WSLA Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, October 15, 2026 **Time:** Called to order 7:06 pm; adjourned 8:38 pm
Location: Microsoft Teams

Present: MK Benshoof, Holly Whitman, Curtis Estes, Christy Neff, Jeanette Wake, Jeanne Ballot **Absent:** Claire, Tony

Draft prepared from the meeting recording transcript and the posted agenda. No formal motions or roll-call votes were recorded.

1. Old Business: WWLOA Rules Question (Music Stoppage)

The board discussed how to enforce the new rule requiring music to stop before the draw and fans to be on the opposite side of the field, in response to a question from the WWLOA.

- Jeanette suggested a warning first, then delay of game. Holly noted that for officials' training, a warning step would create confusion, since every infraction would then be expected to get a warning. Christy added that when the ref addresses the table before the game, that serves as the warning.
- **Consensus:** The infraction will be assessed as a **delay of game**, and the team loses possession. No separate warning step will be written into the rule; the rulebook language stands as written. Individual officials who give a warning first may do so, but training will present it simply as delay of game.

2. Executive Director Report (MK Benshoof)

WIAA sanctioning update (priority item). MK presented a slide deck prepared for the WSLA Town Hall on **Wednesday, October 21 at 7 pm**. Key points:

- WSLA is in conversation with the boys' association, USA Lacrosse, and the WIAA to understand the pathway, timeline, and implications of possible WIAA sanctioning for girls lacrosse.
- The topic was last voted on roughly a decade or more ago (est. 2012; exact date to be confirmed) and failed by a wide margin.
- WSLA would not submit an amendment. Any member school can propose one, it needs support from at least four other schools, and it is due the second Friday in October. The WIAA contact estimated a minimum of 2–3 years to pass. Washington had not

added a WIAA sport in about 25 years until flag football last year.

- Funding is a major factor: districts are cutting budgets, and flag football benefited from roughly $600,000 in Seahawks support and low equipment costs.
- A sport does not need to be WIAA-sanctioned for a school to adopt it, and a sanctioned sport is not required to be offered by every school.
- Rule implications include: school coaches could not coach their own current or feeder-school students in fall club/select activities; programs made up of multiple high schools would have to split; dual-sport spring athletes would have to choose; students whose resident school lacks a team would lose the option to play for a neighboring school; some homeschool and private-school students may gain a pathway. There is no phased-in option, and the sport could see several years of decline.
- Next steps: build relationships with athletic directors, show ASB-fee and participation data, and note that USA Lacrosse can cover insurance for one-off players. A one-page comparison of WSLA vs. WIAA rules was suggested.
- Board feedback was positive; Curtis and Christy praised the deck as clear and balanced. MK will hold questions until the end of the Town Hall. Board members are encouraged to attend. The boys' side is not expected to petition, citing equipment costs and liability insurance concerns.

Strategic plan. MK reviewed the draft 2027 (3–5 year) plan and invited feedback. The four goals are: (1) build sustainable sponsorship and revenue partners that reduce financial barriers; (2) strengthen board structure, process, and culture; (3) increase awareness of girls lacrosse and strengthen the foundation for youth programs; (4) strengthen the development, recruitment, and support of coaches and officials. Tony was absent and was to have presented in more detail.

Fundraising.

- The Dicks grant is still pending.
- A Giving Tuesday campaign is in preparation.
- Jeanne has been researching other grant opportunities, and the board will likely lean more toward local small and mid-sized business sponsorships (for example, state championship booths) than grants. MK and Jeanette will continue work on the Hero of the Deep grant.

Operations and board recruitment.

- Openings remain for treasurer and secretary. MK will keep posting the openings, and members were asked to recruit from their communities. Committee-only roles are welcome for people who cannot commit to a board seat. Christy's outreach to Rachel Moody resulted in her interest in joining a committee.
- **Conduct team:** Erin Massena and David Almond have agreed to serve as a neutral third-party team handling misconduct reports under the handbook (about 5–6 reports last year).

Coach education. MK proposed a coach education session at the January meeting featuring Matt Schreiber (Idaho; culture and athlete development), with WSLA covering his travel. Curtis estimated airfare of about $500–600 plus about $150 for a rental car. To add a woman's perspective, MK will ask Megan Arms (recommended by Christy and Jeanne) to present as well. The board was supportive, and MK may fold the cost into the Giving Tuesday campaign as a coach education series.

3. President, Vice President, and Treasurer/Secretary Reports

- The president was absent. Curtis had nothing to report.
- No treasurer or secretary is currently in place and there was nothing to report. MK will clean up the September minutes; they were **not approved** at this meeting and are carried forward.

