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Girls Attendance Hits All-Time High At 2002-03 MHSAA Tournaments

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Nov. 6 – A new record for attendance at girls post-season tournaments sponsored by Michigan High School Athletic Association was set during the 2002-03 school year, driven by all-time highs in Girls Basketball, Girls Swimming and Diving, and Girls Volleyball.

Attendance at girls tournaments totaled 384,646, breaking the old mark of 380,642 in 1999-00. The overall attendance figure of 1,593,827 was up about 10 percent over last year, and was the third highest ever to the 1999-00 record total of 1,668,905 fans. The boys attendance mark of 1,209,181 for the year ranks fourth all-time.

The Girls Basketball tournament topped the 200,000 mark in attendance for only the second time, the three-week total spectatorship of 205,322 surpassing the 1999-00 mark of 203,411. At District tournaments alone, the 142,833 fans in attendance broke the old record of 125,449 in 1999-00.

The Girls Swimming and Diving tournament totaled 4,940, included a Finals record 4,423; breaking 1997-98 marks in both categories. The Girls Volleyball tournament had overall (49,388) and District (25,450) records, breaking previous standards from 2000-01.

The Girls Competitive Cheer Finals set a new mark for attendance with 4,523, its final day total second only to Girls Basketball. The previous cheer finals record was 3,646 in 2000-01. Girls Soccer set a District tournament record with 11,535 fans.

“It’s encouraging to see overall attendance remain strong, and spectatorship of girls tournaments continue to rise,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “These figures reflect that the unique features of school sports continue to capture the attention of students and the public.”

The Semifinals and Finals of the Ice Hockey Tournament each set records, and the three-day total of 12,702 fans outpaced the 1992-93 mark of 11,130. Track and Field Regionals hit a new high with 19,320 fans.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,200 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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