

League Enrollment Explanatory Posting

June 8, 2009

Key Changes/Points of Emphasis for the 2009-2010 Season

We realize that this League Enrollment Explanatory Posting (hereafter “Posting”), and the corresponding enrollment forms, are rather lengthy. While we strongly encourage you to read every word of all three documents, we realize that doesn’t always happen. As a result, before we get into the details of how to register, we want to highlight for you several key changes for the 2009-2010 season. Please note that if we reference a rule change below and direct you to a specific section of the League’s draft 2009-2010 Rules, these Rules will not be posted on our website until approximately June 18, 2009. If you go to our website before then, you will be able to view only the 2008-2009 edition of the Rules. The key changes for the 2009- 2010 season are as follows (Note: the next three bullets contain information posted previously on this website on June 3, 2009 – it is repeated here to have all information related to enrollment in one self-contained posting):

- **No Mailing via USPS of Entire Enrollment Packet**

In past seasons, we would mail a detailed cover memo describing how the League functions, along with hard copy of hosting and playing enrollment forms to teams that have played in the past, as well as to new teams that have expressed an interest in enrolling. With all of the paper included in those documents, enrollment packets weighed in at six ounces, with a total mailing cost per packet of \$1.73 and a total expenditure over \$3,000 to print and mail the packets to all interested parties. Given the current level of computer and internet competency, it seemed wasteful to continue mailing all that paper. As a result, for the 2009-2010 season, youth coaches, varsity coaches and association contacts who have entered teams in The Great Northwest in the past, will receive a relatively brief memo in mid-June generally describing what is in this website posting. It will refer teams to this website to access the “League Enrollment Explanatory Posting” (which replaces the “cover memo”), Team Playing Date Preference Form and Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form, which can then be printed from this website.

- **Enrollment Deadline**

Unified Meet Hosting Preference Forms will be due on August 1 for all grades, just as they have been in past seasons.

While the due dates for the Team Playing Date Preference Forms have not been moved up, instead of having four separate deadlines spread out over a 45 day period (i.e. two grades every 15 days), we will have eight separate deadlines, spread approximately over the same period. The order of these deadlines reflects the exact order in which we prepare the meet schedules for each grade. Our commitment is to have the schedule for each grade completed within 45 days after the registration deadline for that grade. The deadlines for submitting the Team Playing Date Preference Forms for the various grades are as follows:

- 8th grade girls – August 1
- 7th grade girls – August 8
- 6th grade girls – August 15
- 6th grade boys – August 22
- 8th grade boys – August 29
- 7th grade boys – September 5
- 5th and 4th grade girls – September 12
- 5th and 4th grade boys – September 19

While boys teams, and those for 7th, 6th, 5th and 4th grade girls, have more time to register, we appreciate receiving as many early registrations as possible for all grade levels to help facilitate schedule preparation.

All boys teams, and 7th, 6th, 5th and 4th grade girls teams, be cautious. Just because your Team Playing Date Preference Forms aren't due on August 1, if you intend to host, we still need your Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form by the deadline for submitting that form – August 1.

If your community wants to host a boys meet, or one for 7th, 6th, 5th or 4th grade girls, and you miss the August 1 deadline, we might (i.e., there are no guarantees) be able to accommodate your desire to host if we need the space and if you're able to host on a date that works for the League. However, if you're involved with an 8th grade girls team, we will actually begin scheduling for those grades on August 10, thereby making a late request to host very difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate.

- **Rosters and Liability Waivers**

For many years the League has had a rule that coaches submit a roster online, as well as an original, hard copy, signed "Consent for Medical Treatment and Voluntary Release, Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Risks Indemnity Agreement" (hereafter "Liability Waiver") for each player. While this has long been a requirement, in past seasons we've only done spot audits to verify compliance. After the 2008-2009 season, we performed a complete audit looking for the submission of both items for all teams. If a team with which you are associated failed to submit a complete roster, and/or Liability Waiver for all your team members, you will receive notice of that fact when you receive your memo via USPS about the 2009-2010 enrollment process.

While we will not assess any penalties retroactively for any failure to comply, teams that fail to get into compliance by the time we start preparing the League schedule for their team's grade/gender as noted above, will not be scheduled into meets for the 2009-2010 season. We are very serious about this. Teams that are not currently in compliance are noted on our spreadsheets for the 2009-2010 enrollment process – Team Playing Date Preference Forms for those teams will not be processed until the complete roster has been submitted online, and all executed, original, hard copy liability waivers are received in our office.

Relative to getting into compliance for the 2008-2009 Liability Waivers, please do one of the following:

- If you had your Liability Waiver executed before last season and simply forgot to send them in, you needn't have them re-executed until the beginning of the 2009-2010 season – simply send the originals you've been holding to us at: The Great Northwest, P O Box 506, Hudson, WI 54016.
- If you think you've already submitted the 2008-2009 Liability Waivers and we've indicated that we didn't receive them, please contact Terri Green at 715-386-4317 or e-mail terri@gnbl.org.
- If you didn't submit Liability Waivers for all your team members before the 2008-2009 season because you never got them executed, you can print that form from our website by accessing Attachment #2 to either the 2008-2009 or 2009-2010 Rules. The form must be signed by one of the parents or legal guardians for each player. The original signed form should be sent to: The Great Northwest, P O Box 506, Hudson, WI 54016. If one or more players on your roster in 2008-2009 are unlikely to be back, we are not expecting you to get signed Liability Waivers for such player(s). On the other hand, we do expect coaches to submit Liability Waivers for players who played last season and who are expected to be back. Since Liability Waivers have no legal affect retroactively, whatever Liability Waivers you submit will cover the 2009-2010 season. Once your roster is set later on in the fall or winter, you'll then need to submit Liability Waivers only for new 2009-2010 roster members.

