

Between the Lines

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MGVCA Newsletter

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The MIAA Volleyball Committee will next meet on Tuesday, January 7, 2003 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 via e-mail: (bhsvb6x@yahoo.com)

Gender issue predominant at postseason tournament

It is inevitable that the MIAA Volleyball Committee will have to deal with the gender issue when it next meets on January 7, 2003. The local media's coverage of Matignon's Greg Case seemed to be "the volleyball story" as the MIAA Tournament concluded on November 17 with the State Finals at Wheaton College.

Volleyball, of course, is not the only sport in which the mixed gender issue has been tested. Field hockey, as an example, currently allows boys to participate. Virginia Anderson, Associate Director of the MIAA, articulates the position of this state's governing body for interscholastic sports:

" We have consistently fought in the courts to prevent boys from playing on girls' teams. Not only were we unsuccessful, but the effort spurred counter suits against us from the parents of boys.

We are not like other states with regard to Title IX. Massachusetts is one of the few states (only three) that has adopted the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution. After a multitude of unsuccessful lawsuits in support of prohibiting boys from playing on girls' teams several years ago, our Board decided to honor the decisions of our courts and abide by the law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

If you think that our courts have made a mistake in interpreting the law in adopting this Constitutional Amendment, please let your congressman know. We have exhausted our resources with regard to this issue."

MGVCA membership drive seeks to broaden its base

Over the past three years the membership of the MGVCA has risen from 25-30 to our current total of 178 coaches. However, we are still not reaching everyone. Of the 215 MIAA schools currently playing girls' volleyball, only slightly more than half of our member schools (118) are represented in the association. That's simply because many schools have two (and sometimes three) members.

Our goal for 2003 is to establish an organization of over two-hundred high school volleyball coaches across the state. To do that, we need to reach about 75% of our member schools (varsity, JV and freshman coaches). We will keep dues at the current nominal fee of \$10 per year. Dues entitle members to (1) School/Coach Directory, (2) access to our Video Lending Library of our 110 instructional tapes, (3) future newsletters, (4) Internet Updates and e-mails, and (5) Membership Card.

Please take a minute to send in the enclosed membership form. Varsity coaches can really "help the cause" by signing up their junior varsity/assistant coaches at this time. Additional forms are available on-line at www.mgvca.org.

The updated School/Coach Directory will be sent out on February 1, 2003 along with information concerning our March clinic. In the meantime, feel free to contact our office with any issues that our organization can help you with. Our primary goal is to serve coaches as a volleyball resource.

Seniors dominate 2002 All State teams

Thompson, Curley are again the state's best

The MGVCA held its annual postseason meeting on Sunday, November 3 at the MIAA Headquarters in Franklin. Twenty-four member coaches attended the 11AM meeting.

President Rob Slavin presided over the two and a half hour session by first updating membership information. Annual membership dues will be renewed in January, 2003 for our 178 member coaches. That record number continues to rise as more coaches across the state become actively involved in the sport of volleyball.

Slavin noted that the ongoing cost of maintaining a MGVCA web site would place the most significant economic burden on the association for the foreseeable future. Because of this, it is essential that membership continue at the current high level so that we are able to maintain an on-line presence.

There was a general agreement among the coaches that a slight increase in dues might offset the cost of running the web site. At present Al Morel (Wachusett) continues to serve as the site's web master.

Discussion followed concerning the proposed coaches clinic for March, 2003. Wellesley College is the tentative site for early in March. We are looking at a number of potential clinicians for this annual event.

Secretary Tammy Webber briefly spoke about the Hall of Fame induction slated for the fall of 2002. Since there was no consensus regarding our second class of inductees, Webber suggested that we extend the search process until the fall of 2003. She noted the names of those half dozen coaches who are currently under consideration.

Treasurer David Moorereported a balance of just under \$3,000 in the association account. Most recent expenditures included mailing costs, web site maintenance and the cost of the trophies for All State candidates.

With regard to the All State

candidates, it was decided that plaques would be presented to both first and second team members. In the past, only members of the first team were given plaques (certificates to second team). The request that these plaques be handed out to players at the State Finals was denied by the MIAA on the grounds that these are not "MIAA awards."

The vast 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 almost fifty nominations, both mail-in and from the coaches present, were then discussed and voted upon.

Tammy Webber proposed that the First and Second Team members from 2001 (eight in total) be placed on the First Team for 2002. This notion met with the approval of those present.

