



media information

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2002

Contact: John Johnson or Randy Allen

517.332.5046 or www.mhsaa.com

Cooperative Programs, National Team/Olympic Development Participation Addressed By Representative Council

EAST LANSING, Mich. – May 31 – Several measures impacting cooperative programs and a change in the rules related to participation of in-season athletes on United States National Teams and in Olympic Development Programs were addressed by the Representative Council of the MHSAA at its Spring meeting, May 5-7, in Gaylord.

The Spring meeting of the 19-member legislative body of the Association's 1,300-plus member schools is usually the busiest of its three sessions each year. The Council considered 35 committee proposals and discussed a number of eligibility and operational issues.

Cooperative Programs, first initiated by the MHSAA in 1988, have provided numerous student-athletes with additional opportunities to participate in high school sports, especially where no programs may have existed before, or where a program was in danger of being eliminated. Cooperative Programs have been responsible for preserving activities like girls gymnastics, and instrumental in the growth of sports like girls soccer, ice hockey and girls golf. As of April 16, there were 148 Cooperative Program agreements for senior high schools and 52 such programs at the junior high/middle school level – both all-time highs.

The Representative Council acted to allow new MHSAA member schools not yet eligible for post-season tournament competition to participate in a Cooperative Program with a tournament-eligible school; and also dealt with the issue of agreements involving large schools.

In seven sports – girls competitive cheer, girls gymnastics, ice hockey, boys and girls skiing, and boys and girls swimming and diving – which are sponsored by 250 or fewer member schools, there has been no maximum limit placed on the enrollment of the schools involved in a Cooperative Program. In all other sports, the maximum enrollment must not exceed the Class B limit. The Council voted to not approve new applications for Cooperative Programs where the combined enrollments of the participating schools exceeds 3,500, unless none of the schools had previously sponsored that sport, where such a program will now be allowed to exist for only three years. The Council also decided to seek the input of those schools in current agreements with enrollments exceeding 3,500 to determine if and how long they will be grandfathered.

(more)

2-2-2 – Spring Representative Council Meeting

“There is a concern among members that sometimes a cooperative is put together or stays together even when separate school programs are feasible,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, MHSAA executive director. “There’s also the situation where a large school gets involved in a program to the benefit of just a single student. The Council is looking, with these actions, to keep the avenues for opportunity open, but yet avoid the abuses that some observers have seen occur. Cooperative programs provide opportunities, but we must try to assure they do not eliminate fair opportunity by allowing super huge cooperative programs against single-enrollment programs”

The Council also reaffirmed procedures for reviewing cooperative programs when the number of schools sponsoring tops the 250 mark, and the maximum enrollment drops to the Class B limit. Girls soccer exceeded the 250 school threshold in 1997; girls golf now has; and boys and girls swimming are nearing 250 sponsoring schools.

Student-athletes who qualify for U.S. National Teams will benefit from a Council action that will allow such participation without the potential loss of school athletic eligibility. For National Team members, there is now no limit on the number of opportunities and state high school association events which may be missed by a student-athlete. Participants in Olympic Development Programs are limited to one per student per school season in that sport, but state high school association events may not be missed. The rule was rewritten for clarity, and to distinguish between respective programs and whether or not state association post-season tournament events could be missed as a result.

Another notable action by the Council was to approve an ad hoc committee to study seeding of the lowest levels of selected MHSAA team tournaments. The Council expanded on the recommendation of the Ice Hockey Committee by voting to include other team sports in this study.

Here is a summary of other actions taken at the Spring Representative Council Meeting:

Modified an exception to the transfer rule for student-athletes returning to their parents’ residence.

The Council added language to the existing rule which allows for students to be immediately eligible any time they change their residence from one school district to return to their parents’ residence in another school district – making it a one-time exception.

Quoting Jack Roberts – “The change serves several purposes among which is that students will not now be able to spend one semester of a school year at a tennis academy in another state and the next semester competing at an MHSAA member school, and then repeating that pattern in subsequent years. A school survey favored this change.”

Voted to raise the maximum fair market value or cost of symbolic or merchandise awards a student-athlete may receive to \$25 from \$15. It is the first increase in the award value in 16 years. Fair market value is considered to be the price anyone would be able to obtain a symbolic or merchandise award for.

Quoting Jack Roberts – “The Council felt it was time for the awards rule to catch up with inflation, and this increase will give schools and tournament sponsors more flexibility in selecting quality awards to present to student-athletes. Again, a school survey showed strong membership support for this change.”

