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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2000-01 Sports Season Approaches; Basketball, Football, Soccer & Swimming Rules Changes Announced

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Aug. 1 – The 2000-01 high school sports season begins on August 7, with the beginning of the upcoming school year signaled by the start of practice for fall sports for nearly a quarter of a million young student-athletes who will be participating in the eight sports sponsored by member schools of the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

Football practices will begin on August 7 for all schools wishing to begin their season on the weekend of August 24-25-26. All football schools must conduct three required conditioning days of practice before beginning contact. Conditioning sessions may not include any pads. Practice also commences that week on August 10 for schools sponsoring boys golf in the Lower Peninsula, with competition in that sport beginning August 14.

The remaining fall sports begin their practice schedules on August 14, and all but three sports can start competition that day. The first game date for boys soccer is August 25, girls swimming and diving in the Lower Peninsula may open activity on August 26, and girls basketball begins on August 28.

Playing rules changes by the National Federation of State High School Associations are few for the upcoming season. The most noticeable change in football is that there are now two different penalties for grasping an opponent's face mask or helmet opening – an incidental penalty of 5 yards and a flagrant penalty of 15 yards. In basketball, pre-game meetings between referees, coaches and captains will emphasize the need for good sportsmanship; horizontal lettering on uniform jerseys may now be arches, with limitations; and 20-second time outs have been increased to 30 seconds in length -- with the end results being three full and two 30-second time outs per game. In soccer, uniform rules place an emphasis on shin guards providing reasonable protection, and that socks be the same single dominant color, but are not required to be the color of the jersey; games may not be played until the home team provides two ball handlers; excessive celebration shall be penalized with a disqualification; and if the ball fails to enter the field of play on a throw-in, the ball is awarded to the opponent at the spot of the infraction. In swimming and diving, competitors shall not be

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permitted to use suits or caps which includes advertising or a name other than the name of the competitor, school or mascot except one visible logo/trade name not exceeding 2-1/4 square inches or 2-1/4 inches in any dimension, and one American flag not exceeding 2x3 inches (Goggles are exempt from the uniform requirement as they are not required equipment); and that a visual lap counting system be provided at meets, with its use being option.

The 2000 fall campaign culminates with championships beginning with the Upper Peninsula finals in girls tennis on October 6 and wraps up with the girls basketball finals on December 2.

Here is a complete list of fall championship dates:

- **Girls Basketball:** Districts -- Nov. 13-18
Regionals -- Nov. 20-22
Finals - Nov. 28, Nov. 30-Dec. 1-2
- **Cross Country:** U.P. Finals -- Oct. 21
L.P. Regionals -- Oct. 28
L.P. Finals -- Nov. 4
- **Football:** Pre-Districts -- Oct. 27 or 28
District Finals -- Nov. 3 or 4
Regional Finals -- Nov. 10 or 11
Semifinals -- Nov. 18
Finals -- Nov. 24-25
- **L.P. Boys Golf:** Regionals -- Oct.13 or 14
Finals -- Oct. 20-21
- **Boys Soccer:** Districts -- Oct. 23-28
Regionals -- Oct. 31-Nov. 4
Semifinals -- Nov. 8
Finals -- Nov. 11
- **L.P. Girls Swimming/Diving** Diving Quals -- Nov. 14
Finals -- Nov. 17-18
- **Girls Tennis:** U.P. Finals -- Oct. 6
L.P. Regionals -- Oct. 13-14
L.P. Finals --Oct. 20-21

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,300 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments conducted in 12 sports for girls and 12 sports for boys which attract approximately 1.3 million spectators each year.

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