "open" practices at SDSU, home of the Aztecs. The campus itself is worth touring; a modern 31,000 student facility located about 20 minutes from downtown.

Three of the final four teams - Stanford, Long Beach State and Nebraska - are no strangers to this elite group. In fact, since 1992, they are responsible for all the National Championships in NCAA Division I volleyball except one (Penn State, 1999). The newcomers to the foursome were Dave Rubio's Wildcats from Arizona, runner-up in the Pac-10.

Thursday's highlights focused on the Coach of the Year Banquet, numerous on-court demonstrations, classroom sessions and the national semifinal matches.

John Dunning, now the head man at Stanford, was acknowledged as National Coach of the Year, while UCLA's legendary men's coach Al Scates passed the 1,000 win plateau in his illustrious 30-year career.

Wellesley College's Dorothy Webb, whose team advanced to the Division III semifinal round, received the New England Region Coach of the Year.

The NCAA semifinal matches, always a convention highlight, featured two matches of contrasting styles. Long Beach State (33-0), the top-ranked team in the country, proved too much for Dana Burkholder and Arizona.

Using the strength of 6'7" Tayyiba Haneef (23 kills), the 49er's always seemed to have a comfortable working margin en route to its 3-0 victory.

Stanford employed the combination of Olympian Logan Tom and Freshman of the Year Oganna Nnamani to outlast the defending champion Cornhuskers in

the other semi. The setting of Greidhaly Cepero and left-handed power of Nancy Metcalf were simply not enough for John Cook's team to again reach the finals.

A side note, the 30-point rally games take some getting used to. Runs of 3-4 points are very difficult to attain, and the real turning point in a match does not occur until the 20-24 point mark.

Friday's Player of the Year Banquet featured many of the All Americans who had played the previous night. Hosted by new AVCA President Denise Van De Walle (Bowling Green), the event highlighted the careers of the top twenty-four Division I student-athletes in the sport. The complete list can be seen at the AVCA web site (www.avca.org).

To no one's surprise, three-time All American Logan Tom of Stanford received this year's top honor, Player of the Year.

The high school/club session was conducted by Art Faura. Over 40 coaches from across the country presented their views and concerns. Since over half of the AVCA members are high school coaches, the general feeling was that more should be done to address that particular group.

The finals, held at 12,000 seat Cox Arena, looked on paper like it might be one-sided as Long Beach put its undefeated season on the line against the Cardinal (31-2) from Stanford.

Almost immediately, however, Stanford took the initiative in the match. The 49er's rallied to take a 29-27 first game lead, but that's when Logan Tom took over. With a sensational back row dig, followed by successive kills, Tom rallied Stanford to a 31-29 win.

The first game win swung the momentum to the five-time NCAA champions from Palo Alto. With Tom and Nnamani combining for 44 kills, the Cardinal cruised to a 3-0 win.

With the win John Dunning became the first NCAA Division I coach to earn National Championships at two schools (two titles at University of Pacific).

Rally Scoring: verdict still out

The volleyball world, at least here in the United States, has anxiously waited to see how rally-scoring would be received at the collegiate level. The dramatic change to the 30-point per game format was mandated by the 2001 NAGWS Rules Committee last February.

At the heart of the change to rally scoring were three major considerations: (1) to align the U.S. college game more closely with international and USAV formats, (2) to make the game more dynamic and fan friendly, and (3) to find a format that was more predictable in terms of time (i.e., to accommodate television).

So how have coaches reacted to the change? Well, to hear numerous college coaches speak out on this controversial issue, it is still a very mixed bag. Fans, on the other hand, are more involved in the matches since there is scoring on every point. Spectators also sense that the overall speed of play has increased.

Coach Dave Rubio, Arizona's Final Four mentor, sees the change to rally as the way of the future for this sport. "I feel that a point per rally has made a difference in our game in respect to it being more fan friendly. I think it speeds up the game tremendously and ushers in a new era for volleyball."

Coaches generally agree that the game is now one of possessions. Because of that, there is a premium placed on ballhandling, serve and serve-receive. Deficits of four and five points, even in a match to 30, are often difficult to overcome.

Long Beach State's Brian Gimmillaro, this year's NCAA runner-up, sees the issue differently. Feeling that the strategic element of "sideout" volleyball is now gone, he notes that momentum is no longer a factor in a match.

Stanford's John Dunning, this year's National Coach of the Year, simply feels that he has not seen enough matches to come to any conclusions. "I have lots of experience with side-out scoring in terms of understanding the game, and almost none in 30-point rally scoring."

Like any dramatic change in any sport, there is likely to be a period of adjustment. It was the same when basketball went to its three-point shot in the 1980's. One thing seems certain: the basic skills of the game, have become more important than ever to achieve success.

MGVCA looks back on its recent history

Two years ago I was elected to my first term as this organization's President. Along with Tom Turco, Tammy Webber and David Moore I am pleased to return for another two-year term and update you on the state of our coaches association.

In September of 1999 the MIAA reported a total of 197 schools participating in girls' high school volleyball in Massachusetts. The 2001 season began with 210 high school programs (a 6.5% increase). There will likely be 225-230 programs by the 2005 fall season. In the same two-year period, the MGVCA has grown from 30-35 coaches to our current membership of 152.

Three of the four goals that we set in 1999 have been met: (1) creating a statewide coaches directory, (2) publishing a MGVCA newsletter and (3) establishing a video lending library. Our fourth goal, establishing a web site, was temporarily derailed by the restrictive economic cutbacks at SchoolSports. The re-establishment of an internet site remains a top priority goal for this organization.

Our new directory, which will be sent to all new and rejoining members, will combine both the coaches listings and video library in a 45-page bound document. We continue to update the information in the directory as it becomes available to us.

This is our seventh issue of "Between the Lines," which serves to educate and inform coaches of the major issues impacting girls' high school volleyball. Any story ideas and/or articles which our members would like to submit are certainly welcome at any time. Winter, spring and fall editions are currently published.

The video lending library, which continues to grow, has been very successful. In the past twenty-six month period, we have sent out 147 requests for top notch instructional video tapes. It is hoped that even more coaches will use this valuable resource in the years to come.

In addition the MGVCA has been at the forefront of a number of key issues regarding MIAA policy-making. We initiated, through MIAA representative Tom Turco, the proposal to create a three-divisional alignment. Although modified from our original plan, the current MIAA format is certainly a positive step for girls' volleyball as it continues to grow. Currently we are directing our efforts towards the National Federation/NCAARules controversy (see front page).

Our annual clinics, the last two years conducted by Ken Duarte (Bridgewater State) and Sandy Hoffman (Bentley), have been very well received. Over 50 coaches attended each of these highly informative events held at collegiate sites.

For 2002-03 our goals include (1) re-establishment of a web site, (2) the restructuring of the outdated association Constitution, (3) the expansion of the video lending library, and (4) the induction of the 2002 Hall of Fame coaching candidates.

Although our membership has grown, we would still like to see even more coaches actively involved in our organization. Your input, suggestions and concerns regarding volleyball are extremely valuable as we move forward. To this end, we would like to see more coaches in attendance at our pre-season and postseason meetings.

As we continue to grow, our primary purpose remains simple: to serve as a resource for all high school volleyball coaches.