

## Liberty League Weekly Athletic Director Meeting Summaries

January 5, 2021 – May 4, 2021

### May 4, 2021

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### Agenda:

**1. Championship Updates:** May 1-2 (Rowing, Women's Lacrosse, Golf completed)

### **2. Championship Schedule:**

May 8: Men's Lacrosse / Men's and Women's Tennis / Men's and Women's Track & Field

May 15: Baseball / Softball

**3. Baseball Final Weekend:** Are schools intending to move games up to Friday-Saturday for competitive reasons this weekend (adjust pitching for Wednesday tournament semifinals)? Does it provide a competitive advantage for schools that do it and a disadvantage for schools not doing it? Some may have exams and be unable to do it.

- Schools are not intending to move games up to Friday-Saturday to set pitching. Games will only be moved up in the event of weather concerns.

**4. Spring Meeting:** Tuesday, June 8 from 9-12 appears to be the best option for the spring meeting (16 of 19 respondents available among administrators).

- It was suggested that a DEI program be incorporated into the meeting. Possible facilitators include Nevin Caple, Lawrence Alexander and Jen Frye.
- Today's meeting (May 4) will be the final weekly meeting of the spring.

**5. Testing of Vaccinated Students (Durocher):** Do institutions plan to test fully vaccinated students in the fall?

- To be determined on most campuses.

### **6. Other/Open Discussion:**

- Ithaca will be hosting a gender equity webinar on May 10. Bassett will send a Zoom invitation.
- Recruiting travel: when do schools anticipate lifting restrictions on recruiting travel? Most anticipate they will resume recruiting travel June 1.
- ATC Openings: Bard and Vassar anticipate openings for athletic trainers.

### Action Items:

- Schedule DEI facilitator for June 8 Liberty League meeting.

### Voting Items:

- **MOTION (Walsh/McLaughlin):** That Sunday, May 9, shall be the final date for Liberty League baseball and softball games prior to the start of the league tournament (PASSED, 9-0-2).

## **April 27, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### **Agenda:**

#### **1. Spring Campus/League Updates.**

#### **2. Championship Schedule:**

May 1: Women's Lacrosse / Men's and Women's Rowing

May 1-2: Men's and Women's Golf

May 8: Men's Lacrosse / Men's and Women's Tennis / Men's and Women's Track & Field

May 15: Baseball / Softball

**3. Tennis Tournament (revisited):** Do we need to shift the dates for dual-sport coaches? Possible men's qualifiers - Hobart, Skidmore, RPI, Vassar. Possible women's qualifiers – Skidmore, St. Lawrence, Vassar, Union/RPI. It appears unlikely that we'll have a dual-sport coach with both teams in the tournament.

- Based on apparent qualifiers, it does not appear that any dual-sport tennis coaches will have conflicts for the Wednesday semifinal matches, therefore the schedule does not need to be adjusted.

**4. Spring Meeting Options:** Our meeting has typically been the Wednesday-Thursday after Memorial Day. Memorial Day is May 31 this year. Possible meeting dates this year – May 26, May 27, June 2, June 3. We're not limited to these options. Earlier might be a challenge in terms of sport meetings.

#### **5. Other/Open Discussion**

- Required Vaccinations: A number of institutions have announced that they intend to mandate vaccinations for students in the fall. Others are evaluating options.
- Summer Camps: Several institutions plan on holding summer camps. Most will be day camps.
- Testing Plan for Fall: Institutional policies regarding COVID testing for the fall are still being developed.

### **Action Items:**

- Send Doodle to determine date for Spring Meeting.

### **Voting Items:**

- None.

## **April 20, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### **Agenda:**

#### **1. Spring Campus/League Updates:**

- Skidmore has resumed athletics competition after a campus pause. Rensselaer is set to begin competition the weekend of April 24-25. The majority of scheduled games have been completed. Some games that were previously cancelled have been rescheduled.

**2. Track and Field – Proposed Meet Schedule (attached):** The schedule for the Liberty League track championship had been a 2-day league-approved schedule. With the move to a one-day meet this year, a new schedule was needed. The host (Rochester) compiled two potential schedules. The only difference is the placement of the 10,000-meter run. Option 1 has the 10K last, where temperatures would likely be cooler, allowing for better running conditions. Option 2 has the 10K first, potentially allowing athletes to compete in both the 10K and 5K. The men’s coaches favored Option 1, 4-0, while the women’s coaches favored Option 1, 3-1.

- The athletic directors were supportive of the coaches’ preference of Option 1. The Ithaca coaching staff posed a question about the timing of certain field events scheduled around the same time as track events and whether it might be possible to adjust the schedule to reduce overlap.

**3. Tournament Teams – Replacements:** Once a four-team tournament field is selected, what happens if a team has a positive test and has to opt out? Does the next-best team get added, or does the opponent simply advance to the championship game? Need to consider testing, travel, host site, officials.

- Once the tournament is seeded following the final day of regular-season competition, no replacement teams will be added. If a team opts out after the tournament is seeded, the opposing team will receive a bye to the championship. No re-seeding will occur. If a team opts out before the tournament is seeded, the team with the next-best record (i.e., fifth-place team) will be added.
- In tennis, a possible shift of one gender from Wednesday-Saturday to Thursday-Sunday was discussed due to the possibility of a dual-sport coach having both teams participating in the tournament. A concern with shifting to Sunday is the possibility of inclement weather and having to move matches indoors. Certain institutions are not able to play indoors this spring. The schedule will be revisited next week following matches this weekend.

