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Girls Basketball Finals To Remain At CMU For Two More Years Before Move To East Lansing In 2004 and 2005

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Jan. 18 -- Rose Arena at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant will again host the Michigan High School Athletic Association Girls Basketball Semifinals and Finals in 2002 and 2003.

The decision was made by the MHSAA Representative Council by mail ballot earlier this month, following the Council's discussion of possible venues at its November 28 meeting in Grand Rapids, and another successful tournament at the site this past fall.

The five highest years of attendance at the Girls Basketball Semifinals and Finals have been the five years the MHSAA has staged the event at Rose Arena. The peak year was 1999, when 21,606 fans attended the six sessions.

This year's dates for the event are December 5-7. The tournament will remain at Rose Arena for the December 4-6, 2003 event unless the girls basketball season is altered by pending litigation.

The Girls Semifinals and Finals are scheduled to relocate to Michigan State University's Breslin Student Events Center for the December 2-4, 2004 and December 1-3, 2005 tournaments. Breslin Center director Scott Breckner reports that the facility is not available on additional dates in March of 2005 and 2006 if the girls basketball season is changed as a result of actions by either the judicial system, the MHSAA or its membership.

Other sites which had expressed interest in hosting the tournament in December of 2002 and 2003 included The Palace of Auburn Hills and Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids.

"The close, capacity crowds of Rose Arena have provided a tremendous atmosphere that the participants – including players, coaches and spectators – have appreciated," said MHSAA Assistant Director Nate Hampton. "I believe we would be reluctant to move to a facility designed more for ice hockey than basketball, which is why a move to the Breslin Center after our seven-year run at Rose Arena is appealing.

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“Like Rose Arena, the Breslin Center is centrally located east and west, and it’s on a college campus,” added Hampton, “and both of these criteria have been important to many who have commented on site selection over the years.”

“We are grateful to the management at CMU and to those in Mt. Pleasant who have welcomed the tournament for the past five years,” commented MHSAA Executive Director John E. “Jack” Roberts. “We want to make it seven years, the best seven years in the life of the MHSAA post-season Girls Basketball Tournament, which began in 1973.

“It is possible we will return to CMU in the future, especially if its plans for a new arena are developed and the facility is made available to the MHSAA and meets our needs.”

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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