The advocacy process then began for the remaining four slots on the first team. This process was repeated for the second team nominees. Votes were taken after all coaches present had a chance to speak on behalf of their own or other players placed into nomination.

As in the past, selections were made available to the local media. Most of our selections are generally represented on the Boston Globe and/or Boston Herald All Scholastic teams.

MGVCA 2002 All State Selections

Liz Curley	Senior	Barnstable High School
Makini Thompson	Senior	North Quincy High School
Erica Marcus	Senior	Medway High School
Kassie Moore	Senior	Bourne High School
Kristen Kelly	Senior	Medway High School
Krista Suojanen	Senior	Medfield High School
Betsy Hurley	Senior	Sacred Heart High School
Kathleen McCarthy	Senior	North Quincy High School
Amanda Clement	Senior	Barnstable High School
Sara Rabinovitch	Senior	Newton North High School
Kim Price	Senior	Billerica High School
Rachel Smith	Senior	Somerset High School

Second Team

Casey Buss	Junior	Barnstable High School
Sarah Choi	Senior	Boston Latin School
Diane Gilbody	Senior	Quincy High School
Elin Dahlstrom	Senior	Dennis-Yarmouth Reg. HS
Emily Groth	Senior	Franklin High School
Rebecca Smith	Senior	Somerset High School
Julie Brodie	Junior	Chelmsford High School
Raechel Jackson	Junior	Milton High School
Erin Mosley	Senior	Billerica High School
Jamie Pardee	Senior	Milford High School
Caitlin Ostrowski	Senior	Hudson High School
Kristen Goede	Senior	Westborough High School

Coach's Corner

Interviews with MGVCA members
conducted by Leo Fahey

Jim Rendle's formula for volleyball success

North Quincy's Jim Rendle is a self-proclaimed dinosaur in the world of Massachusetts high school volleyball.

He started playing in 1972 at the Quincy YMCA after putting down the football and basketball.

Jim played up and down the east coast until he started coaching in 1984 with the Mass Patriots of Quincy. He is currently the director and a coach there.

A coaching vacancy opened up at North Quincy High School in 1985. His daughter and a group of her friends convinced Rendle to apply for the job.

The team was coming off a 2-14 record, but Jim was able to help right the ship with a 9-7 record in his first year. North Quincy has had a winning record ever since.

His first state title was in 1987, and there have been five more since. In 2002 North Quincy went 25-2, beating Billerica 3-0 in the finals.

Jim was gracious enough to sit down with the MGVCA to share his views on coaching volleyball.

Building a Program

Generally it takes several years to develop a winning volleyball program. Jim Rendle was simply not that patient. His impact was immediate, and he has not let up.

What then does it take to achieve this? "The first thing you need is talent. My daughter and three or four of her friends were superb athletes. You are not going to bluff your way through without talent."

It also involves teaching the game and getting your players on the right track by working hard. Jim believes that good, hard working kids will give you a good start to a successful program.

"At the high school level if you want your kids to be committed to winning, you have to be committed to winning.

You have to show up to practice every day and *actually* practice.

You can't allow yourself to get tired or burnt out. You have to follow through by making sure every practice is as intense as it can be. If you want to keep building, you can't slack. It isn't an easy thing to do after two months of practice, but you have to keep pushing."

Surprisingly, North Quincy does not usually have a set line-up or a set of fense until mid-October. Jim has a strong philosophy that there are two seasons.

"The first twenty-two games are practice. The kids are learning and improving. Line-ups change, serve receive patterns change and kids play different positions." He likes to give his players the opportunity to learn by trying new things.

They also learn by making mistakes. If they make some mistakes and lose a few games, that's all right, as long as they learn from their mistakes. "We want to be good at the end of the year."

Coaching Style

Rendle describes his coaching style as animated and intense. Though, lately, it has been more so with his players and less so with the referees!

He tries to over-emphasize a lot of points (both positive and negative) to make it more fun for the kids and for him.

At the beginning of each year he tells his players that the sport of volleyball is supposed to be a fun experience. However, this definition has to be carefully explained lest there be any confusion amongst the girls.

According to Coach Rendle fun is "a lot of sweat, hard-work, competitiveness and improving. It's not giggling and laughing."

If he can get his players to buy into his definition of fun "then they will be pretty successful come game time, and they will enjoy that success."

Basic Philosophy

The key to successful coaching is consistency. You have to look to improve every day, starting in August and ending in November. You simply can't stop trying to improve.