Coaches should keep a photocopy of this document in their coach's bag that they take to games in case one of their players is seriously injured and a parent or legal guardian is not present. In a non-life threatening situation, hospital and EMT staff may refuse treatment without a signed consent for medical treatment provision, which is part of the Liability Waiver form.

Rosters, on the other hand, **cannot** be submitted to us via USPS, fax or e-mail. They must be entered online. If you send us hard copy, you are not in compliance. To complete this online process, starting at gnbl.org, click on the link for "Roster Submission." From this point on there are instructions on each page throughout the process. Each coach will create their own username and personal password. Coaching information is gathered only once and then kept on file with your team. Once the coaching entry is completed, you will be asked for name, jersey number, address, school and current grade of attendance for each player on your team – please use the 2008-2009 school year. What you submit can be edited by you throughout the season. Once you enter this information the first year (now for 2008-2009), it's a simple process to update it in subsequent seasons (i.e., later this year when your 2009-2010 roster is set). The process shouldn't take you more than 15-20 minutes the first time; much less to update at the start of each subsequent season or during each season. If you feel your roster has been properly submitted, it may be that we can't locate your roster online because we don't have your team's correct username. If you think that is the case, please forward that username to Terri Green at 715-386-4317 or e-mail terri@gnbl.org.

If you are not sure whether your team is in compliance, please wait until you receive the memo we are mailing you between June 10 and June 13 to verify your status. After June 15, if you have questions about the requirements, or process of submitting either item, please contact Terri Green at 715-386-4317 or e-mail terri@gnbl.org.

While the following items are not new for the 2009-2010 season, they are important items that merit special notice or that will continue to be points of emphasis during the 2009-2010 season:

- Each year we get an increasing number of complaints from hosts about unruly coaches and fans. The first question we ask those hosts is: how many technical fouls did your referees issue? Often, the answer is “none.” League Rule D-10 gives referees broad authority to deal aggressively with unruly fans and coaches. The fact that we get so many complaints about adult conduct at meets, either means that referees haven’t read the rule or choose not to follow the sanctions outlined. Hosts are encouraged to make sure that referees know what procedures they’re supposed to follow and to do so aggressively.
- Over the course of the last several years, several communities cancelled their home basketball meets because their varsity team qualified for sectionals or for state. While we agree that playing in a sectional final or a state tournament is an important event, rarely does a varsity team qualify for such an event where it wasn’t realistically expected at the beginning of the season. If your varsity basketball team (in spring) or football team (in fall) expects to have a strong team, and their being in the playoffs would cause you to be short of volunteers that date, don’t plan to host on that date(s) in the first place. While we realize that a host may occasionally lose gym space for a totally legitimate reason (e.g. a re-scheduled varsity basketball game due to school closure for snow, a WIAA-sanctioned event that wasn’t on the calendar at the beginning of the school year, etc.), cancelling a meet because your fans want to watch the local high school team in play-offs is not an acceptable reason when the problem could be avoided by not scheduling a meet on that date in the first place. Teams/associations that do so in the future will lose hosting privileges in succeeding years (see Rule B-2).
- Reformatting Meets. Rule C-18 (see also Item #6 in the Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form and Attachment #5 to the League Rules) spells out how a meet must be reformatted if a team fails to show up on the day of the meet. During the last several seasons, a small number of hosts did not re-format meets as required. In most of these cases, the host said it was “too difficult.” That is a ridiculous excuse. The reformatting procedures are carefully laid out, taking into account virtually every possible scenario. It’s only “too difficult” because some hosts fail to read the procedures in advance and are not prepared; one such host didn’t even have the reformatting procedures with him on the date of the meet. We also had one host who simply refused to reformat because he didn’t like the rule.

Whatever the reason for not doing so, failing to reformat is not an option. For the 2008-2009 season, and continuing into 2009-2010, if a host fails to reformat as prescribed by League Rules, the host will have a choice: either forfeit its entire hosting credit for that meet (usually \$390 or \$520) or be banned from hosting in future years for the remainder of that team’s participation in The Great Northwest. If it’s an 8th grade team, there will be no option: the hosting credit will be forfeited.

The reason we're adamant on this process is simple. When teams come to Great Northwest meets, they expect to play four games. No team should be limited to three simply because the host refuses to follow League Rules.

- The only time The Great Northwest will schedule a mini-meet (five teams on one surface) is if a small community literally has only one playing surface in their community (see Item #3 in the Unified Meet Hosting Form). While this has long been our policy, starting with the 2008-2009 season and again in 2009-2010, we are enforcing it across the board – no exceptions.
- Wisconsin-based teams that qualify for the League Championship Tournament and decline are not guaranteed an invitation to the Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament (see Section B-12 of the Rules and the discussion in this memo under the heading “Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament”). An invite will be extended later only if space allows.
- Sixth, seventh and eighth grade Wisconsin-based teams that declined an invitation to the WSICT in one season are not guaranteed an invite to the WSICT for the next season (see Section B-12 of the Rules and the discussion in this memo under the heading “Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament”). An invite will be extended later only if space allows. This requirement has been in place for years and applies to all teams around the state, not just Great Northwest teams.