**4. Scheduling/League Championships:** Is there consideration for changing league tournament/championship formats? Can budget reductions be made elsewhere (e.g., non-league or regular-season play) to preserve the full championship experience for student-athletes?

- Championships that currently have a six-team tournament are basketball (m/w), lacrosse (w), soccer (m/w) and tennis (m/w). Potential cost-saving from reducing the tournament from six teams to four is unknown. It was recommended that actual financials for tournament participation in 2018-19 are shared to determine cost impact.
- The question was raised as to whether other conferences intend to change tournament formats in 2021-22 due to COVID-related budget concerns. King will survey other conferences to determine if reductions are being considered.

**5. Spring Meeting Options:** Is a full league meeting needed this spring? Suggestions on format?

- A date needs to be established for the meeting. It was recommended that a spring meeting in late May or early June include assistant/associate directors. Given the focus during the past year, it was suggested that an outside individual could be invited in to conduct a DEI program for the league.
- Sport committee meetings should be conducted with reports provided for the spring meeting.

## 6. Other/Open Discussion:

- **Required Vaccinations:** The group was surveyed to determine whether institutions would require COVID vaccinations for all students and staff next fall. Several institutions are considering it. Ithaca and Rensselaer have announced plans to require vaccinations.
- **Summer Camps:** Rochester, Skidmore and Union are planning on conducting summer sports camps. Camps are not expected to include overnight programs.
- **Salary Increases:** The group was surveyed to determine whether salary increases will be given this year. Some institutions are planning on providing raises while others may restore salaries that were reduced this year. Other institutions are exploring the possibility.

### Action Items:

- Schedule sport committee meetings.

### Voting Items:

- None.

## April 13, 2021

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### Agenda:

**1. Weekly Updates / Challenges:** Are there any issues from this past week that need to be addressed?

- Skidmore, which has been on a campus pause, may return to competition this weekend if the campus returns to alert level 2. Rensselaer is on a campus pause and will not compete the weekend of April 17-18.
- Tracy shared an update of league games that have been played and postponed during the first three weeks. Men's lacrosse has been a challenge with just four league games played. Some games have been rescheduled.

**2. Spectators:** Revised spectator policy - which schools plan to allow spectators (two spectators per athlete and coach) at final regular-season home game?

- Currently, Clarkson and HWS are planning to permit spectators. Union may also permit spectators. Other institutions intend to continue with the current policy of no spectators, consistent with campus visitor policies. No public announcement is planned.

**3. Men's Lacrosse Proposed Schedule:** With Bard discontinuing men's lacrosse, King drafted a revised 8-team schedule for 2022-25 and emailed it to the coaches on March 23, but did not receive any feedback other than a request to retain a 6-team tournament. The schedule consists of four pairs (Ithaca-RIT, Clarkson-SLU, Skidmore-Union, RPI-Vassar). All schools have three home Saturdays and three away Saturdays with a midweek game against a travel partner. The tournament is a four-team tournament (Wednesday-Saturday) as determined by league policy.

- The schedule was adopted as proposed.

**4. Scheduling for Next Year- Budget Consideration:** The scheduling committee (Steward, McLaughlin, King) met last Thursday (4/8) to discuss potential scheduling options that could

reduce costs. The 2021-22 approved schedules are attached. The committee discussed back-to-back games and whether eliminating back-to-back contests and taking separate bus trips to the same geographic area would be more cost-effective than staying in a hotel and playing back-to-back (for example, would it save money to take separate trips to Clarkson and St. Lawrence, or would it be more cost-effective to stay in a hotel and play back-to-back?). Playing a divisional schedule might be the most significant option to reduce costs, but would a reduction in the number of league games be offset by adding non-league games to fill out the schedule? The committee also discussed other cost-saving options, some of which were considered and voted down last May. Items include:

- Exploring divisional models in some/all sports.
- Adjusting game times to eliminate the need for overnight trips.
- Limiting non-league travel – no overnight trips.
- Establishing institutional or league contest limits.
- Establishing travel squad sizes, consistent with NCAA championships.
- Establishing travel radius for overnight games.
- Reduction in league championships from 6 to 4 teams in team sports.
- Reduction in the number of days of swimming and track championships.
- Playing a fourth game in a baseball series (can count as a non-league game – would replace six games).
- Possible reductions in league budget/spending.
- Opportunities for revenue/corporate sponsorships.
- Consolidated buying power – equipment, supplies, etc. – can we join together on any purchases?
- Staffing - is there interest in updating our staffing survey to see what may have changed?
  - The consensus was that eliminating back-to-back games with overnight trips would not result in significant cost savings. In some cases, taking separate bus trips to the same geographic region would not be a savings over an overnight trip with back-to-back games.
  - With regard to contest limits, travel restrictions and squad sizes, institutional autonomy was favored over league policy.
  - Specific Liberty League championship policy changes will be revisited at the next meeting.

## 5. Other/Open Discussion

- **Required Vaccinations:** Smalling surveyed the group to determine whether schools will require all students to receive a COVID-19 vaccine next year. Ithaca is planning to require it will other schools are considering it. Some are discussing whether to require it for participation in certain activities, including athletics.
- **NCAA/Management Council Report:** Walsh provided a brief update from the D3 Management Council. The subject of the NCAA rowing championship was discussed by the council. The D3 championships committee and council continue to review sponsorship numbers to determine whether a championship will be held. League members support a championship opportunity for the student-athletes. Walsh also noted that spring championship selections appear to be skewed toward institutions that have played more games.

