



media information

1661 ramblewood drive • east lansing, mi 48823 • 517.332.5046 • fax - 517.332.4071 • www.mhsaa.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 14, 2000

Contact: John Johnson or Jack Roberts

517.332.5046 or www.mhsaa.com

A Commentary By MHSAA Executive Director John E. “Jack” Roberts: What Is “Traditional?”

A small minority of people in Michigan, including plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed against the Michigan High School Athletic Association, want high school sports seasons to coincide with college sports seasons. They focus their argument on the word “traditional:” if it isn’t the traditional season, they claim, it’s discrimination.

But is what the colleges do really traditional? Not in many states:

- Colleges conduct women’s swimming in the winter, but only 19 states do so for girls high school competition.
- Colleges conduct women’s soccer in the fall, but only 17 states do so for girls high school competition.

And what the colleges do is not traditional in Michigan:

- Schools that do not belong to the MHSAA conduct their girls basketball seasons and statewide championships at a time of year (fall) that is different than colleges (winter).
- Sports for which the MHSAA provides no service and sponsors no post-season tournament (e.g., boys gymnastics) are conducted by Michigan high schools at a time of year (fall) that is different than colleges (winter).

Tradition is the statements, beliefs, legends, customs passed from one generation to the next.

Traditions may vary with countries and they may vary within regions of the same country.

Tradition is what causes the MHSAA to recognize “Legends of the Game” at many of its final events. We recognize the contributions of teams from earlier years, many of whom were pioneers for interscholastic athletics in Michigan.

When it comes to tradition, Michigan has a legacy of service to girls athletics that is unsurpassed in America.

(more)

2-2-2 – What Is “Traditional?”

The MHSAA was the . . .

- First state high school association in the United States to establish an equity committee as a standing committee of the state association.
- First state high school association in the United States to award annually a Women in Sports Leadership Award.
- First state high school association in the United States to sponsor an annual conference for women in sports leadership; and the only state association in the country to endow that program to assure its future.

The MHSAA . . .

- Sponsors 24 post-season tournaments open to girls, 12 open to boys: the MHSAA allows girls to play on any team in MHSAA tournaments, but it does not allow boys to play on girls’ teams in MHSAA tournaments.
- Televises as many girls tournaments as boys, even without sufficient sponsor support.
- Produces the same quality souvenir program for girls tournaments as boys, even without comparable advertiser support.
- Pays tournament officials identically and reimburses tournament hosts and managers for girls tournaments at the same level as boys, even without the same spectator support.

This is the tradition the MHSAA will pass on to the next generation of female athletes, coaches, administrators and officials who participate in interscholastic athletics in Michigan.

-0-

RL01-035

Farm Bureau Insurance and Little Caesars Pizza are year-round MHSAA Corporate Partners