Sale of Basketballs and Other Related Basketball Equipment

The Great Northwest will again offer for sale certain basketball-related merchandise that many coaches (particularly in rural areas) have had a hard time accessing, or that coaches anywhere are unable to find in one location at a fair price. The most purchased item is the men's and women's Spalding TF-1000, the most popular basketball for high school and middle school players in America. We are also offering whiteboards, dry erase markers, ball bags, weighted practice cones, dribbling goggles and scorebooks. A description of all the available products, a price list and order form can be accessed by clicking “Basketball Equipment” on The Great Northwest website (gnbl.org). Please note that there is a significant price break on the basketballs when purchased in quantity. Allow 1-3 weeks for delivery.

Third Season of “Pioneer” Division for 4th and Certain 5th Grade Teams

About eight years ago, The Great Northwest first organized a “non-competitive” League for 3rd and 4th grade boys and girls teams. That League has been limited to about 25 communities, primarily in western Wisconsin in an area extending from Grantsburg to Spooner to Thorp to Arcadia to Prescott. (Little interest outside of that area has been expressed.) That League has operated from mid-October to mid-December the past five seasons and will be continued in the fall of 2009. For more information on the “non-competitive” 3rd and 4th grade League, go to our website (gnbl.org) and click on “3rd and 4th Grade League.” Enrollment materials for the past season are listed currently. 2009 enrollment materials will be posted later this summer, usually in mid-July.

While the coaches of 4th grade teams participating in the Great Northwest's "non-competitive" League have been generally pleased with the playing opportunities, many also expressed concern about the shock to the system of players going from what is essentially in-house basketball to four competitive games in one day. As we considered how to address that issue, we also wanted to address the following two points made by some varsity coaches and 5th grade coaches:

- Fifth grade teams from those communities with no developmental program below that age level often struggle when going from no competitive games to four games in one day. Even in some large communities, where there are tryouts, second or third teams are often comprised entirely of first year players. Many of these kids have a difficult time transitioning to competitive traveling basketball from a standing start.
- Many WIAA Division 4 (Minnesota A) and some WIAA Division 3 (Minnesota AA) communities have insufficient numbers in some of their grade levels to field a team at each one. That forces them to play with a small roster, which can be very difficult with four games in one day, or have younger players play "up." As a result, many smaller communities often have 4th grade players on their 5th grade teams out of necessity rather than choice.

As we considered all of the above, we also have the issue of blowouts at the 5th grade level. Most 8th, 7th and 6th grade League meets have relatively close games because all of the participants that play at those grade levels are rated based on their actual performance in the previous season. Since we have no previous playing experience from most 5th grade teams to consider, 5th grade meet schedules are put together based more on geographical considerations than strength of opponents. In an 8th grade game, if one team has a top-notch point guard and the other team an average one, and the rest of the two rosters are relatively equal, you might see a 15 point differential between the two teams. In 5th grade, the net difference is more likely to be as much as 30 points or more.

As a result, in an effort to better serve the interest of the various 5th and 4th grade teams playing in the League, for the 2007-2008 season, The Great Northwest established a "Pioneer" Division targeted at 4th grade teams and those 5th grade teams that are short on numbers and/or playing experience. While the total number of teams that participated in the Pioneer Division in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 wasn't huge, those that participated seemed generally pleased with the option. As a result, we've decided to have a Pioneer Division again for the 2009-2010 season. Play for the 5th and 4th graders during the 2009-2010 season will be scheduled as follows:

- The Pioneer Division will be open to all 4th grade teams, and those 5th grade teams which, because of perceived numbers or experience issues, are likely to be rated as B, B- or C teams after the season has concluded. The Pioneer Division will play only three games on a Saturday within a pool of four teams. Essentially, teams will be placed in pools of four just as at regular meets, except that, after pool play, there is no play-off game. Ribbons will still be awarded based on pool play results.
- The cost to play in a Pioneer Division meet will be \$95 (compared to \$110 for a regular meet) with the host getting a hosting credit of \$50 per team (compared to \$65 for a regular meet). League fees, therefore, will be \$45 regardless of the format (\$110 - \$65 for regular meets; \$95 - \$50 for Pioneer Division meets). While the host gets a reduced

hosting fee, it will also have a shorter day. When hosting in the Pioneer Division, a host will supervise games over six time slots (starting at 9:00 a.m., 10:10 a.m., 11:20 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 1:40 p.m. and 2:50 p.m.), compared to eight time slots in a regular meet. When hosting, communities with two playing surfaces will host two pools of four. The two pools can be the same gender or different. Communities with three playing surfaces will host two six-team pools, similar to the re-formatting option described in League Rule C-18, without the fourth game.

