

RHODE ISLAND INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Principals' Committee on Athletics
March 23, 2026 @ 1:30 pm
RIIL Office
875 Centerville Road, Building #3
Warwick, RI 02886

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairperson Caluori; Mmes., Craven and Ward; Messrs., Barbieri, Barr, Costa, Crowley, DeCiccio, Fontaine, Gibbons, Green, Heath, Lazzareschi, McGair, Richard and Sollitto.

Also Present: Michael Lunney, Executive Director; Susana Borges, Administrative Assistant; and Carolyn Thornton, Dir. of Communications & Student Services.

Absent: Messr., Welsh

The March meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

PCOA MINUTES JANUARY 27, 2026

On a motion made and seconded, the PCOA minutes from the January 27, 2026 meeting were unanimously (16-0) approved.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted to move to Executive Session.

PCOA EXECUTIVE SESSION

The following items were discussed in Executive Session: Rules and Regulations; Marketing and Sponsorship; PCOA Assistant Chairperson Vacancy; Spring Workshop; Officials and Insurance Coverage.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee voted to move out of Executive Session.

NEW PCOA ASSISTANT CHAIRPERSON

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (16-0) approved the nomination of Mr. Michael Green, associate principal of West Warwick High School, to the position of Assistant Chairperson on the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

RIIL FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lunney reported on the Finance Committee meeting held on March 23, 2026. Items discussed were the 2025-2026 budget update, profit & loss, facility costs and annual audit.

The RIIL received a request from RI Association of School Principals (RIASP) regarding an AMICUS Brief. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (16-0) voted to approve contributing to the writing of an AMICUS Brief in support of the Trust's appeal of a decision in a court case that could affect member schools moving forward.

Mr. Lunney reported Mr. Steven Chapman was appointed by Teall Properties Group (TPG) to the position of General Manager of marketing and sponsorships to work on behalf of the RIIL. Also, Donna Kane, Director of Finance, reported there are new standards in Rhode Island that require re-application to continue tax-exempt status. The RIIL will comply with the new guidelines.

In addition, as part of his assistant chair responsibilities, Mr. Green will be added to the Finance Committee.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Lunney reported on the following:

- Winter Tournaments Update
 1. Venues
 2. Directors and Sport Committee Support
- Sponsorship Support
 1. Navigant Credit Union – Financial Trivia Challenge – winners will be announced soon.
 2. RI Army National Guard – Student Leadership Experience – target date early May.

3. Peanut Butter Express partnership with RI Food Bank
4. Even Field – Honors Awards
- Proposed Legislation
 1. Bullying, Hazing, Harassment
 2. Soft Helmet Covers
 3. Athletic Trainers
 4. Protecting Sports Officials including athletic directors/administrators.
- RIIL Annual Awards Breakfast – target date April 30, 2026 at TBA.
- Meetings
 1. Sport Committees - ongoing
 2. Sports Medicine Advisory Committee
 3. RIIAAA Executive Board
 4. Spring Sports Coaches Interpretation Meetings – held on March 10, 2026.
- Resources to Schools
 1. Student Eligibility Support
 2. Sport Rules Support
 3. NFHS/RIIL Branded PSA's
 4. Sportsmanship Toolkit – Bench Bad Behavior Campaign
 5. Coaches Certification Tracking System
 6. Transfer Management Tracking System
 7. Electronic Payment of Officials

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Mr. Lunney provided an update on the spring and fall sports planning. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) to approve the following 2025-2026 middle school winter championships: Boys' & Girls' Basketball and Co-ed Wrestling.

RIIAAA REPORT

Mr. Marty Crowley, President of the RIIAAA submitted a recommendation on behalf of the RIIAAA regarding scheduling of RIIL Championship events to establish a consistent rotation system for scheduling RIIL Championship events involving male and female competitions. Each sport committee will establish the standards in each sports handbook and document them. On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously (16-0) voted to approve the recommendation.