### Action Items:

- Circulate approved men's lacrosse schedule to coaches and administrators.

### Voting Items:

- **MOTION (Cummings-Danson/Bassett):** to approve the 2022-2025 Liberty League men's lacrosse schedule as proposed. **PASSED, 8-0-3.**

**April 6, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

**Agenda:**

**1. Weekly Updates / Challenges:** Are there any issues from this past week that need to be addressed? Spectator updates?

**2. Testing / Attestation:** Our testing attestation form indicates that it needs to be submitted “not later than two hours prior to a Liberty League spring sports competition.” In most cases, the visiting team may already be en route two hours prior to competition. If testing is being conducted just prior to submitting the attestation form, a positive test could result in the traveling team having to turn back. We need to reconsider the timeline. Tracy suggested changing the language to:

“The Director of Athletics (or designee) or Head Athletic Trainer (or designee) must complete and sign this COVID-19 testing attestation document and submit electronically to the Liberty League ~~not later than two hours prior to a Liberty League spring sports competition.~~ **prior to the traveling team’s departure from campus.**”

- Language will be updated on the form and conveyed to administrators and head athletic trainers.

**3. Adding games - to count or not to count:** If and when teams pick up additional games against Liberty League opponents, should they count as league games or non-league games?

- Games against RPI (added to bye weeks on the schedule) will count as league games.
- Other games added outside of the original schedule will not count as league games. Each team had an original schedule of league opponents. Adding other opponents creates a further imbalance. It could also lead to teams picking and choosing opponents in order to improve their chances of qualifying for the league tournament.

**4. Golf Tournament Formats:** Five of the six men’s golf coaches favored a two-day, 36-hole Liberty League championship. Please review with your women’s golf coach/team to gauge their preference on the championship format - 18 or 36 holes.

- Both the men’s and women’s championships will be 36 holes, May 1-2, at Turning Stone’s Shenendoah course. Tracy will work with Dan Wesley (Rochester) on coming up with a schedule.

**5. Baseball doubleheader format 9/7 or 7/9 (Lindholm):** Should the league consider changing the format of the baseball doubleheader to play the 7-inning game first?

- It was agreed that the previous format would be utilized for this year only. The format will be 7/9 and if the first game goes extra innings, the second game becomes a 7-inning game.

**6. Basketball Officiating Agreement:** We have reached the end of our current agreement for men’s and women’s basketball officiating. Tom Reinisch (men) and Mike Schmidt (women) are proposing a new 3-year agreement with the following fees. The fees, which we’ve had in place since 2019-20, remain flat through the 2022-23 season. It is the same fee structure as other NY conferences. Do we support?

We propose a three (3) year agreement moving forward, ending at the conclusion of the 2023-2024 season.

Proposal: Game fees per official:

2021-2022: \$210

2022-2023: \$210

2023-2024: \$215

-For the length of the agreement, post season games will be the game fee plus \$10 for all games prior to the semifinal, game fee plus \$15 for the semifinal, and plus \$20 for the conference final. Postseason fees are also consistent with the 2019-2020 season.

-Scrimmage fee: \$75 per official for a 3 person crew. I would like to add, for consideration, that when possible; if we can add the 4th official, the fee will be \$60 per official.

-Assigning fees will remain at \$425 per season for the length of the agreement. This represents no increase from the 2019-2020 season as well.

- Agreement was approved. Tracy will confirm with Tom Reinisch and Mike Schmidt.

## 7. Other/Open Discussion

- Liberty League mask policy was discussed. It was previously agreed that if one team was competing in masks that the opposing team would also wear masks. It was less clear how the policy would apply to individual sports like track and golf, which are not head-to-head competitions scheduled by the league and which may also include non-league institutions. Consensus was that the host institution would establish a masking policy in these types of competitions and the visiting teams must adhere to the policy of the host.

### Action Items:

- Schedule meeting with scheduling committee to review schedule formats.

### Voting Items:

- **MOTION (Steward/VanderZwaag):** to conduct a two-day 36-hole men's golf championship at Turning Stone's Shenendoah Course, May 1-2. **PASSED, 6-0-5.**
- **MOTION (Bassett/McLaughlin):** to conduct a two-day 36-hole women's golf championship at Turning Stone's Shenendoah Course, May 1-2. **PASSED, 4-0-7.**
- **MOTION (McLaughlin/Lindholm):** to utilize a 7/9 format for Liberty League baseball doubleheaders for this season only. If the first game goes extra innings, the second game becomes a 7-inning game. **PASSED, 9-1-1.**
- **MOTION (McLaughlin/Steward):** to adopt the proposed 3-year basketball officiating agreement for the seasons of 2021-2022 through 2023-2024. **PASSED, 10-0-1.**

### **March 30, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### Agenda:

**1. Opening Weekend – Feedback:** Most games were played; a few were postponed due to COVID. Are there any issues/concerns from the first weekend of Liberty League play that we need to address moving forward?

- Changes to Liberty League testing attestation form were discussed. It was suggested that a participation roster could be submitted for contact tracing purposes. An upload section will be added to the attestation form so schools can upload rosters when forms are submitted.

**2. Spectators:** Are we announcing the presidents' decision publicly, or just updating the Return-to-Play document? What concerns are there with the policy? Enforcement obviously may be challenging.

- A statement will be posted on the Liberty League website and shared on social media stating the league's policy on no outside spectators. The Return-to-Play Protocols/Standards document will also be updated to include the updated policy.