- Our objectives is to schedule all fourth grade teams in Pioneer Division meets only. Generally speaking, we will place a 4th grade team in a regular 5th grade meet only if availability and travel distances make it impossible or difficult to fit a 4th grade team into a Pioneer Division meet, and then only if fourth grade teams indicate their willingness to do so on their Team Playing Date Preference Form.
- Fifth grade teams (or combined 5th grade / 4th grade teams) will have the option of playing in the regular 5th grade division, the Pioneer Division or both. Coaches who know that they are likely to have an A or B+ team by season's end, should not indicate an interest in playing in the Pioneer Division just because they may have a preference to play only three games in one day. On the other hand, if you coach a team that you think will be rated at the B-/C level by season's end, you shouldn't automatically decide to play only in the Pioneer Division – it depends on which program is likely to address your long-term developmental needs.
- For those teams that want to be ranked for purposes of receiving an invitation to the 6th grade League Championship Tournament (“LCT”) in 2010-2011 or the Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament (“WSICT”) in 2009-2010 or 2010-2011, you should not play in the Pioneer Division. Because this division will be heavily populated with opponents that are either 4th grade teams, or less experienced or less accomplished 5th grade teams, it will be virtually impossible to achieve a top 32 or B+ rating playing a Pioneer Division schedule.
- As was the case last season, Pioneer Division meets will be organized only in the months of January and February. While the majority of regular 5th grade meets will take place in January and February, some regular 5th grade meets will also be scheduled in November, December and March.
- For coaches looking to enter teams in the Pioneer Division, carefully read the options when answering Question #9 on the Team Playing Date Preference Form. Since we've had only two years worth of experience and, therefore, can't be absolutely certain how much the level of participation in the Pioneer Division for 2009-2010 will grow, you are asked in Question #9 about how your total number of play dates should be adjusted if there are not enough Pioneer Division meets within a reasonable driving distance on dates your team is available to play.

Submission of Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form

As noted above, the final registration deadline for hosting will again be August 1 for the 2009-2010 season. The increasing complexity of the scheduling process as the League grows each season makes it essential that we start piecing together the schedule on August 1.

Requests for hosting dates will be processed on a first come-first served basis. The earlier you submit your Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form, the more likely that you'll get to host on your preferred date. Communities submitting Unified Meet Hosting Preference Forms shortly on or before the August 1 deadline must take potluck on when they can host. For example, let's assume you have a 7th grade girls "A" team and want to host on December 6, but you don't submit your hosting form until August 1. If, at that time, we've already exceeded the number of meets the League can accommodate on that date, or at least in your area and at your ability level, we will not be able to accommodate your request to host on that date. At that point, you'll either need to come up with an alternate host date that works into the schedule or you'll be unable to host. Also, last season, for the first time, at several grade levels we had more communities want to host than we could accommodate. Again, preferential treatment will be given to those communities that submitted their hosting forms early (along with other considerations, such as the total number of meets hosted by that community and the feedback we receive from last year's visiting teams – see Item #16 in the Team Playing Date Preference Form). Bottom line: submitting your hosting form on June 30 is better than July 15, and July 25 is better than August 1.

2009 – 2010 Meet Fee Structure

The cost to play in a regular League meet during the 2009-2010 season will be the same as it was the last several seasons: \$110 per meet. The hosting credit for a regular meet will again be \$65 per team hosted. If you are involved with a 5th or 4th grade team that intends to play in the "Pioneer" Division, note that the fee to play in these meets will also be unchanged at \$95 (only three games) with a proportionately reduced hosting credit.

Directions

We need all directions to gyms to be in detailed narrative form to facilitate listing these on our website. We must have this narrative submitted with your Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form for your hosting preferences to be accepted. Please check the accuracy of any directions you submitted last season and send any changes with your Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form. Any host community not supplying narrative directions will force us to follow-up with you by phone and delay locking in your hosting date.

Completion of Unified Meet Hosting Preference Forms

This point is not new to the 2009-2010 season, but warrants reiteration. All communities or school districts are strongly encouraged – although not absolutely required – to submit a "Unified" Meet Hosting Preference Form for all teams from their community or school district. Our strong preference is that each community submits one unified form – for all the boys and girls teams from that community or school district. (When we say "one community," we do not expect a parochial school to be included in a community's general submission. For example, we do not expect Rice Lake St. Joseph to be part of the Rice Lake submission, or Chippewa Falls MAXX to be part of the Chippewa Falls submission.) We realize that in some communities, the boys and girls operate under very different organizational umbrellas and prefer to submit

separate forms. Nevertheless, it's easier for two programs in the same community to talk to each other, than to force the League to do so for you. For each of you, that's one extra conversation – for us, it's well over one hundred additional phone calls.

One of the things we accomplish with this approach is a little more flexibility on host dates. For example, let's say the boys program in Community A is willing to host two meets and the girls program one meet. Each provides us with optional dates they've "blocked." We would expect teams in the same community using the same facilities to switch those blocked dates with each other if it works out best for the League schedule, assuming the host teams involved have said on their Team Playing Date Preference Form that they are available to play on the alternate date. Communities that do this for us help contribute immensely to League efficiency.

There also will be a definite benefit for non-hosting teams that get themselves included in filing a Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form. For example, let's say that in Community B, all teams have traditionally enrolled separately; in the 2009-2010 season, the 5th and 7th grade boys teams and the 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls teams plan to host, but the 4th, 6th and 8th grade boys and the 4th and 5th grade girls teams do not. If the five hosting teams each submit a separate hosting form, and the non-hosting teams are not included as part of a community submission, the five non-hosting teams run the risk of having their meets cut back if the League has a shortage of meet locations. As described in greater detail in the next section, the five non-hosting teams in Community B could guarantee that they would not be at risk of having meets cut, if they approached hosting teams in their community and submitted the Meet Hosting Preference Form on a "unified" basis.