(more)

3-3-3 – Spring Representative Council Meeting

Approved the creation of a study committee to review the transfer regulation’s applications and period of ineligibility. Based on the suggestions of a member school and the MHSAA Executive Committee to review the transfer regulation’s period of eligibility, the Council created a committee which will report on this topic at a future meeting.

Quoting Jack Roberts – “Such study has occurred before. Usually it reaffirms rules. But local school leadership changes and the process is educational and occasionally leads to an improvement in the transfer rule.”

In basketball, the Council defeated a Basketball Committee proposal to assign three-person officiating crews for MHSAA Regional contests; and voted to continue with the point-differential rule during subvarsity games only. Three-person officiating crews are only used during the MHSAA Tournament for Quarterfinal, Semifinal and Final games. The elimination of the point-differential rule at the varsity level will bring Michigan into compliance with National Federation of State High School Association Rules.

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Nate Hampton – “While we continue to see growth in three-person crews at the local level for regular-season play, to begin to use those crews in Regional competition may give the appearance that all games should do so, and many local schools and leagues may not desire that change or be in a position to financially accommodate it.

“The point differential rule has worked very well at all levels of play in Michigan, but the National Federation will not longer allow its use on an experimental basis. The rule will continue to be used at the subvarsity level.”

In girls competitive cheer, the Council approved the Competitive Cheer Committee recommendation to reconfigure the MHSAA post-season tournament into five regionals per class and allow two teams from each regional to advance to the final round – Previously, there were eight regions in each class and only one team from each region advanced to the finals. There will now be ten teams in each class competing at the finals instead of eight.

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Suzanne Martin – “This reorganization will streamline the administration of the tournament, but will also see additional teams receive the opportunity to participate in the finals.”

Approved the Competitive Cheer Committee recommendation to have a maximum of 16 competitors in each round, with no more than a two-person differential between any round. Previously, the 16 competitor limit applied to just the first and third rounds, and a school could have a differential of up to four between any round.

Quoting Suzanne Martin – “Some schools were using the previous differential rule to a greater advantage than the rule was designed for. This will provide for more equitable competition.”

Approved the recommendation of the Cross Country/Track and Field Committee to reestablish the policy in cross country that allowed a fourth-place team to qualify from the Regional to the Final if it had four runners finishing in the top 20 places. This policy had been previously set aside when the cross country post-season tournament began competition in nearly equal divisions in 2000.

(more)

4-4-4 – Spring Representative Council Meeting

Quoting Nate Hampton – “This will allow an extra team or two the experience of competing in the Finals in most years without placing any additional administrative burden on the Finals host.”

Voted to survey member schools and the complete track and field community regarding the concept of and MHSAA Team Track and Field Finals. The survey will look at what changes the membership would envision to the Individual Tournament, and any modifications that might be necessary to a team championship already run by the Michigan Interscholastic Track Coaches Association the weekend between the Regionals and the Finals of the existing tournament series.

Quoting Nate Hampton – “For several years, the track coaches association has expressed an interest in separate team and individual post-season tournaments in track and field.. This survey should provide the Council with the membership input necessary to make a decision on this issue.”

In golf, the Council approved the Golf Committee recommendations for breaking ties – When a tie for team championship honors occurs, the tie shall be broken by adding the fifth scores from Friday and Saturday competition and if the tie is not broken, then five players from each team shall compete in a sudden-victory playoff to break the tie. When a tie for team runner-up honors occurs, the tie shall be broken using the fifth-player scores; and if there is still a tie, then co-runners up shall be declared.

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Suzanne Martin – “There has previously been some misapplication of tournament policy at Finals site when ties for top honors have occurred. This change will make it clear as to how ties should be resolved.”

The Council also approved the Golf Committee recommendation to increase from seven to eight the number of Regionals per division in the Lower Peninsula Boys Tournament – There will be three additional team qualifiers to the Finals as a result, raising the number of schools in the field to 24 in each Division; and up to eight additional individuals may also advance.

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Suzanne Martin – “This is an opportunity to address the growth that has occurred in boys golf, and also one that will allow additional teams and individuals the opportunity to experience play in the Finals.”

In ice hockey, the Council approved a staff recommendation to for all levels of the MHSAA Ice Hockey Tournament to have venues provide netting designed to protect spectators if seating is provided behind the goals – This action takes place with the 2003 tournament.

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Randy Allen – “Most, if not all of the arenas currently used for the MHSAA tournament series, provide for protective netting at the ends of the arena, and this safety concern is shared by all parties involved in school ice hockey.”

In skiing, the Council approved the Skiing Committee recommendation, as modified by the staff, to require each student to have their CUSSA/high school meet schedule on file at their schools with an administrator.