Jim also stresses basic fundamentals in practice, particularly ball placement and ball control.

He highly recommends viewing Russ Rose's video volleyball series because of the intensity in the way Coach Rose runs practice.

He also likes Mike Krzyzewski's book *Leading with Heart*. Rendle is a big fan of Coach K's approach to athletics: games are fun and practice is work. If you work at practice then you can showcase all that work and improvement during the game.

Moreover, winning and losing doesn't really matter. If you lose then you have to go back and work harder. If you win then you have to maintain the work ethic you have been using.

State of the Game

The current state of volleyball in Massachusetts is definitely improving according to Jim. The problem has been, and remains to be, the vast disparity in the level of play.

There is a big gap between "the haves and the have-nots." This, however, is improving in a number of ways. The athletes now coming out to play volleyball are the "best I have ever seen."

Rendle believes the dramatic increase in the number of new players and programs should improve the parity problem. Finally, the addition of a Division III in the state will develop more competitiveness among the smaller schools in Massachusetts.

For the record: State Finalists

Division 1

1980	Brockton 2	Milford 0
1981	No State Final	
1982	Quincy 2	Arlington 1
1983	Amherst 3	Stoneham 0
1984	Quincy 2	Stoneham 0
1985	Chelmsford 2	Quincy 0
1986	Chelmsford 3	Boston Latin 0
1987	No. Quincy 3	Stoneham 2
1988	Quincy 3	Bp. Feehan 0
1989	Case 3	Quincy 2
1990	Case 3	Quincy 2
1991	No. Quincy 3	Dracut 0
1992	No. Quincy 3	New Bedford 1
1993	Barnstable 3	Marlboro 1
1994	New Bedford 3	No. Quincy 1
1995	Barnstable 3	No. Quincy 1
1996	Barnstable 3	Dracut 1
1997	Barnstable 3	Dracut 0
1998	Barnstable 3	No. Quincy 1
1999	No. Quincy 3	Dracut 1
2000	Barnstable 3	Newton North 0
2001	No. Quincy 3	Barnstable 1
2002	No. Quincy 3	Billerica 0

Division 2

1986	Case 3	Westwood 0
1987	Case 3	Turners Falls 1
1988	Case 3	Medway 1
1989	Medway 3	No. Reading 1
1990	Medway 3	Old Rochester 0
1991	Medway 3	Seekonk 0
1992	Medway 3	No. Reading 0
1993	Medway 3	Case 0
1994	Case 3	Medway 2
1995	Medway 3	Amherst 2
1996	Case 3	Mahar 2
1997	Mahar 3	Medfield 2
1998	Medfield 3	Bourne 2
1999	Medway 3	Lynfield 0
2000	Bourne 3	Medway 0
2001	Case 3	Milford 1
2002	Somerset 3	Minnechaug 0

Division 3

2001	Medway 3	Bourne 0
2002	Bourne 3	Matignon 1

Sectional alignment raises some concerns

MIAA Member Schools by Section

	South	Central	North	West
Division 1	19	21	15	-
Division 2	30	17	18	17
Division 3	21	22	20	15

The current sectional alignment for postseason tournament play is slated to remain in effect through the 2004-2005 season. At present there are 215 schools which participate in girls volleyball, an increase of 4% since 1998.

This alignment was revamped in 2001 with the creation of a Division 3. The idea was to divide each section into three equal groups based on female enrollment in grades 9-12. Technical schools were allowed to drop down one level.

The restructuring has left a void in Division 1 since the West only participates in Divisions 2-3. Because of this, a BYE was created in the State Tournament at the top level. One sectional winner, on a rotating annual basis, does not have to play in the State Semifinal Round.

A number of coaches have suggested that all the teams in Division 1 which qualify for the postseason should participate in a single bracket statewide tournament. This past year thirty-five D-1 schools qualified in the three sections.

Coaches who wish to weigh in on this matter should contact MIAA Representative Tom Turco. At present, nothing has been formally proposed to alter the system in place.

Off-season programs for volleyball players

There are currently 15 Junior Olympic programs offered in Massachusetts during the winter/spring. Although some programs have already started, most begin in early January. Contact information can be obtained at www.nevolleyball.org. If you are interested in coaching from January-May, positions are available.

Also, we are trying to build our Summer Camp Directory for the 2003 season. If you are conducting a program this summer, contact Al Morel (www.usagrassroots.com) so that he can get that information on our web site as soon as possible. If you have a brochure simply download a copy and forward it to Al.