Number of Meet Locations

In the early years of The Great Northwest, we often scrambled at the last minute to find extra hosting locations to handle all the demand. Several seasons ago we started to define the "supply" side of the equation first and then adjusted "demand" accordingly. That has worked very well the last several years, so we plan to take the same approach this season. For example, let's assume we have teams willing to host 650 meets (550 full meets, 95 six-team meets and 5 mini-meets). That's a "supply" of 4995 spaces $[(550 \times 8) + (95 \times 6) + (5 \times 5)]$. Let's also assume that we have 1150 teams registered to play, with a total "demand" for 5100 spots. That means we are short 105 spots $(5100 - 4995)$. Rather than spend time after the enrollment deadline recruiting (arm-twisting) enough hosts to hold 15 additional full meets to create 120 extra spots, once the enrollment deadline is closed, our supply will be locked in and we will instead cut back the number of meets certain teams will play in order to artificially reduce the "demand." At that point, we will usually not entertain offers by teams to host a meet in order to avoid having playing dates cut. This may sound harsh, but every team that offers to host after the deadline usually needs time to come up with a date. That prolongs the meet date setting process which, in turn, pushes back the time when we can start putting together a schedule. As noted above, and on the registration forms, for those grades with a later deadline for submitting Team Playing Date Preference Forms (August 8, 15, 22 and 29, or September 12 and 19), we will consider allowing teams to host meets if they failed to file their Unified Meet Hosting

Preference Form by August 1, provided we have sufficient “demand” for space, they are flexible about utilizing remaining potential host dates and we haven’t actually started preparing the schedule for their grade as of yet. While we have rarely in the past had to cut back on a non-hosting team’s play dates, in the remote likelihood that we’d have to do so in 2009-2010, when deciding which teams will be cut back first, we will make cuts in the following order:

- Consistent with the discussion above, non-hosting teams (defined as those teams not included in a given community’s Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form submission) that have signed up to play in only 1 or 2 meets. Among this group of non-hosting teams, those registering early will receive priority treatment (i.e., late registrants will be cut first).
- While it is unlikely that we will need to cut any play dates beyond those referenced in the first bullet above, if necessary, we will next reduce spots for non-hosting teams (those not included in a Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form submission) playing the most meets in our League. To avoid having non-hosting teams sign up for more meets than they actually plan to play (to cushion any possible cuts), if we get to this level of cuts, we will use as a team’s base starting point, the lower of the number of meets in which they’ve asked to play in the 2009-2010 season, and the actual number of meets they played in during the 2008-2009 season. For new registrants, we will take the lower of the number registered to play in 2009-2010 and the League average for that grade the previous season (typically 4-7 meets, depending on the grade).

Pre-Payment of League Fees for Certain Teams

A small number of teams will be required to pay their 2009-2010 League fees in advance, with their registrations. Every season, we have several communities drop an entire team, drop a substantial number of play dates, renege on a hosting commitment once our schedules were set, or fail to pay their previous season’s invoice in a timely fashion. Teams that did this may be required to pay in advance for all 2009-2010 meets. This requirement will be imposed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the severity of the problem experienced during the 2008-2009 season. We regret the need to do this, but we cannot let this go unchecked. It is not acceptable to say that “we didn’t have our community’s enrollment until late September; we never thought we’d be short of players.” All teams playing in our League should have a spring or summer enrollment. If you enroll a team for the 2009-2010 season and then need to drop out after scheduling is completed, you’ll not only have to pay the immediate financial penalties spelled out in our Rules, but that specific team won’t be allowed back in next season without submitting a check for full payment before the League schedule for that grade is completed (everyone else is invoiced in October, November or December). Teams submitting a Team Playing Date Preference Form to play in the 2009-2010 season, that have not paid their final 2008-2009 invoice, will not have their Preference Form accepted and processed.

2009-2010 Game Rules

As of this writing, there are no major changes to the 2009-2010 game Rules. A complete set of revised draft Rules for the 2009-2010 season will be posted on our website (gnbl.org) no later than June 18, 2009. We reserve the right to make minor adjustments and clarifications in those Rules through October 1, 2009, based on suggestions and feedback we get from the survey

questions asked at the end of both the Team Playing Date Preference Form and the Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form.

Online Submission of Roster Information for the 2009-2010 Season

Earlier in this posting, we addressed the issue of teams that were delinquent in submitting roster information for the 2008-2009 season. This section of this Posting addresses this issue prospectively for the 2009-2010 season, for all new teams, and those existing teams that were in compliance during the 2008-2009 season. League Rules require all coaches or team contacts to submit each player's name, address, jersey number and school of attendance. Coaches can submit this information on our website (*gnbl.org*) by clicking on "Roster Submission" and following the on-screen instructions. If you had a team in the League last season and have previously submitted your roster, you can easily update player information for the new season without retyping the entire roster. If you have questions, please contact Terri Green at 715-386-4317. Access on the website to the rosters is limited only to each team's coach and the League's staff; individual rosters can only be viewed with the coach's password, so the information is secure and private – rosters cannot be viewed on the website by other coaches or other outside parties. There will be additional information regarding this in the packet you receive this fall with your schedules.

For teams that were in compliance during the 2008-2009, and for teams new to the League in 2009-2010, rosters will be due one day before your first game and can be modified/updated throughout the season. As explained in the first section of this posting, teams that were not in compliance during the 2008-2009 season, must get into compliance prior to the time when we start preparing the League schedule for their grade/gender, or risk not participating in the League for the 2009-2010 season.