**3. Track & Field Championship:** The coaches are proposing East (Vassar hosts Bard, RPI, Union) and West (Rochester hosts Ithaca, RIT, St. Lawrence) since an 8-team championship is not feasible with travel restrictions. The meets, to be held on Saturday, May 8, would be scored as separate meets and we would recognize east and west champions.

- Athletic directors support the proposed format. Awards will be ordered for the two sites.

**4. M/W Golf:** NYU will not be participating in spring sports, including golf. The men's coaches are considering a two-day, 36-hole championship at Turning Stone in which teams would drive back and forth each day. The women's coaches prefer a one-day, 18-hole tournament at Turning Stone. The plan would be to hold the tournament Saturday while reserving Sunday as a rain date.

- The format and schedules for the championships will be revisited at the next meeting. There is concern with equity in providing a 36-hole championship for the men and an 18-hole event for the women. While the women's coaches support an 18-hole event, the golfers should be surveyed to determine their preference. Tracy will reach out to the men's golf coaches to gauge their preference on a format.

**5. Softball:** The softball coaches have inquired about the possibility of a best 2-of-3 championship series to be held Saturday and Sunday (top seed hosts Saturday; lower seed would host Sunday if necessary). I'd assume baseball would want the same.

- It was agreed that the format would proceed as a Wednesday-Saturday single-elimination tournament as originally planned.

**6. Scheduling for Next Year- Budget Consideration (Susan):** Are we modifying our schedule to reduce/eliminate overnights?

- Schools can work together to adjust times on football games to minimize overnight trips. The scheduling committee will meet to discuss possible options to reduce costs through scheduling.

### **7. Other/Open Discussion**

- RIT Athletic Director Search: Lou Spiotti offered an update on the school's search for a new AD. The school is hoping to name a replacement by mid-May. Lou offered to pass along recommendations to the search firm.

### **Action Items:**

- Schedule call with scheduling committee to review schedule formats.

### **Voting Items:**

- None.

**March 23, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

**Agenda:**

**1. Attestation Form** ([link](#)): The Liberty League COVID-19 Testing Attestation Form was reviewed. The form will be circulated to administrators and head athletic trainers and should be submitted prior to each series/competition for each team to confirm all participating individuals have tested negative.

**2. Tournament Qualification and Seeding:** The scheduling committee (King, McLaughlin, Steward) met Friday to discuss minimum competition to qualify for the league tournament as well as tournament tiebreakers/seeding. The following tournament qualification and seeding procedures were established:

**Championship Qualification:** With COVID-19 pauses likely to impact 2021 Liberty League spring schedules, it may not be feasible for schedules to be completed in all sports. The league administrators have established minimum standards that teams must meet in order to be eligible for postseason championship competition. In order to qualify for a Liberty League championship, a team must play 51% of the average number of league games played in a particular sport. For example, if the average number of league games played is 20.5, a team would need to play a minimum of 11 games ( $20.5 \times 0.51 = 10.46$ ) in order to be considered eligible for the Liberty League championship.

**Championship Seeding Criteria:** Once it is determined which teams have met the minimum standard for championship qualification, the top four teams will be seeded according to the following tie-breaking criteria:

1. Winning percentage in Liberty League play.
2. Head-to-head competition.
3. Winning percentage vs. common league opponents in descending order.
4. Greater number of Liberty League wins (if two teams were unbeaten but one had played more league contests).
5. Sport-specific tiebreakers:
  - M/W Lacrosse: Fewest number of goals allowed in the first half – first head-to-head between tied teams and then average in league play.
  - Baseball/Softball: Most number of runs scored in the first three innings – first head-to-head between tied teams and then average in league play.
  - M/W Tennis: Winning percentage in doubles competition – first among tied teams and then in all league matches.
6. Coin flip.

**3. Spectators:** The following information was included in an email sent Thursday from CICU to member institutions:

“Updated Guidance for Sports and Performing Arts Venues: Thursday the Governor announced that outdoor sports venues and performing arts venues with capacities above 2,500 can reopen at 20 percent capacity beginning April 1. Indoor sports venues with capacities of 1,500 or more can reopen at 10 percent capacity. This announcement was made in specific reference to the New York Mets and Yankees resuming play with spectators in their stadiums but also indicates that it applies

to smaller, regional sports venues. The announcement specifies that it is applicable to professional sports. We are trying to learn if this guidance could also be applied to college commencement and/or college athletics. We will keep you updated.” Siena and the MAAC have interpreted this as applying to collegiate sports. Siena intends to begin permitting spectators (2 per participant) April 2 -- see attached.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-york-yankees-and-new-york-mets-start-season-fans-stands-beginning>

- President Munson (RIT) asked to revisit the league’s position on spectators. The athletic directors reaffirmed their position on prohibiting spectators at all events. Additionally, the following points were discussed and will be shared Friday, March 26, on the Liberty League presidents’ call:
- Teams have yet to start Liberty League competition (league play starts March 27). Between student-athlete testing and ensuring COVID safety protocols, athletic department staffs have a lot to manage without also having to enforce social distancing of spectators. If it initially goes well, perhaps the league can consider relaxing restrictions later in April.
- The priority is providing a safe and healthy competitive experience for the *student-athletes*, not an entertainment experience for parents and fans.
- Postgame social interactions between student-athletes and parents are a concern; it is not uncommon for parents to visit with daughters and sons postgame and have a meal together.
- A number of institutions are planning on either limiting or not permitting guests at commencement ceremonies.
- A uniform approach will provide consistent expectations across all campuses. Institutional autonomy may create confusion among individuals planning to travel to different campuses.
- A limited spectator policy (e.g., two spectators per participant, or students/faculty/staff only) may be difficult to enforce. Many facilities are not completely fenced or enclosed and it would be challenging to collect tickets or check IDs. It might also require additional staffing.

