

To Chapters that said yes

As promised, the Futures Committee made up of your president, Alton McCormick; president-elect, Barry Caponi; vice-president, Bill Carter; immediate past president, Chowan Mayo; district director, Sonny Balli; and ex-officio board member, Ronnie Giraourd met with the TASO Multi-sport board yesterday in Austin. The meeting was a very civil, professionally run meeting with a solid exchange of ideas. At the end of a five hour meeting, it became apparent that the TASO board was not prepared to meet our needs as we presented to you in Austin last month. Therefore, we will go forward with our plan to create the Lone Star Officials Association, effective April 1, 2007 and have notified the UIL of that decision.

Because of the make up of some of the non-board attendees, as well as some long standing opposition to us on the board, not to mention the executive director, we fully expect negative stories to circulate as a result of our action, so the following is our report to you on what transpired.

First of all, because of the negative and rude reception our two representatives received last May, we are pleased to report that the board was very courteous and cordial to us personally and we felt the meeting was a good exchange of information. We even felt that many on the board were receptive in principle to several of our requests, including the possibility to restructure the voting strength of the divisions. However, when taken in its entirety, the board only definitively addressed two of the five issues and passed only one motion which was to create a president's council to oversee the executive director's performance on an annual basis. (The first item we discussed.)

We'd also like to warn you that you may hear that *we* were the ones that were unwilling to compromise on our requirements and that *we* were the ones that were only going through the motions from the beginning. You may even hear that from basketball members who were present at the meeting. There were only four or five, but *all* represented chapters that had been very vociferous in their opposition to the formation of a new organization. (One has to wonder who invited them as we did not, or we would have certainly opened it up to all basketball members.)

The reason you may hear that is that after getting fairly effortless agreement on the first two (easy) issues, we got to the first of the three more contentious ones (individual sport autonomy). As the discussion began on that, it became apparent that the board was going to be unwilling to take the definitive actions at the meeting as we had requested in our letter. That led to the Chair, Bill Fecci, to question the need to continue. We reiterated our need to get definitive answers that day and agreed that perhaps there was no need to continue if we couldn't get closure on the issues. We reminded the board that we had been very clear in our letter and had asked all board members to respond to us if they didn't think it was possible to accomplish our tasks at the meeting; and none did. (Although in his defense, Bill Fecci in a phone conversation that *we* initiated did say he thought it would be tough to do.) At that point, two of the dissenting basketball chapter representatives made angry statements accusing us of having no intention of trying to find a middle ground, etc.

However, in spite of the fact that we knew the board would not enact what we required there yesterday, we decided to continue on because the overall reception to that point had been positive. We considered that if the board truly agreed with us on all five topics perhaps there was a possibility for a thirty or forty-five day moratorium on the payment of dues while we were able to get things finalized. However, during our discussion of voting rights restructuring (item number two) it became apparent that the board could not come to a consensus on exactly how to restructure the voting rights of the divisions

and that the process they were proposing could have easily drawn out to sixty days or more, with no guarantee of an acceptable resolution. But in spite of even that, we continued on to the final topic; that of the executive director's continued employment which occurred in executive session as you might expect. It became apparent there also that we were not going to resolve anything in that meeting. As a matter of fact, at the end of the discussion it became apparent that there would not be any resolution prior to September 1st, and as with the above issues, there was no guarantee that the resolution would be acceptable to us. As we agreed in our meeting at the UIL offices in Austin in February, both were totally unacceptable to us.

We want you know that we did spend a considerable amount of time preparing for this meeting and did make an honest attempt at reconciliation. It is unfortunate that that our cries for help over the last year and a half fell on deaf ears. And although we did not get what we wanted out of the meeting, we do believe that we opened some eyes as to the true extent of the issues.

In conclusion, going in to the meeting there were definitely some on the board that were of the mind that our position was based solely on our objection to one of 'our' candidates not getting the job of executive director. When faced with the preponderance of the evidence, we do believe they began to see they had problems that needed to be addressed. As a matter of fact, we got comments from some after the meeting that they may not be long for TASO either and were glad we 'stuck to our guns'.

This is all water under the bridge at this point. So we are proud to announce the birth of the Lone Star Officials Association and look forward to working with you to make it the premier high school basketball officials associations in America! With your help, it will become so.

Towards that end, we have already been in contact with the UIL to begin the process of setting up the organization. We will get back to you shortly and frequently with updates. The most important of those will be what to do with your dues payment. As we will need time to set up the bank accounts and logistics such as where to send the payment, how make out the check, etc., we will not be requiring payment of dues for the 2007-2008 season until April 16th. The second most important will be a process to notify TASO of your decision.

The UIL has set up sports officials organizations in the past, so with their help, we will be working out the logistics in short order. We do not expect this to be painless, so please bear with us as we get this up and running. You can help by sending us by doing two things. 1) Send us questions that you come up with to either Barry Caponi or Alton McCormick. We'll assign them to the appropriate committee for action. 2) Please volunteer to work on the committees we'll need to get things rolling as rapidly as possible.

Thank you all once again for your support.