Non-Weather Related Cancellations

One of the biggest problems each year in preparing schedules are teams that do not take care when completing their Team Playing Date Preference Form regarding the dates on which they are available to play. In order to avoid large scale changes, the League has always had a policy for how to charge teams for dropped meets. That policy for the 2008-2009 season is identical to the one used in 2007-2008. Paragraph C-12 of the League Rules reads as follows:

- Teams that fail to play in a League meet to attend a non-League tournament, on a date they said they originally were available to play in a League meet on their Team Playing Date Preference Form, will be required to pay 100% of any such meet fee, even if they provide more than three weeks notice. Teams that do so with less than three weeks notice will be considered for expulsion per paragraph A-5 of the Rules.
- Teams that drop a meet with more than three weeks notice will be required to pay 50% of the cost of that meet if they indicated on their enrollment form that they were available to play on that date. Teams that find out that they have a conflict on a given date after they've submitted their enrollment form, but before the schedule for that grade is completed (see discussion of the "Black-Out Period" in Question #5 of the Team Playing

Date Preference Form), can effectively amend their registration by sending the League notice in writing via e-mail or the USPS. The 50% penalty will not apply where the League schedules a team on a date they said they'd "prefer not" to play. To the extent the League schedules a team in meets exceeding the distance guidelines outlined in paragraph B-7, that team will be allowed to make more than one schedule change with more than three weeks notice, free of charge, to get the team below the maximum and average distances traveled cited in paragraph B-7. Also, when the League sends out schedules, if the League made a mistake and scheduled a team on a date they said they couldn't play (i.e., "CP"), the League will make this schedule change with no charge.

- Teams providing less than three weeks notice, but at least one week's notice, will be required to pay 50% of the cost of the meet from which they are canceling, even if it was a date that the team originally said they'd "prefer not" playing, or where a trip in excess of one and one-half hour is involved. In other words, there are no "free" drops when providing the League less than three weeks of notice. Teams that intentionally and repeatedly wait until eight days in advance of a meet to drop that meet because the penalty is as high as if they had provided the League more notice, will be considered for expulsion per paragraph A-5 of the Rules (subparagraph g).
- Teams providing less than one week's notice will be required to pay the full cost of that meet.
- Teams providing less than 48 hours notice, or no notice at all, unless for weather or serious health-related reasons, risk expulsion from the League as provided for in Rule A-5.

Restrictive Play Dates

In the enrollment forms every season, we warn coaches that there are certain times of the playing season when there are few meets (e.g., late October and all of March for all teams; November and December for 7th and 8th grade boys; etc.) Nevertheless, every year there are several teams that register to play in six meets and give us only October and March dates with which to work, or want five specific dates when there may not be any meets in their area or at their ability level. Up until the 2005-2006 season, the League made between 150-200 phone calls to clarify simple scheduling questions. We don't mind making calls to address legitimate issues, but we are not willing to make calls to teams that do not provide us with optional play dates. As a result, four seasons ago we added a section to Question #6 of the Team Playing Date Preference Form, where registering teams that provide no scheduling flexibility are given a choice: if the limited dates they provide us don't work out, do they want to play less meets, travel further distances, or pay a one time \$25 surcharge if the League needs to call them to address scheduling options? All teams wanting to play in four or less meets must give us at least one extra quality date with which to work (i.e., don't tell us you want to play three meets and give us only three date options); teams wanting to play five to eight meets, need to give us at least two additional quality dates to work with over and above the number of meets you want to play (e.g., if you want to play eight dates, you need to give us ten or more dates with which to work); and teams wishing

to play nine or more dates, need to give us at least three extra dates with which to work (e.g., if you want to play ten dates, we need 13 or more dates with which to work). The number of optional dates registering teams need to provide must be increased if a portion of the dates indicated are likely to have no or few meets (e.g. November 22 and November 29 for all grades, an October date for teams other than 7th or 8th grade girls, etc.).

Teams with Players from Two Small Communities

Rule C-1 allows two small communities to combine their players to form one team only when both communities lack sufficient numbers to form a team on their own. This rule limits such combinations to two Wisconsin Division 4 (or Minnesota A) communities. A Wisconsin Division 3 (Minnesota AA) community will be allowed to combine with a Division 4 (Minnesota A) community only by petitioning the League when enrolling. Where combining is allowed, all kids from the grade and gender in question in both school districts must be given the opportunity to play on any combined team (it can't be only the best players from one or both communities). No Division 1 or 2 (Minnesota AAAA or AAA) community can field a team in the League with players from another community, nor can two Division 3 (Minnesota AA) communities put forward a combined team. In communities with multiple public high schools (e.g., Eau Claire, Wausau, La Crosse, Duluth, etc.), all players on a team must reside in that portion of the city that feeds into the same high school.

Reading and Following League Rules

As The Great Northwest has grown, and as our Rules have become longer, fewer coaches seem to read and understand them. While we realize that our rule book is daunting in length, each rule is there for a reason. Rather than be part of an undisciplined or disorganized League, we want coaches to embrace the benefits that come from knowing that it doesn't matter where you play in The Great Northwest, the Rules are the same everywhere. Every week we get complaints about coaches who don't appear to know game Rules or, even worse, from coaches who have a complaint about something and demonstrate that they clearly haven't read the Rules. Please don't file complaints or ask questions unless you have made an attempt to read and understand the League Rule about which you have a concern. We, of course, welcome calls if you fail to understand a particular rule, feel that a certain rule should be changed or believe another team is in violation of a specific rule.

Enrollment Packets

When filling out the hosting and playing registration forms, please read the materials carefully - - don't just answer the questions. The forms are filled with information you will need to make intelligent enrollment decisions.

- **Team Playing Date Preference Form.** Each team must complete a separate form.

Given the discussion above about charges for meet changes, it is critical that Team Playing Date Preference Forms be filled out by, or in consultation with, the coach actually coaching the team – not solely a varsity coach or association contact. If you choose to have someone other than the actual head coach of the team in question complete this form, this team will, nevertheless, be obligated to the choices made.

