

TO : MSBOA HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIALS
FROM : LARRY MACHIONE
DATE : 1/27/08
RE : MIAA EMAIL 1/25/08

As most officials know the MIAA sent out an email on 1/25/08 with their view of what has been going on between the MSBOA and the MIAA in regard to the "post game hand shake" (PGHS). Your MSBOA delegate has been aware of everything that has occurred between our organizations since last April of 2007 up until our recent State Board meeting of 1/13/08. A meeting with the MIAA occurred on 1/24/08 which lasted for over 4 hours. The purpose of this letter is to give you a balance perspective of all that has occurred.

As you may recall 2 years ago there was concern over how the officials were being assigned for tournament games, I am sure there has been concern for a long time but finally it came to a head. As a result several meetings were arranged between Dick Neal and myself. Although they initially focused on tournament issues, eligible requirements, assignors selection , number of games allowed to work, working boys and girls, who should be the MSBOA representative to the MIAA, etc.. At our last meeting (Jan/07) we learned about the proposed PGHS. We were told that we could address the MIAA board of directors at their April '07 meeting (Bruce Edwards President MSBOA did) and then have **3 minutes** to address the MIAC (the MIAA's ruling body who has the final say) at their May '07 meeting (Bill Miller spoke on MSBOA's behalf). The Sportsmanship Committee was not limited to only 3 minutes.

The Board of Directors voted against PGHS. The MIAC voted to postpone any decision until their November '07 meeting. At this meeting, once again Bill Miller spoke against the PGHS as did the Basketball Coaches Representative and Jim Peters who was chairperson of the Basketball Committee indicating the Basketball Committee voted 16-0-1 against this proposal. Each of these individuals were subject to a time constraint of 3 minutes. The Sportsmanship Committee was allowed to present a 25 minute presentation (which included a power point) at the conclusion of which the MIAC voted almost unanimously in favor of **recommending** the PGHS for the winter and spring sports, but be a **requirement** for all team sports starting in the Fall of 2008. In our discussions with the MIAA we have been informed that the Sportsmanship Committee has in effect been working on this project for over 5 years even though we were only recently informed of it.

As a result of the November meeting a letter was forwarded to the MIAA expressing MSBOA concerns and asking one question: Whether or not the PGHS would be in effect for the upcoming tournament.? The MIAA never answered this question. Instead they had Bill Gaine author a letter indicating that they did not understand our position regarding not wanting to do the PGHS during the regular season. (I am sure you have seen this letter). In response the MSBOA sent a second letter to the MIAA once again reiterating our position and concerns over liability, safety and asking the same question.

Once again the MIAA failed to answer this very simple question. As a result of the MSBOA's attempt to resolve our difference we asked for assistance from our national organization (IAABO). Through the efforts of President, Peter Carroll and National Interpreter, Peter Webb a meeting was scheduled for January 10, 2008. At that meeting both liability and safety was discussed. It was determined that we would look in to purchasing insurance to resolve the liability issue (this, in fact, has been resolved). However, in regard to the safety issue the MIAA was asked directly (Bill Gaine, Phil Vacarro, and Bill McGuirk) whether or not the PGHS would take place in the tournament. They refused to give us a straight answer. In fact, they joked in their response that they had not answered our question.

At the MSBOA's special State Board meeting on January 13th a vote was taken that each Board would submit a list of tournament eligible officials, but would withhold any form of payment until we knew that the safety of the officials would be addressed and we would have a final determination as to whether the PGHS would be in effect for the tournament. As you know the MIAA was not happy when they did not receive the money and although they like to claim educational athletics is their primary concern, we all know in reality it is the money that drives this organization. In an effort to resolve the safety issue, a meeting was scheduled for 2 pm on January 24, 2008. Bill Miller and Larry Machione represented the MSBOA and the MIAA was represented by Bill Gaine, Jim Peters and Dave Gavigan (Security Consultant to the MIAA). This meeting lasted over 4 hours. During this meeting the safety of the officials was the primary concern of the MSBOA. After approximately 3 hours we felt we had worked out a mutual agreement between the organizations which included that a police officer and site administrator would be on the court with the officials during the PGHS activity. MSBOA went so far as to draw a diagram as to how this could take place and was willing to develop a narrative form so that all parties concerned would know their responsibilities. It was also agreed that should any activity occur during the PGHS the officials would only observe and not get involved.