(more)

5-5-5 – Spring Representative Council Meeting

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Gina Mazzolini – “It is important for school administrators be aware of the non-school meets that count toward the total number of competitions for a student-athlete and team during the high school season. This action will help eliminate the possibility of a student-athlete or team participating in too many meets and losing eligibility for the MHSAA post-season tournament.”

The Council approved the Skiing Committee recommendation to require a face guard on helmets in the slalom and giant slalom events – Just a year ago, a helmet became a requirement for high school competition in Michigan. The Council also emphasized that the required helmet be a full head-covering piece manufactured for skiing.

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Gina Mazzolini – “This is an important safety measure for high school skiing. The face guard will provide additional protection, and the specification that the helmet fully cover the head will reduce the exposure to potential injury that exists with some helmets.”

In soccer, the Council approved the Soccer Committee recommendation to request that the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee change the penalties and mechanics for officials so that a second caution issued would result in a player being disqualified from their next game – In addition, a team losing a player disqualified for receiving a second yellow card would be allowed no substitutes for that player in the current game. Disqualification for taunting would also result in no substitution being allowed. Currently, substitutions are allowed following disqualifications for a second yellow card and for taunting.

Quoting MHSAA Suzanne Martin – “This change would bring more consistency to the penalty applied whenever a disqualification occurs. Not allowing a substitute for a player who is disqualified for taunting will help focus Michigan’s and the National Federation’s emphasis on good sportsmanship.”

In swimming and diving, the Council approved the Swimming & Diving Committee recommendation to divide schools into two nearly equal divisions for the Lower Peninsula tournament series. This will result in 112 schools in Division 1 and 113 schools in Division 2 for girls; and 107 schools in Division 1 and 108 schools in Division 2 for boys. Previously, these tournaments were conducted as Class A and Class B-C-D.

In tennis, following a preference expressed by member schools, the Council approved the addition of a fourth Doubles flight in the Division 4 Lower Peninsula and Division 2 Upper Peninsula Boys and Girls Tennis Tournaments.

In girls volleyball, a staff recommendation to schedule the Semifinal round of the tournament over two days was approved. Previously, all eight Semifinal matches had been conducted on a single Friday at University Arena in Kalamazoo, beginning at 10 a.m. The new schedule will have the Class C and D Semifinals on Thursday; the Class A and B Semifinals on Friday; both sessions beginning at 3 p.m.

Quoting Gina Mazzolini – “The early start of the semis was proving to be disruptive to the class day, especially for schools which became repeat semifinalists. Playing eight matches in a single day also resulted in some late-night finishes. Both of these situations should be avoided with the new schedule.”

(more)

6-6-6 – Spring Representative Council Meeting

The Council approved the Wrestling Committee recommendation to limit a wrestler’s eligibility to their lowest minimum weight class and the weight class immediately above that weight once the wrestler establishes the scratch weight for the lowest class. Previously, a wrestler could move up several weight classes from their minimum weight.

Quoting MHSAA Assistant Director Bill Bupp – “Too many times, a coach has moved a youngster up to a weight that is unsafe. It is the opinion of the Wrestling Committee that keeping a tight range of weight classes that a wrestler can participate at will create a healthier situation, and even take out some of the gamesmanship that comes with moving around too many weight classes.

Following the recommendation of the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee, the Council reaffirmed the practice of continuing the Individual Wrestling Finals in the Upper Peninsula, and not participate in a unified tournament with Lower Peninsula schools.

Quoting Bill Bupp – “Upper Peninsula schools have gone through a thorough process to determine their desire to maintain a tournament that concludes with their own Finals. While some would like to see a unified Individual tournament, the U.P. Athletic Committee has determined a system which they feel works best for them.

The Council also reviewed reports on membership, with an increase to 754 senior high schools, and a decrease of 61 junior high/middle schools to 467; eligibility advancement applications, which numbered at 21 for the second straight year; school violations, which saw a significant decline in the past year; attendance at athletic director and coaches in-service workshops; a dramatic increase in registered officials during the 2001-02 school year; rules meeting attendance; officials reports submitted for the past three sports seasons, which continued to show a decline in the number of negative officials report and player and coaches ejections; and a review of risk minimization issues in various sports. The Association’s \$7.4 million budget for the 2002-03 school year was also approved.

The Representative Council is the 19-member legislative body of the MHSAA. All but 5 members are elected by member schools. Four members are appointed by the Council to facilitate representation of females and minorities; and the 19th position is occupied by the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee.

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 1.3 million spectators each year.

-0-

RL02-097