Within two weeks after you submit your Team Playing Date Preference Form, you will receive an emailed notice acknowledging receipt of your enrollment form. This is your proof that we've received your 2009-2010 team entry form. If you do not receive this email confirming receipt of your enrollment form within two weeks of mailing, please call Terri at 715-386-4317 to make sure we've received your form. If we have no email address for the coach or team contact, we will send hard copy of the notice through regular mail (USPS). **If you do not have a receipt, you have no proof that your team is duly registered.**

- **Unified Meet Hosting Preference Form.** As discussed above, we **strongly prefer that each community, or teams from each school district**, submit a coordinated response - - one for all your community's teams combined. If we must, we will accept forms separately from the boys and girls programs in your community or from individual teams, but there are some disincentives to doing so which are discussed above.

Please note that Unified Meet Hosting Preference Forms are due on August 1, but there are significant advantages to submitting earlier (see the discussion above).

Power Rating Chart

If you are enrolling a team that played in the League last season, you can see how your team was rated by checking out the League's Power Rating Chart on our website (gnbl.org) and clicking on "Enrollment Information." The Power Rating Chart lists the ratings of all teams that played in at least one meet during the 2008-2009 season. Note that all teams are referred to by the grade the players will be in next season (2009-2010) - - not last season (2008-2009). Also note that in preparing the power ratings, a greater emphasis was placed on late season play. If you are enrolling the same team for next season, your ultimate rating will be the one listed in the Power Rating Chart, unless you provide an explanation as to why it should be rated higher or lower in the "Comments" section of Question #8 in the Team Playing Date Preference Form. If you are enrolling a 6th, 7th or 8th grade team that didn't play in the League last season, use games against League opponents you might have played elsewhere as a means to gauge the relative ability of your team, or gauge your team's likely ability based on relative school size and general program strength.

Please also note that we've included the following items in the Power Rating Chart:

- For grades 6, 7 and 8, we've rated the top 32 teams at each grade level based on 2008-2009 season play. Teams wanting to know why they were ranked where they were can call Jerry Engeleiter at 715-549-6161 to discuss our methodology. This listing will be used in selecting teams to play in the League Championship Tournament discussed in greater detail below. Please note that teams failing to play in at least three meets are not included in the top 32 rankings (unless those teams have already informed us that they intend to play in the League during the 2008-2009 season on a more significant basis); nor are teams that have said in the past they were not interested in playing in the League Championship Tournament.

- We retain the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade girls and boys teams in the chart based on the rating they received for their play as 8th graders, during either the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008 or 2008-2009 seasons. We do this so we can track how successful youth teams live up to their potential during their high school careers.

League Championship Tournament

Dates and locations for the six League Championship Tournaments (6th through 8th grade boys and girls) will be set shortly. The LCTs this season will again be two-day, 32-team events. Qualifying teams will receive a separate mailing sometime in July. The top 32 ranked teams at each grade level automatically qualify. Teams ranked below #32 will receive an invitation to be included in the field if a team ranked ahead of them declines to play due to a conflict.

Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament (WSICT)

The Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament (WSICT), which The Great Northwest plays a part in organizing, has become Wisconsin's premier youth basketball event. In the 2009 tournaments, over 600 top community-based teams from across the state played in eight separate venues. Our Minnesota participants have an opportunity to play in a similar event in their state each spring.

In 2009, for the first time, there was a smaller version of the State Tournament (between 52-54 teams, as compared to 80 for the older grades) for 5th grade boys and 5th grade girls teams. Sixth, seventh and eighth grade (2009-2010) League teams that attended the 2009 WSICT this past spring and performed well, will be invited back to the 2010 event. Seventh and eighth grade League teams that weren't very highly ranked in the regular season two years ago (07-08), but moved up markedly last season (08-09), will also be invited in 2010, depending on where they rank relative to other League teams at their community's size (i.e., WIAA Divisions 1, 2, 3 and 4). Generally speaking, if you're from a WIAA Division 1 or 2 community, you need to have qualified for the LCT to get a WSICT invite; while WIAA Division 3 and 4 teams can sometimes qualify if B+ rated, even if they didn't make the top 32. Tournament organizers expect to have more top-flight applicants than they can accommodate at the 2010 WSICT and will be forced to turn some teams away, particularly at the 6th, 7th and 8th grade levels. Applications for the 2010 WSICT will be mailed in waves to eligible teams in late September through the end of October. Sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams (2009-2010) that were invited to the 2009 WSICT and declined will receive invites later on in the process only if space is created by non-returning teams.

Invitations to the 6th grade WSICTs will be based primarily on last year's performance in The Great Northwest (08-09) as 5th graders. While typically all WIAA Division 3 and 4 communities that qualify for the LCT in a particular grade will receive an invitation to the WSICT, that is not always true for lower-seeded Division 1 (and sometimes Division 2) teams. Those teams may be extended invitations later in the process if they have a strong showing at the LCT. Even if a team is not ranked in the top 32, if it shows strong improvement during the 09-10 season, it can receive an invitation later on in the season (e.g. January) if the WSICT for that grade is not yet full.

Invitations to the 5th grade WSICTs will be based almost entirely on 2009-2010 performance in the 5th grade division of the League. Many of the invitations for the 5th grade WSICT won't be

extended until later (January) in the process than for other grades (starting in September and October) because there is less historical information (08-09) on which to base an assessment of a team's strength.