The RIIAAA Awards Banquet is set for April 9th at Cranston Country Club.

RIIL RULE REVISIONS

Mr. Lunney submitted a first draft proposal to establish clear and consistent criteria for school sponsorship of interscholastic teams, oversight of team operations, and the process by which new sports achieve official recognition and championship status within the RIIL. A finalized recommendation will be submitted at the June meeting.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) the following revision of the goggles rule to Article 18, Section 8 of the Field Hockey Handbook:

- a. A face mask must be worn by those field players defending the goal on a penalty corner and may be worn throughout the game.
- b. The face mask may be smooth, rounded, preferably transparent or single colored and fit flush with the face. It shall not be attached to any hard, unyielding headgear (even if padded). A wire-caged face mask that is smooth and rounded may be worn for defending penalty corners.
- c. Players shall remove the wire-caged masks at the completion of the penalty corner. If no suitable opportunity to remove the mask arises, they may continue to wear it within the 25-yard area.
- d. All field players are encouraged to wear goggles.
- e. Players wearing safety equipment for the purpose of defending a penalty corner shall put on the equipment and prepare to defend a corner in a timely fashion without delaying the game. It is the responsibility of the head coach to assure that their team sets up for penalty corners without delay.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) the following revision to Article 6 (Penalties), Section 18 (Late Entries):

- Entries for RIIL Competitions (team, individual, or combination) must be submitted at a time and manner as designated by the Director with no exceptions.
- Penalty for late entries: Schools who submit late (after the deadline) entries for an RIIL Competition will be subject to the following:
 - 1st Offense for a team in a season - \$50.00
 - 2nd Offense for a team in a season - \$100.00
 - 3rd Offense for a team in a season – penalties to be determined by the PCOA

REQUESTS FROM SCHOOLS

The RIIL received a request from Excel Academy High School to join the RIIL beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. The RIIL will work with the Excel Academy High School’s administration regarding their sports offerings.

RULE VIOLATIONS

Central High School – Article 6, Use of Ineligible Athlete (Football)

The Committee is requesting further clarification from Central High School administration regarding the use of an ineligible student athlete. The matter was tabled to the June meeting.

RIIL SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC)

None.

OFFICIALS

Mr. Lunney commended all the winter sport officials on a great job this season and expressed the RIIL’s gratitude for their efforts during a very challenging winter season.

FALL SPORTS – ALIGNMENTS

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) to approve the following 2026 & 2027 alignment proposals: Girls’ Tennis and Girls’ Volleyball. The RIIL will send out the schedules to schools.

Mr. Lunney reported, with regret, that the Ponaganset School District communicated that Ponaganset High School will not be available to host the 2026 RIIL Cross Country Championships.

WINTER SPORTS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Lunney expressed gratitude to the school administrations, athletic directors, coaches and officials and a special thanks to the RIIL staff for their hard work and dedication during the winter season. Special thanks also goes out to all of the winter sports championship venues for their cooperation in making their facilities available despite the many challenges and changes required to complete the winter championship season.

On a motion made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted (16-0) to approve the following 2025-2026 High School Winter Championships: Boys’ & Girls’ Indoor Track, Boys’ & Girls’ Swimming, Boys’ & Girls’ Basketball, Boys’ & Girls’ Ice Hockey, Competition Cheerleading, Co-ed Wrestling and eSports.

SPRING SPORTS

The first day of practice for high school spring sports was March 16, 2026. The first day of practice for middle school spring sports is March 23, 2026. Mr. Lunney reported the RIIL has been securing championship venues for the spring championships.

The Committee then adopted the following closing motion: THAT ANY AND ALL MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS AND ACTIONS BY THE PRINCIPALS’ COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE PRINCIPALS’ COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS TO THIS DATE BE REAFFIRMED AND RATIFIED.

The March meeting of the Principals’ Committee on Athletics was adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Signed:

_____ Date: _____

Susana Borges, RIIL Board Secretary