#### 4. Other/Open Discussion

##### Action Items:

- Email attestation form to administrators and athletic trainers.
- Email updated discussion points to presidents.
- Share tournament qualification and seeding with administrators and coaches.

##### Voting Items:

- None.

#### **March 16, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

##### Agenda:

**1. Fall/Winter Sports in Spring (Lou):** Just a quick survey to determine how many schools are planning on having formal competition for the fall and winter sports during the spring.

- Most schools anticipate conducting 1-2 contests this spring.

**2. Mask Policy (Deb):** Clarifying the league's mask policy during competition. Skidmore, Union and Vassar are required to wear masks during competition. Teams competing against these schools will also wear masks.

--Rowing Championship Mask Policy (Deb): Proposal - masks worn until at starting line and masks worn upon returning back to shore post-race; however, masks optional during race.

- Face coverings for athletics competition, including the rowing championship, will be required by the county. A league policy can't supersede county guidelines.

### **3. COVID Testing:**

--Tier 1 personnel (Deb): In the protocols, sports info, ADs, sport administrators, game personnel, scorekeepers, PA/clock operators and event/facility managers are included in Tier 1.

Our HWS interpretation is that these categories of personnel can reasonably maintain physical distance and use face coverings; therefore, they would be Tier 2. We were not planning on testing them.

- Language in league guidelines will be adjusted to specify "game personnel" rather than identifying specific positions, which may not be on-field individuals.

--Baseball/Softball Umpires: is testing their responsibility or ours? Coordinators have indicated that requiring umpires to get/pay for a test on their own could be problematic in filling assignments. How many schools intend to test umpires?

- It was agreed (motion below) that all officials working Liberty League spring sports contests will be required to either a.) produce a negative test result from the previous 48 hours, or b.) consent to on-site testing with a rapid antigen test. It is also requested that officials not travel together so that in the event of a positive test a game would be able to continue with remaining officials.

**4. Make-Up Policy:** Consensus appears to be that there should be no required make-ups of any cancelled competition this spring. Games can be rescheduled by mutual agreement of the competing institutions. Consideration will be given to rescheduling games in which teams need to meet the NCAA minimum requirement for postseason.

- It was agreed (motion below) that regular Liberty League make-up policies would be suspended for the 2021 spring season. In the event of contest cancellations, senior administrators will make every effort to reschedule a contest if it is feasible to do so.

**5. Attestation Form:** Two samples are attached – Northeast Conference (Hobart Lacrosse) and ECAC Hockey. Are there specific items we need to include?

- Tracy will draft an attestation form and share with the group for consideration. The form should be concise and direct.

**6. Default Game Times (Michelle):** To streamline the spring scheduling process, should there be default game times for various sports? Baseball/softball are currently the only two sports with established start times of 1 p.m., but this is under normal circumstances in which teams could travel the day prior and stay in a hotel.

--Proposed tennis order:

Weeks 1, 3, 5: Men's teams would have the first match of a doubleheader

Weeks 2, 4, 6: Women's teams would have the first match of a doubleheader.

\*Those with doubleheader weekends would alternate first matches within the weekend (RIT vs. SLU and Union vs. Skidmore)

- It was agreed that flexibility should be maintained in establishing game times. Given testing requirements for officials and the possibility that a school may have multiple contests being

played simultaneously, no default game times were established. Regarding tennis, coaches should work together on any alterations to weekend schedule.

**7. Baseball Doubleheader Format (Michelle):** Is there consideration for changing baseball doubleheader format from 9/7 to 7/7?

- While some coaches favored 7/7 doubleheaders due to travel considerations, it was agreed to maintain the 9/7 doubleheader format to maximize participation opportunities.

**8. Championship Qualification/Tiebreakers:** These items will need to be established prior to the start of play (Scheduling Committee perhaps?). To consider: is there a percentage of league games a team must complete in order to qualify for the league tournament? A majority? How to determine seeding with an unequal number of games and unbalanced schedule?

- The scheduling committee will discuss and make a recommendation.

## 9. Other/Open Discussion

### Action Items:

- Set time for scheduling committee meeting to discuss championship qualification and tiebreakers.
- Share testing requirement and protocol with coordinators.
- Draft attestation form.
- Update Protocols and Shared Standards document.

### Voting Items:

- **MOTION (McLaughlin/Steward):** to require all officials working Liberty League spring sports contests to either a.) produce a negative COVID test result from the previous 48 hours, or b.) consent to on-site testing with a rapid antigen test. **PASSED, 10-0-1.**
- **MOTION (Walsh/McLaughlin):** to suspend currently Liberty League make-up and rescheduling policies for the Spring 2021 season and to further specify that senior administrators will make every effort to reschedule a contest if it is feasible to do so.

## March 9, 2021

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher, Grembowicz (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### Agenda:

**1. Reminder – NCAA Spring Sports Declaration:** Due by 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 10.

**2. Spectators:** Per the Nov. 23 NYS guidance, “Additionally, no spectators, fans, or audience are authorized to attend an intercollegiate sport competition or training program until further notice.” Has there been any guidance released that supersedes this policy?

