



media information



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2003

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Winter Sports Season Underway – Bowling Tournament Debuts

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Dec. 18 – The winter sports season is now underway for over 90,000 in 11 sports at member schools of the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

This winter sports season features the debut of the Association's newest post-season tournament – bowling for girls and boys – which will involve nearly 200 schools and 3,000 student-athletes. The venue for the Finals of this tournament, to take place March 5-6, will be announced soon.

Rules changes are minimal across the board for winter sports. In basketball, the big news in Michigan is the return of the point differential rule after a one-year absence. In the Spring, the National Federation of State High School Associations added to the rules the option for state associations to utilize a point differential rule. In Michigan, the rule where the running clock begins once a 40-point differential has been reached anytime after the beginning of the second half will be used at all levels of play. The clock will continue to run until the differential falls below 30 points, with the exceptions of called time outs, injuries, the end of the period, and free throws being shot in the final two minutes of the fourth quarter. Another visible rule change will be one where the number of players allowed along the free throw lane during free throws will be limited to four defensive players and two offensive players, with the spots closest to the shooter remaining vacant.

The most visible change in gymnastics allows a vaulting table to be used for regular-season and post-season tournament competition in Michigan. The MHSAA Representative council voted at its Fall meeting on Dec. 6 to allow the use of the table in conjunction with the traditional vaulting apparatus.

In ice hockey, a revision designed to speed up the game requires the visiting team to have its lineup ready for play following a stoppage, after which the home team may put its lineup on the ice. Neither team may substitute until play has been resumed.

There is one major change in girls competitive cheer which affects the calendar for that sport. This year, the Finals of the post-season tournament move to a major venue – the DeltaPlex in Grand Rapids, in

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order to accommodate the growing crowds for this event. Last year, a record 4,523 spectators attended the Girls Competitive Cheer Finals, attendance which exceeded the Finals in all other girls sports in 2002-03 except basketball and softball. To accommodate the move, the Finals will take place one week later on March 13, with the Regional round of the tournament also moving by a week, taking place on March 6. Plans are also in the works to have the Girls Competitive Cheer Finals televised on Fox Sports Net, joining Finals broadcasts in Girls Volleyball and Boys Basketball in late March and early April.

The 2003-04 winter campaign culminates with championships beginning with the Upper Peninsula Swimming and Diving Finals and Individual Wrestling Finals in mid-February, and wraps up with the Boys Basketball Finals on March 27.

Here is a complete list of winter championship dates:

Boys Basketball:

Districts – March 8-13
Regionals – March 16-20
Quarterfinals – March 23
Semifinals – March 25-26
Finals – March 27

Bowling:

Regionals – Feb. 27-28
Finals – March 5-6

Girls Competitive Cheer:

Regionals – March 6
Finals – March 13

Girls Gymnastics:

Regionals – March 6
Finals – March 12-13

Ice Hockey:

Regionals – March 1-6
Quarterfinals – March 9-10
Semifinals – March 11-12
Finals – March 13

Skiing:

Regionals – Feb. 12 or 13
Finals – Feb. 23

U.P. Swimming:

Finals – Feb. 21

L.P. Boys Swimming & Diving

Diving Quals – March 9
Finals – March 12-13

Girls Volleyball:

Districts – March 5 or 6
Regionals – March 12 or 13
Quarterfinals – March 16
Semifinals – March 18-19
Finals – March 20

Individual Wrestling:

U.P. Finals – Feb. 20-21
L.P. Districts – Feb. 21
L.P. Regionals – Feb. 28
L.P. Finals – March 11-13

Team Wrestling:

Districts – Feb. 18 or 19
Regionals – Feb. 25
Finals – March 5-6

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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