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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2002

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MHSAA Files Reply In Sports Seasons Case; Statement Issued by Executive Director John E. "Jack" Roberts

EAST LANSING, Mich. – July 19 – The Michigan High School Athletic Association filed its Reply to the Plaintiff's Response to its Compliance Plan filed on May 22 in U.S. Federal District Court on Thursday. The filing of the 25-page document was the last step in the legal proceedings prior to a hearing on July 26 at 9 a.m. in Kalamazoo.

Following the July 26 hearing, the Judge in this case, the Honorable Richard Enslen, will rule on the Compliance Plan submitted by the MHSAA. As soon as the District Court approves a plan, that phase of the legal proceedings end, and the implementation of the plan is suspended, pending the Association's appeal to the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati.

The MHSAA issued the following statement today from Executive Director John E. "Jack" Roberts regarding the Reply filed Thursday:

"Plaintiff's Response to the Compliance Plan attempts to persuade the Court that there is only one standard of equity – numerical parity – and only one path to equity – simultaneous seasons for all boys and girls sports. Our Reply Brief points out that the law does not require quotas and that this Court has already ruled that the MHSAA has many options for designing new sports seasons. No sport must be in any particular season, and no sports seasons must be combined for boys and girls.

"Our Reply Brief demonstrates that the law is flexible. It not only allows but encourages organizations to consider the opinions and diverse needs of their constituents.

"The MHSAA has submitted a Compliance Plan which follows the District Court's governing criteria and best accommodates schools diverse circumstances, resources and views."

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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