**3. Spring Schedules:** Discussion of draft schedules for MLAX, WLAX, BASE, SOFT, TENNIS. Rowing and Track have calls scheduled for Tuesday afternoon (tomorrow). Here are some of the questions/feedback that we should discuss:

--Testing standard on back-to-back weekends (Michelle)

- General statement/philosophy on making up cancelled or postponed games? (Michelle)
- League Tournaments: can we add semifinal games midweek? (Susan)
- Flexibility with start times? (Michelle)
- Tennis: can we play men one day and women the next at opposite sites? (Susan)
- Baseball: reason for 20-game schedule? (Michelle)

#### **4. Other/Open Discussion**

##### **Action Items:**

None.

##### **Voting Items:**

**MOTION (Cummings-Danson/Walsh):** to not permit spectators at Liberty League spring sports events. **PASSED, 8-2-1.**

**MOTION (McLaughlin/Walsh):** to approve the proposed baseball regular-season schedule format with the intent to have a four-team tournament. **PASSED, 10-0-1.**

**MOTION (McLaughlin/Cummings-Danson):** to approve the proposed softball regular-season schedule format with the intent to have a four-team tournament. **PASSED, 10-0-1.**

**MOTION (McLaughlin/Cummings-Danson):** to approve the proposed men's lacrosse regular-season schedule format with the intent to have a four-team tournament. **PASSED, 10-0-1.**

- One mid-week game between local teams (Ithaca-RIT, Clarkson-St. Lawrence, Skidmore-Vassar) was added so the last available Saturday could be utilized for a Liberty League championship game.

**MOTION (Cummings-Danson/Spiotti):** to approve the proposed women's lacrosse regular-season schedule format with the intent to have a four-team tournament. **PASSED, 10-0-1.**

**MOTION (Steward/Cummings-Danson):** to approve the proposed tennis regular-season schedule format with the intent to have a four-team tournament. **PASSED, 10-0-1.**

- Institutions have the flexibility to play matches on any day during a designated weekend, including splitting the men's and women's matches.

#### **March 2, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

##### **Agenda:**

**1. Spring Participation / Scheduling:** the Scheduling Committee (Deb, Jim and I) had a call this afternoon to discuss a framework for scheduling and championships. More to come. I will compile our thoughts and circulate later this afternoon/evening.

**2. Spectators:** Last week, we discussed following a NYS standard, which was believed to be no spectators. There was some NYS guidance released last Tuesday (page 5), indicating that "Responsible Parties must limit spectators to no more than two spectators per player." It also states, "These guidelines apply to non-professional and non-collegiate sports and recreation

activities (e.g. youth sports).” Are there actually any spectator guidelines pertaining to collegiate sports? Based on Jim’s survey of the group yesterday, it appears most of our schools are not permitting spectators.

**3. Institutional Standards that Exceed League Standards:** It will need to be determined which schools will have institutional standards that exceed league standards and share them so teams can prepare accordingly. Skidmore, Union and Vassar will require student-athletes to compete wearing masks. Thus, any team competing against an institution with a mask policy will have to adhere to that standard. Any team competing against Skidmore, Union and Vassar will also have to wear face coverings.

**4. Abbott Test Order:** Deb was looking to gather numbers on a bulk order for Abbott tests. If you might be in need of additional rapid tests, please have the quantity available.

## **5. Other/Open Discussion**

### **Action Items:**

None.

### **Voting Items:**

None.

## **February 23, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### **Agenda:**

#### **1. Campus Updates**

--Intention to Participate or to Opt Out of Spring Sports

#### **2. Spring Sports Decision Timeline:**

--Voting Question for Presidents: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1S-6ODs4pG4TnMDjJaNJ8Lj2UXonK77BH/edit>

--Monday, March 1, 9 a.m. – Institutional Votes Submitted (I could also request them earlier and wait to share results until 3/1)

--Monday, March 1, 5 p.m. – Public Announcement ([Draft Announcement](#))

#### **3. Return-to-Play Protocols (draft to follow):**

--Testing

--Details for cancellation of a contest due to positive case- who makes the call based on what criteria?

--Facility access- locker rooms/rest rooms

--Spectators

--Officials

--Non-conference opponents

#### **4. Other/Open Discussion**

**Action Items:**

None.

**Voting Items:**

None.

**February 16, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

**Agenda:**

**1. February 11 Meeting Debrief:** Key takeaways from last Thursday's joint meeting.  
-- COVID Variants, Campus Equity concerns.

**2. February 26 Presidents-Only Meeting:**

--Committed to participating (either through Doodle or Calendar Invite): Collado, Collins, Conner, Fox, Harris, Jackson, Jacobsen, Mangelsdorf, Munson.  
--Voting Question.  
--Recommended Decision/Announcement Timeline.

**3. Shared Standards (see attached):** Laurel Kane modified a Return-to-Play document utilized by ECAC Hockey. It's very thorough and addresses a majority of questions below. I think it is a better document than we had compiled in the fall.

--Testing required  
--Facility access – no locker rooms/rest rooms?  
--No Spectators  
--Officials  
--Details for cancellation of a contest due to positive case- who makes the call based on what criteria?  
--Non-conference opponents- will this be permitted?

**4. NCAA/Alston Case (George/Michelle)**

**5. Other/Open Discussion**

**Action Items:**

None.

