



media information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mini-Grants Available To Assist Local Sportsmanship Efforts

EAST LANSING, Mich. – May 24 – The success the Michigan High School Athletic Association has enjoyed in its efforts to promote good sportsmanship at school athletic events has been achieved by a mix of statewide support and local efforts.

Since the Association launched its first and the largest single-day Sportsmanship Summit in the nation in 1997, it has begun to alternate the large gatherings in Lansing in even-numbered years with providing mini-grants in odd-numbered years for individual member schools or leagues and conferences to conduct their own local sportsmanship summits.

This year, mini-grants will be awarded in the \$50 to \$500 range, with up to a total of \$20,000 available. In the 1999-00 school year, a total of \$13,530 was provided to support 46 different events around the state involving over 400 schools and 5,000 students. By comparison, the MHSAA has attracted less than 4,000 persons to its three statewide summits and absorbed more than \$135,000 in direct costs to stage those events.

“It’s great to have large, statewide conferences that attract media attention and speakers with high marquee value, but when all is said and done, the sportsmanship battle is waged daily by our schools at the local level,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “Our one-day Sportsmanship Summits are popular and vital, but so many more people can be reached so much more economically when schools and leagues and conferences work together to reach their constituents with the messages of ethics, integrity, respect and character that embody sportsmanship.

“The MHSAA has never been afraid to put its money where its mouth is when it comes to sportsmanship,” Roberts continued. “And our schools have been very successful in getting the message out when we’ve given them the tools to do it with.” The MHSAA provided all member schools sportsmanship videos in 1998 and 1999, and has annually distributed a comprehensive sportsmanship kit to every school since 1988.

(more)

2-2-2 – Sportsmanship Mini-Grants Available

While the mini-grants will be provided for almost any type of sportsmanship effort, special consideration will be given to, and Roberts is asking schools to focus on, the following areas in 2001-02:

- Junior high/middle school students and faculty
- High school team captains
- Adult spectators

“Sportsmanship is a learned behavior, and focusing our attention on the youngest group of students and toward the leaders of our high school teams, is appropriate, and our efforts must continue to reach adult spectators – especially parents – who continue to be schools’ biggest challenge,” Roberts said.

Application forms were sent to MHSAA member school principals and athletic directors in the past month. A copy of the application can also be found on the Forms & Graphics page of the MHSAA Web Site – mhsaa.com.

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, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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MEDIA ADVISORY – The MHSAA is preparing a report on the significant decline in player and coach ejections for unsportsmanlike conduct. Look for it soon.

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