After a brief recess, the MIAA came back to the table and indicated that although this is their tournament they did not feel they could tell the schools how they should handle their facilities. MSBOA informed the MIAA that this was contrary to everything they have done in the past. In fact they started this meeting telling us that this was their tournament and that they could do what they wanted, when they wanted and how they wanted. The MIAA also indicated that in some early round games some schools actually lose money because they actually do not have a large fan base. Larry Machione suggested that they could absorb the costs themselves based on the overall revenue generated and the revenue sharing plan with the schools could be adjusted so the schools would not absorb all of the expenses nor be burdened with a loss. They did not want to discuss this saying it was tournament policies and procedures and not for them to decide. We found this to be an interesting statement considering Jim Peters was at this meeting and currently serves as President of the MIAA and should have the authority to influence and or change policy regarding how the revenue is shared.

The MIAA then proposed they would consider MSBOA's recommendation if it were implemented from the quarter finals on, but not the earlier round games. MSBOA indicated that this would be acceptable if the officials were not required to stay for a PGHS for those earlier round games. MIAA stated that was not acceptable and wanted it required for all games. At the conclusion of the meeting Bill Gaine indicated that first thing Friday morning he would contact Bill Miller and notify him with a phone call in the morning of how many games took place last year that, in fact, did not have police coverage.

Bill Gaine **NEVER** called Bill Miller. It wasn't until Bill Miller (at approximately 4:30 pm) sent an e-mail to Bill Gaine that Bill Miller received a response which indicated that the MIAA was rejecting the MSBOA's proposal. There was no mention of additional discussion. Instead the MIAA sent out an e-mail (which only selected officials received) which stated their position concerning officials.

SOME TRUE FACTS YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF:

The MIAA has consistently misled the MSBOA

The MIAA does not want to be questioned or held accountable on anything they do or want.

Bill Miller never said that MSBOA does not respect the MIAA . What he said was "the MSBOA feels they receive little or no respect from the MIAA".

At no time during our 1/24/08 meeting did MSBOA demand more money for working the games. I stated to Bill Gaine that I knew some officials would ask if they would receive additional compensation for this added activity and he said the fees are set for this year. No requests were made for Game passes.

I did question why we pay an enrollment fee when we do not pay any fee to work regular season games.

I did question why last year over 1400 officials (1412) enrolled , (1280 were IAABO officials) for a cost of \$7,680.00, when there were only 798 available spots. We know not everyone received a game and most people got at least two games and some as many as 6 to 7. That results in approximately 150 to 200 officials that actual worked the tournament.

MIAA chooses who the MSBOA representative will be. That is why Hank Ryan still serves on the basketball committee. Dick Neal was informed that Hank Ryan does not have the support or backing of MSBOA yet Dick's comment was that Hank has always been loyal to the MIAA and should continue to serve as the officials representative.

MSBOA voted unanimously that no one should stay for any PGHS for the regular season. I have been told that officials have violated this mandate , and as a result should be disciplined.

MSBOA, IAABO and the MIAA basketball committee have suggested on many occasions that we do a pregame hand shake, similar to what FIBA recommends. That was rejected by the MIAA.

MSBOA asked the MIAA if the PGHS could be postponed until next year. They answered NO. If it could be experimental, do it in some games but not all until the kinks are worked out . No was there answer.

MSBOA has done nothing but act in what they felt was the best interest of their members and the game of basketball. They do not have a hidden agenda, I can not say the same for the MIAA.

MSBOA has always gone in to any meeting with a willingness to discuss and try to work thru the problems. At no time did MSBOA ever state that we would not work tournament games.

MSBOA has always been concerned with both liability and safety for all those involved.

IAABO National Executive Board did discuss and support officials not staying for any PGHS.

MIAA is concerned why they can not receive an answer overnight or within a few days but it is totally okay for them to avoid answering a simply question for over 2 months.

At this time MSBOA maybe the only sport group questioning the PGHS because it is affecting us right now and we believe the MIAA has not even notified the other sports of this policy yet.

FINAL THOUGHTS

If as an official your only goal is to work a tournament game then that is what you should do and worry about the consequences later. If you truly believe in the integrity of our organization then you should support it, even if it means not working a tournament game. But please do not lose sight of the bigger picture. What is going to happen in the future?

If there is no MSBOA do you think there will be any unity or fair dealings across the state or will all of us be subject to what ever the person or organization who controls the games dictates? Will the larger boards control everything? Will there be equity between the regions for both regular season and the tournament? These are just some of the questions we all must be willing to answer and accept the consequences from our decisions.

Just as those who came before and made sacrifices to make our association better for us, I believe we owe it to those that will come after us to make the same strides as to what we believe is right even if it is not the easy choice.