4. Committee Reports

Rules Committee. This is Holly's last year as chair. Current members are Christy, Tony, Holly, and Allison, who volunteered at the meeting. MK will invite Erin and David to join so that votes involve enough members and include non-coach perspectives. No waivers have been received yet.

Sagebrush petition (new varsity team, Tri-Cities). MK summarized the petition from Sage View: the boys' club board will start the program, with a parent board for girls to follow; the field is a lined turf field; they have about 14 girls (95% confident) in grades 9–12; they do not expect to field both varsity and JV; their main challenge is finding a coach. Holly raised concern about the effect on Kamiakin's roster. MK noted that, per the handbook, juniors and seniors may stay with their current team. The board welcomed the growth.

- MK will send the petition to the Rules Committee to vote.

- Holly will contact the Walla Walla team; Curtis offered to reach out to Eastside teams to help with scheduling and growth.
- MK will add a schedule-form option for programs able to host multiple teams (e.g., round robins).

5. New Business

Conferences and conglomerate/combined programs. No decisions were made; this was an exploratory discussion.

- *Conference counts:* Independent and Metro have 7 teams each. Nisqually could fall to 4 if Auburn folds; North Sound will be at 4 with Woodinville out; Peninsula could fall to 5 if Klahanie folds.
- *Options raised:* moving Shoreline to North Sound; dismantling the Independent conference; splitting Metro and Independent into smaller conferences with power-ranking-based non-conference games. Bainbridge Island has asked about moving from Metro to Peninsula but has not formally petitioned.
- *Concerns:* Curtis cautioned about repeated reshuffling if teams fold, and about Bainbridge's travel. Any major restructure (such as dismantling Independent) would likely take effect for 2028, with 2027 conferences remaining as they are and membership told in advance. Registration closes November 15, after which the schedule is built.
- MK will research how the WIAA and the boys' association structure conferences, including open divisions.
- *Conglomerates:* The board discussed what motivates programs to grow and split (examples: Northshore/Woodinville, Snohomish, Issaquah). Members stressed that coaches and administrators are scarce so splits cannot be forced, that some programs (e.g., Spokane, Bellingham) need to be conglomerates to survive, and that case-by-case review and strong advice are preferable to mandates. Holly noted a mandate would be especially harmful to Spokane programs. Jeanne noted that one-off players need a way to keep playing. MK noted Woodinville plans to return to a standalone program in 2–3 years and WSLA will not dictate a Northshore/Woodinville split. MK will use this input in conversations with membership, with coaching and resources as a focus.

6. Old Business (continued)

Handbook: out-of-season provisions. Not finalized; carried to November.

- The definition of "regular participants" (three or more sessions) was removed.
- Proposed concept for tournament teams (MK to draft the exact language): an out-of-season team formed to compete in a specific tournament must be posted to WSLA and open to all, and if more than 50% of the players are from one high school or feeder program, the roster must be submitted to WSLA. Activity must conclude before the start of the season (wording to be confirmed). Curtis noted the rule gives WSLA something to enforce if a complaint arises. The board will revisit after a year or two if abuse is seen. Holly questioned enforceability.
- MK will circulate draft language.

Other items

- **League meeting timing:** The board agreed it should move earlier in the fall for next year (target: the week after Labor Day) so programs can ask questions before registration opens. MK also suggested publishing registration fees for multiple years in advance and lowering fees through fundraising.
- **October meeting parking:** Ian is working with Starfire; no answer yet.
- **All Conference/All State process and power rankings research (cross-border play, low priority):** Not discussed; deferred.

7. Action Items

Owner	Item
MK	Draft and circulate out-of-season handbook language
MK	Send Sagebrush petition to Rules Committee; invite Erin and David to the committee
MK	Invite Megan Arms and confirm Matt Schreiber for the January coach education meeting; estimate costs
MK	Prepare for the Oct 21 WSLA Town Hall (7 pm); confirm date of the prior WIAA vote
MK	Add multi-team hosting option to schedule form; research conference structures

Owner	Item
MK	Clean up September minutes for approval; keep posting board openings
Holly	Contact the Walla Walla team
Curtis	Reach out to Eastside teams
Jeanette / MK	Work on Hero of the Deep grant
Rules Committee	Vote on the Sagebrush petition
All	Recruit treasurer and secretary candidates; attend the Town Hall if able

8. Next Meeting

Tuesday, November 17, 2026 at 7:00 pm (Microsoft Teams)

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.