**Voting Items:**

**MOTION (McLaughlin/Walsh):** to require all teams in intermediate risk sports to wear masks during competition. **FAILED, 3-5-3.**

**February 9, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

## **Agenda:**

### **1. COVID-19 Landscape**

- NYS County Dashboard (attached). Continued decline in infection rates.
- School COVID Report Cards (attached). Not necessarily great news. Some of our schools have had more positive cases in the last three weeks than in the entire fall semester. Not a huge surprise given the starting point in January, but hopefully campus numbers follow Union's positive trend.
- Campus Updates.

### **2. Presidents Meeting – Key Discussion Points:**

- League Testing Standard – test ALL athletes prior to competition? High/Intermediate risk athletes? Traveling athletes? NCAA guidelines? I think this is important and needs to be clarified.
- Number of members needed for league play – NCAA permits conferences to retain AOs this year if four core members are competing and minimum contest requirements are met. This is a different standard than requiring a majority of league members, but it would provide NCAA championship access if four teams choose to participate. Are we in support of this?
- Presidents objections/concerns – what are the chief concerns you're hearing on your campuses?

### **3. Other/Open Discussion.**

## **Action Items:**

None.

## **Voting Items:**

None.

## **February 2, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

## **Agenda:**

### **1. COVID-19 Landscape**

- NYS County Dashboard (attached): Numbers continue to show a downward trend in infection rates.
- School COVID Report Cards (attached): These numbers show cumulative test results for the 2020-2021 academic year; I'm not able to find testing numbers that start in January.
- Campus Reopening Updates – how are they going?

### **2. Scheduling (attached)**

--The scheduling committee (Deb, Jim, Tracy) met Friday to discuss options for spring sports. The committee discussed: a.) March 27 start date; b.) regional play; c.) scheduling to meet NCAA minimums; d.) potential formats when considering COVID testing. We drafted the following model for men's and women's lacrosse as a starting point for a discussion (we chose lacrosse because it is a shared facility). The schedules are set up in a 2-division format, but what happens if ends up with only 2-3 teams? I would recommend holding off on sharing this model with the coaches until we have more discussion.

### **3. Feb. 11 Presidents Meeting – Key Discussion Points:**

- Improving COVID situation (it was worsening when decision was made to cancel winter sports).

- Several schools have successfully resumed winter competition.
- Cancelling spring would mean that spring athletes would lose out on 50% of their athletic experience.
- All spring sports are either intermediate- or low-risk sports.
- Spring plan would include primarily regional competition with no required overnight travel.
- 5 or 6 week season beginning March 27.
- Testing in accordance with NCAA guidelines (PCR testing 3 days prior to competition or antigen testing 1 day prior to competition).
- Institutional autonomy on decision to participate; league championships will be conducted if the majority intend to participate.
- Decision by March 1.

**4. Union Waiver:** Union is looking for league support for a blanket waiver that would allow winter sport student-athletes who graduate in December to continue competing through the end of their sports seasons without being enrolled in classes. The NCAA currently permits fall and spring student-athletes who have graduated to continue participating as long as the graduation falls within 60 days of the NCAA championship.

## 5. Other/Open Discussion.

### Action Items:

- Email schools for website links to campus COVID-19 dashboards.

### Voting Items:

- **MOTION (McLaughlin, Smalling):** to have the Liberty League support an NCAA waiver permitting winter student-athletes who graduate in December to complete their sport participation in the winter/spring term. PENDING (7-2-1 – need RIT vote to determine whether there is 2/3 support for a league-sponsored waiver).

## January 26, 2021

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

### Agenda:

#### 1. COVID-19 Landscape:

- NYS County Dashboard (attached): the latest NYS county numbers continue to show a downward trend in infection rates.
- Campus Reopening Updates – how are they going?
- NYS High-Risk High School Sports: Permitted to begin Feb. 1

**2. Liberty League Core Values/Shared Standards – Update:** the committee met Thursday (1/21) and discussed shared standards document, including testing. While the NCAA testing guidelines for intermediate and low-risk sports recommend testing 25-50% of athletes every 1-2 weeks, the NCAA testing standard for all sports is the same when accounting for travel: “If travel cannot take place with physical distancing and masking, then PCR testing within three days before travel departure, or antigen/rapid PCR testing within one day before travel for away competitions.” The committee discussed this testing schedule as a possible league standard for spring sports competition.

### **3. Scheduling (attached):**

- NCAA reduction of minimum contest requirements
- Spring start date - league play: Weekend of March 27
- Possible regional scheduling to reduce travel and meet NCAA contest minimums
- Non-league competition at the discretion of each institution, consistent with testing standards
- Single-site and team championships: how to accomplish without overnight travel?

### **4. Other/Open Discussion.**

#### **Action Items:**

- Set up call with scheduling committee to draft spring sports schedules.

#### **Voting Items:**

None.

### **January 19, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

#### **Agenda:**

**1. NYS COVID-19 County Dashboard (update attached):** NYS county numbers continue to improve.

**2. Presidents Meeting - Feb. 11:** What data needs to be prepared?

-In preparation of the presidents meeting, spring start dates must be confirmed (3/27 or 4/3), shared standards must be reviewed, proposed COVID testing policy must be confirmed

#### **3. Scheduling:**

-Spring start date - league play. Can we commit to a start date or dates and build schedules? How do we build schedules without knowing which teams may/may not be participating?

-Golf/Tennis Scheduling (Deb):

#### **4. Testing:**

-League-wide Standard. A committee consisting of Susan Bassett, Laurel Kane, Brian Miller, Brian Atkins and Mike Matheny will be reviewing the league's Core Values/Shared Standards document Thursday. Can we agree on a league standard for testing?