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams that are invited to the LCT and decline are not guaranteed a spot in the WSICT. As with the other major traveling Leagues in the state (Tri-County, YSGBL, WIBL and Metro South), The Great Northwest uses the LCT to determine who its best teams are and, therefore, who should be included in the WSICT field. A team that argues that they should play in the WSICT after refusing to play in the LCT, would be a little like a high school varsity team arguing that they should be able to skip the Regionals and be slotted directly into the Sectionals. Since we have as many 6th grade teams play in the State tournament as we do for 7th and 8th, if all teams from the previous spring's WSICT return, there is no space available for new teams. As a result, 6th, 7th and 8th grade teams that decline participation in the LCT will be extended invitations later in the process only if space allows after last year's WSICT attendees have decided whether or not to re-enroll.

If your community is in Wisconsin and has one or more strong teams that may qualify for the Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament (WSICT), consider hosting a meet in March that could be used as a warm-up for your team (and others) for the WSICT. Every year WSICT participants complain that there are few places to play in March to keep their teams sharp. While, as of this writing, the 2010 WSICT schedule has not yet been set, we will most likely run the eight tournaments the weekends of March 20 and 21 (girls only), March 28 and 29 (boys only), and April 10 and 11, with two or three tournaments on each of those three weekends. As a result, depending in which grade(s) your community has strong teams, all Saturdays in March are possible options. Hosting a meet in this time frame will provide a strong team from your community with a place to play a WSICT warm-up event.

Other Issues

Please pay particular attention to the following issues when registering a team:

- **High School Regionals/Sectionals, Deer Hunting and Other Conflicts.** Every season we have several teams drop out of meets on short notice because they didn't realize that they'd be losing players to deer hunting or because the local high school team is playing in the regional or sectional basketball final. If deer hunting season is likely to cost you players, don't sign up to play on those dates when filling out your Team Playing Date Preference Form. If your players are not likely to want to play in a meet if the local high school team is playing in the regional or sectional final that day, don't sign up to play on that date (it doesn't take many wins to qualify for a regional final). If your high school team is projected to be very strong this coming season, you might also want to stay away from state tournament final dates if you have players you might lose should there be a conflict. Key dates include:
 - Football Play-offs in Wisconsin (Minnesota is usually a week later):

Level 2 - October 31; Level 3 - November 7; Level 4 - November 14

- Minnesota Deer Hunting: November 7, 14 and 21
- Wisconsin Deer Hunting: November 21 and 28
- High School Basketball Play-Offs:
 - March 6: Wisconsin High School Boys Regional Finals
 - March 13: Wisconsin High School Boys Sectional Finals; Wisconsin High School Girls Regional Finals; and Minnesota High School Girls Section Play-offs
 - March 20: Wisconsin High School Boys State Tournament, Wisconsin High School Girls Sectional Finals; Minnesota High School Girls State Tournament; and Minnesota High School Boys Section Play-offs
 - March 27: Wisconsin High School Girls State Tournament and Minnesota High School Boys State Tournament

Other dates that cause a significant number of conflicts for many teams are: **solo ensembles** (these are often in November or February; check with your school's music teacher, since these dates are often not included on school calendars, but students are required to attend), holiday concerts (or other holiday activities), drama events and spring break. If any of these would cause your team to not want to play on a given Saturday, check dates with your school before submitting your Team Playing Date Preference Form.

- **Schedule Black-Out Period: From the registration deadline for the grade of the team you are registering (August 1, 8, 15, 22 or 29, or September 5, 12 or 19) until 45 days after that deadline (sometime between mid-September for 8th grade girls to late October for 5th and 4th boys).** Every season we have a number of coaches who register a team by the deadline, give us their play date preferences and then, in late September or during the month of October, when we send them their schedule of five meets, they say: "we now have conflicts on three of these five dates and can't make it to three of the meets." This creates a huge problem from a scheduling standpoint. As discussed above, there are significant financial penalties for teams that do things like this.

We need to have up to 45 days from the posted registration deadline for your grade to construct a schedule. If something comes up, either before or after the registration deadline for your grade, and you can no longer abide by the preferences selected in your Team Playing Date Preference Form, send Terri Green a written request (via e-mail or the USPS) immediately. If it's before your grade's registration deadline, there's absolutely no problem - - as long as you contact us right away. If it's after your grade's deadline, contact us **before** you commit to any non-League tournament or other event and ask if it's going to create a problem to drop a certain date. If your request is prompt and reasonable, we'll almost always accommodate you, particularly if we haven't as yet completed the schedule for your grade. If you don't bother calling us in advance, and don't tell us about your conflict until after we have the scheduling done for that grade, or until you receive your schedule, the financial penalties outlined above will apply.

- **2008-2009 Invoices.** Some teams still have an outstanding unpaid balance for the 2008-2009 season. If you have such an original invoice balance, or you added meets during the course of the season for which you have an unpaid balance, you need to address this immediately. **We will not process 2009-2010 enrollment applications from any coach or team until the unpaid balance is settled.**

If you had a credit from the 2008-2009 season as a result of meet(s) you hosted, or meets you dropped, you have already received a refund check, **provided that you returned your original or revised invoice to us with the designation of a person or organization to whom the refund check should be made out. We will not issue a credit payment until that designation has been completed.** If you have not sent us that designation form, and fail to do so shortly, we will carry over your credit to the 2009-2010 season. We would prefer, however, not to carry forward any funds and pay all refunds immediately, so please return that designation at your earliest convenience. Any questions about your invoice should be directed to Terri Green at 715-386-4317.