

## **League Enrollment Informational Posting**

All coaches enrolling teams in The Great Northwest Basketball League, should be familiar with the contents of this document, the "League Enrollment Informational Posting" (hereafter, "Posting").

### **Enrollment Deadlines**

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

The deadlines for submitting the Team Playing Date Preference Forms (TPDPF) are virtually identical to the 2010-2011 season (the deadline for 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls teams are slightly different). 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:

- 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls – August 1
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls – August 8
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls – August 15
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys – August 22
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys – August 29
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys – September 5
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade girls – September 16
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade boys – September 16

While boys teams, and those for 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls team, we will actually begin scheduling for those grades on August 11, 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, 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. If a team with which you are associated failed to submit a complete roster, and/or Liability Waiver for all your team members, you received notice of that fact via email. Teams that are not in compliance will be sent a 2011-2012 TPDPF only after they have complied. If you are not in compliance, please contact Terri Green at 715-386-4317.

Please note that newly-executed Liability Waivers need to be submitted each season before teams play their first game, so even if your team was in compliance in 2010-2011, new Liability Waivers will need to be submitted for the 2011-2012 season. Coaches should keep a *photocopy* of the Liability Waivers 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.

In past seasons, rosters were required to be submitted online. For 2011-2012, coaches will be submitting these to the League manually via email or hard copy by USPS; rosters are due at least one day before your first 2011-2012 meet. If you think you are in compliance with this rule relative to last season and you haven't already received a 2011-2012 TPDPF via email, or if you have questions about the requirements, please contact Terri Green at *terri@gnbl.org* (e-mail) or 715-386-4317. If you agree that you are not in compliance for the 2010-2011 season, you can get into compliance by sending us your roster from last season through USPS or email, using the attached form (see Attachment #1), showing each player's first and last name, jersey number, home address, school attended in 2010-2011 and grade attended (again, during the 2010-2011 school year). You can then update this list, no later than one day before your first League meet during the 2011-2012 season, by providing the names of new players, delete names of players no longer on the team, changes in jersey numbers, changes in addresses, etc.

## **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.

## **2011 – 2012 Meet Fee Structure**

The cost to play in a regular (four game) League meet during the 2011-2012 season remains unchanged at \$110 per meet. The hosting credit for a regular (four game) meet will again be \$65 per team hosted. If you are involved with a 4<sup>th</sup> grade team, or a 5<sup>th</sup> grade team playing in three game meets (see discussion in "2011-2012 Rule Changes"), note that the fee to play in these meets will also be unchanged from 2010-2011 at \$95, with a proportionately reduced hosting credit (\$50 per team hosted).

## **Completion of Unified Meet Hosting Preference Forms**

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 2011-2012 season, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys teams and the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls teams plan to host, but the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

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 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls "A" team and they want to host on December 3, 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, the last several seasons, 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 last item 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.

Also, please note that 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 #2 in the Unified Meet Hosting Form).

### **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. Every season we receive complaints about non-updated, inaccurate or vague directions. Any host community not supplying narrative directions will force us to follow-up with you by phone and delay locking in your hosting date. Also, note that we require all host schools to provide the exact street address of each venue used so we can post it with their directions to assist coaches/parents who prefer to use GPS.

### **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 13 additional full meets to create sufficient 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 5, 12 and 16), 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 2011-2012, 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 2011-2012 season, and the actual number of meets they played during the 2010-2011 season. For new registrants, we will take the lower of the number registered to play in 2011-2012 and the League average for that grade the previous season (typically 4-6 meets, depending on the grade).

### **Pre-Payment of League Fees for Certain Teams**

A small number of teams will be required to pay their 2011-2012 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 2011-2012 meets. This requirement will be imposed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the severity of the problem experienced during the 2010-2011 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 2011-2012 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 2011-2012 season, that have not paid their final 2010-2011 invoice, will not have their TPDPF accepted and processed.

## **2011-2012 Game Rules**

There are three significant rule changes for the 2011-2012 season. A detailed discussion of those changes can be reviewed in the posting on this website entitled "2011-2012 Rule Changes".

A complete set of revised draft Rules for the 2011-2012 season will be posted on our website (*gnbl.org*) no later than June 17, 2011. We reserve the right to make minor adjustments and clarifications in those Rules through October 1, 2011, 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.

## **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. Please note that this policy for the 2011-2012 season is slightly different than the one utilized during the 2010-2011 season in that meets can't be dropped on less than ten days notice without paying full price for that meet (in 2010-2011 it was seven days). Paragraph C-12 of the 2011-2012 League Rules reads as follows:

- Teams that fail to play in a League meet to attend a non-Great Northwest event, on a date they indicated 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 ten days notice.
- Teams that drop a meet with at least ten days notice (for reasons other than to play in a non-Great Northwest event) 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" on 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 ten days 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.