-Abbott Test. With the Abbott tests now available, is that something that could assist with spring sports?

#### **5. Spring Sport Updates:**

-MLAX: Coaches had a call Friday to discuss scheduling options. They also inquired about non-league play. Does institutional autonomy guide non-league play?

-Tennis: See committee report below.

-Upcoming Meetings: WGOLF (1/19), BASE (1/20), Shared Standards (1/21)

#### **6. Strength & Conditioning Report (Deb)**

## **7. Other/Open Discussion.**

### **Action Items:**

- Set up call with scheduling committee to draft spring sports schedules.

### **Voting Items:**

None.

## **January 12, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm, Carrington (Bard), Smalling, Kane (Clarkson), Steward, Miller, Scatton (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett, Roberts, Rothermel (Ithaca), McElroy, Hansen, Beattie (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag, Shanley, Stout (Rochester), Spiotti, McVean, Reed (RIT), Cummings-Danson, Buchanan, Hollowood (Skidmore), Durocher, Grembowicz, La Brake (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin, Little, Tiffany (Union), Walsh, Acquarulo, Leach (Vassar), King, Meline (Liberty League).

### **Agenda:**

#### **1. NCAA**

-Convention Schedule/Key Dates: (See key dates below) All individuals who registered for the Convention should have received an email with a unique login to the Convention portal. The voting for the D3 Business Session will be conducted on the Lumi platform (attachment), separate from the Convention portal.

-Management Council Update (Walsh): Brief update from Michelle on items of interest from the Management Council, including the status of the NIL proposal.

-NIL Legislation/Voting (Q&A attachment): If a vote is conducted, what is the league's position?

#### **2. Spring Sport Planning:**

-NYS Weekly County COVID update (attachment): NYS county data has generally trended downward in the last week.

-Decision Timelines (Institutional/League) on Spring Sports Participation (McLaughlin): Discussion of timelines for institutional decisions regarding spring sports. We had previously discussed a target date of the beginning of March.

**3. Sport/Committee Reports:** As we make contingency plans for spring sports, or sport groups have been meeting to draft scheduling proposals. The sport liaisons

-Women's Lacrosse (Kane) (attachment)

-Softball (Hansen) (attachment)

-Strength & Conditioning (Steward)

**4. Liberty League Women's Volleyball Liaison:** the league will need to appoint a new administrator to serve as the women's volleyball liaison, replacing Kris Hall. Nominations welcome.

**5. NCAA Grant Reimbursements:** per my email last week, I am willing to provide NCAA grant reimbursements in two installments – an initial \$3,000 check now followed by the balance of any remaining funds in July.

## **6. Other/Open Discussion.**

### **Action Items:**

None.

**Voting Items:**

None.

**January 5, 2021**

**Participants:** Lindholm (Bard), Smalling (Clarkson), Steward (Hobart and William Smith), Bassett (Ithaca), McElroy (Rensselaer), VanderZwaag (Rochester), Spiotti (RIT), Cummings-Danson (Skidmore), Durocher (St. Lawrence), McLaughlin (Union), Walsh (Vassar), King (Liberty League).

**Agenda:**

**1. League Budget Update / NCAA Grant Reimbursements:** we've typically provided a budget report at our Convention meeting, so I wanted to give a snapshot of where we are through five months of our fiscal year (starts 8/1). Expenditures – primarily salary/benefits-related – total about \$85K. Kris had asked me a couple months ago if it might be possible to reimburse schools for NCAA grant expenditures prior June (when we've typically done it). Depending on whether we have spring competition/championships, we should be able to reimburse schools between \$5,000 to \$6,000 this year with few restrictions (PPE, etc.). If schools are interested, we could probably distribute checks for \$3,000 now with the balance in June, if it helps with expenses.

**2. NYS COVID-19 County Dashboard – Update:** A county-by-county COVID update.

**3. LL COVID-19 Values and Standards Document:** Kris and I agreed on our call in December that we would look this document over and see what updates might be needed. Individuals are needed to review and provide feedback. In particular, we wanted to ensure that our testing guidelines are consistent with NCAA recommendations.

**4. Spring Sport Liaison Updates:** all of our round-robin spring sports (baseball, softball, m/w lacrosse, m/w tennis) have had calls within the past month to discuss contingency plans for their spring seasons. Beginning next Tuesday (1/12), I'd like to have a sport liaison or two join the call to provide an update.

**5. NYU Spring Sports Inquiry:** Stuart Robinson reached out to me to inquire about plans for our Liberty League golf championships. He also inquired about the possibility of participating in other spring sports in some form (baseball, softball, tennis, track and field). From his email, which I've included below, it sounds unlikely that the UAA will have any formal spring sports competition. Stuart was inquiring as to the possibility of Liberty League competition. If we do have league competition and schools choose to opt out, there might be an opportunity to fill openings with NYU. Might be difficult to commit at this point, but I'd like to provide him with some feedback.

**6. NCAA Convention Planning:** at our Convention meeting, we discuss and share our positions on D3 legislative proposals, of which there is one this year (NIL). I suggest we reserve a block of time next Tuesday (1/12) to discuss the proposal. We could have Michelle provide a Management Council update as well.

**7. Women's Volleyball Liaison:** we will need to appoint a new administrator to serve as the women's volleyball liaison. Is there anyone who would have an interest or anyone with a volleyball background that might be a good fit?

**8. Other/Open Discussion.**

**Action Items:**

None.

**Voting Items:**

None.