In other words, there are no "free" drops when providing the League less than ten days notice. Teams that intentionally and repeatedly wait until ten 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 ten days of 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 immediate 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., March for all teams; December for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys; etc.) Nevertheless, every year there are several teams that register to play in six meets and give us only very early or very late (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 annually 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 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 onetime \$25 surcharge (per call, not per meet) 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).

### **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 5 (or Minnesota A) communities. A Wisconsin Division 3 (Minnesota AA) community will be allowed to combine with a Division 4 or 5 (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 strongest players from one or both communities). That means sending a note home from school to every student of that gender in both communities (or some other effective form of written communication), so no one is precluded from participation. No Division 1 or 2 (Minnesota AAAA or AAA) communities 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 fully 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. While the rule book is lengthy, it has a well-organized table of contents, so it is not difficult to locate the rule covering a particular issue. 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 Materials**

When filling out the hosting (UMHPF) and playing (TPDPF) 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 2011-2012 TPDPF. If you do not receive this email confirming receipt of your enrollment form within two weeks of mailing, please contact Terri at 715-386-4317 or [terri@gnbl.org](mailto:terri@gnbl.org) 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 2010-2011 season. Note that all teams are referred to by the grade the players will be in next season (2011-2012) - - not last season (2010-2011). 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 lower.

If you are enrolling a 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> 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 2010-2011 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 2011-2012 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 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade girls and boys teams in the chart based on the rating they received for their play as 8<sup>th</sup> graders, during the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 or 2010-2011 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 (6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> 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 or August. 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 2011 tournaments, over 680 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.

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade (2011-2012) League teams that attended the 2010 WSICT this past spring and performed well, will be invited back to the 2012 event. Seventh and eighth grade League teams that weren't very highly ranked in the regular season two years ago (09-10), but moved up markedly last season (10-11), will also be invited in 2012, depending on where they rank relative to other League teams at their community's size (i.e., WIAA Divisions 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5). Generally speaking, if you're from a WIAA Division 1 or 2 community, you need to have an "A" or high "B+" rating and have qualified for the LCT to get a WSICT invite; while WIAA Division 3, 4 and 5 teams can sometimes qualify if B+ rated, even if they didn't make the top 32. Tournament organizers expect to again have more top-flight applicants than they can accommodate at the 2012 WSICT and will be forced to turn some good teams away, particularly at the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Applications for the 2012 WSICT will be mailed in waves to eligible teams in late September through the end of October. For sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams (2011-2012) that were invited to the 2011 WSICT and declined, please see the posting on this website entitled "Background, Structure, Team Selection Process and Play Eligibility," by clicking on "Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament."

While typically all WIAA Division 3, 4 and 5 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 2011-2012 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade WSICTs will be based almost entirely on 2011-2012 performance in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade division of the League. Many of the invitations for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade WSICT won't be extended until later (December and early January) in the process than for other grades (starting in September and October) because there is less historical information on which to base an assessment of a team's relative 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, WYBL, Metro (boys) and Metro South (girls)], 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 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams play in the State tournament as we do for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, if all teams from the previous spring's WSICT return, there is very limited space available for new teams. As a result, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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 who were competitive in the event 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 2012 WSICT schedule has not yet been set, we will most likely run the four boys tournaments and the two for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls, the weekends of March 24 and 25, March 31 and April 1, and April 14 and 15 with two or three tournaments on each of those three weekends. There is a strong likelihood that the 6<sup>th</sup> and/or 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls WSICTs will again be held on one of the last two weekends of February (the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> or the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>). Dates and locations of all 2012 WSICTs will be posted on this website later on in July, once all are set (access by clicking on "Wisconsin State Individual Championship Tournament"). As a result, depending in which grade(s) your community has strong teams, all Saturdays in March are possible hosting options for all boys grades, as well as the older girls grades. 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.

### **Unruly Fans and Coaches**

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 assertively.

### **Dropped Host Dates**

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 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 2010-2011 season, and continuing into 2011-2012, 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 a full complement of games (in most cases, except for 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and certain 5<sup>th</sup> grade meets, that's four games). No team should be limited to less than the number of games promised simply because the host refuses to follow League Rules.

### **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 29; Level 3 - November 5; Level 4 - November 12
  - Minnesota Deer Hunting: November 5, 12 and 19
  - Wisconsin Deer Hunting: November 19 and 26
  - High School Basketball Play-Offs:
    - March 3: Wisconsin High School Boys Regional Finals

- March 10: Wisconsin High School Boys Sectional Finals; Wisconsin High School Girls Regional Finals; and Minnesota High School Girls Section Play-offs
- March 17: 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 24: 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 16) until 45 days after that deadline (sometime between mid-September for 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls to late October for 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> boys and girls).** 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.

- **2010-2011 Invoices.** Some teams still have an outstanding unpaid balance for the 2010-2011 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 entertain 2011-2012 enrollment applications from any coach or team until the unpaid balance is settled.**

If you had a credit from the 2010-2011 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 2011-2012 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 or *terri@gnbl.org*.