



media information



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MHSAA Joins With MAB Foundation, Michigan Radio Network, TBC Sports To Syndicate Girls & Boys Basketball Finals Broadcasts; Provide Educational Opportunities For Student Sportscasters

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Nov. 15 – The Michigan High School Athletic Association has joined with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Foundation to launch a co-branded radio network for its Girls and Boys Basketball Finals and other sports in 2004-05, an effort which will also bring educational programming and recognition to aspiring high school sports broadcasters.

Included in the partnership is involvement by the Michigan Radio Network, which helped the MHSAA launch its initial Championship Radio Network during the 1987-88 school year; TBC Sports, the Lansing-area based syndicator of college sports programming to stations around Michigan and around the nation, which will handle the production of the basketball games; and WDW in Dowagiac, which will handle the production of the Football Finals and Girls Volleyball Finals for distribution on the Internet.

In teaming with the MAB Foundation, student broadcasters will become involved in MHSAA events and promotions, and the MHSAA will underwrite a portion of the MAB's program recognizing those students for their achievements in sportscasting.

Students, as part of the MAB Foundation's annual competition, will develop Public Service Announcements based on some of the key elements of educational athletics – sportsmanship, citizenship and the value of participation. The award-winning announcements will then be distributed to MAB member radio stations across the state, and used in broadcasts on the MHSAA Championship Network. Award-winning students will also be recognized during a Semifinal session at the MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals, where they will also participate in on-air and Internet audio broadcasts of the games, and be involved in a workshop on careers in sportscasting conducted by radio and television professionals – including talent and producers from the MHSAA's television partner, FSN Detroit.

“There are all kinds of opportunities for students to be a part of the educational athletics experience, inside and outside the lines,” said John Johnson, MHSAA communications director. “Our partnership with

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the MAB Foundation will highlight the opportunities in sports broadcasting, help prepare today's students for tomorrow's jobs, and give them a chance to be involved with our championships.”

The Michigan Radio Network and the MHSAA first teamed up in the Fall of 1987 to create a network for the Association's Football Finals. Over the years, MRN has been instrumental in the production and satellite distribution of MHSAA championships in three sports to its statewide network of affiliates, and later handled just the distribution role which it now returns to in 2004-05.

“We're looking forward to being involved again with the Michigan Radio Network and the stations it serves, many of whom cover high school sports on a regular basis,” Johnson said.

TBC Sports handles the origination of Michigan State University athletics in five sports, and syndicates weekly programming on college football and basketball. “TBC brings to the table production experience which will benefit us, and while their primary focus is on college sports, they have a deep appreciation for high school sports,” Johnson said.

The Girls and Boys Basketball Finals will air on a statewide network, with a record 25 stations carrying the girls championship games on Dec. 4; and 30 stations carrying the boys finals on March 19. Network affiliates for the girls and boys events are (as of Nov. 8): WABJ-Adrian; WBCK/WRCC-Battle Creek; WKAD-Cadillac; WBCY-Cheboygan; WDOW-Dowagiac; WVFN-East Lansing; WCHT-Escanaba; WDBC-Escanaba; WBBL-Grand Rapids; WMPL-Hancock; WCSR-Hillsdale; WMIQ/WZNL-FM-Iron Mountain; WIKB-Iron River; WJMS-Ironwood; WIBM-Jackson; WKLA-Ludington; WMTE-Manistee; WTIQ-Manistique; WHCH-Marquette; WMPX-Midland; WMMI-Mt. Pleasant; WNBYS-Newberry; WMBN/WMKT-Petoskey; WKNW-Sault Ste. Marie; WIDG-St. Ignace; WMSH-Sturgis. In addition, these stations will air the Boys Basketball Finals: WQBX-FM-Alma; WTVB-Coldwater; WHTC-Holland; WKJC-Tawas City; WPNW-Zeeland. WVFN in East Lansing will serve as the flagship station of the network, and will carry most Semifinal and Final games in both sports.

All of the basketball Semifinals and Final games, as well as the Football Finals and Girls Volleyball Finals, will also be available on the Internet through the Michigan Live Web site. WDOW in Dowagiac will produce the football and volleyball events for the Internet, and for any radio stations interested in picking up those broadcasts. WDOW president Joe Jason will coordinate the production and serve as the primary play-by-play voice of both events.

“Joe Jason and WDOW are typical of the broadcast community – they have a great love of high school sports and they go the extra mile to help bring recognition to our kids and our schools,” Johnson said.

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“Joe’s experience as a Finals announcer for us in several sports is a plus, and we’re appreciative of the work he is doing from a technical standpoint to get the games onto the Internet.”

Farm Bureau Insurance, an MHSAA corporate partner since 1989 and underwriter of the Association’s Scholar-Athlete Award, will be the presenting sponsor of the network. The Michigan Army National Guard is also a network sponsor. The MHSAA and the MAB are jointly working on securing additional network sponsorships.

The MAB Foundation is a non-profit educational and research-oriented charitable organization. It was formed and initially funded by the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. The Foundation is involved with preservation of the industry through education, research and promoting excellence. A major part of the foundation is to promote the continuation of excellence through a diverse broadcasting work force. This is done by offering scholarships, internships and continuing education opportunities. The MAB Foundation is dedicated to promote, support and enhance the broadcast industry for the good of all Michigan citizens, through education, research, public service, historical preservation, information dissemination and a commitment to diversity in all aspects of the broadcast industry.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,500 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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MEDIA ADVISORY – Here are the key contacts for some of the organizations involved in this partnership:

- **MAB Foundation** – Karole White, president, Michigan Association of Broadcasters – 517.484.7444
- **Michigan Radio Network** – Dennis Mellott, president – 517.484.4888
- **TBC Sports** – Will Tieman, president – 517.699.2200
- **WDOW Radio** – Joe Jason, president – 269.782.5106
- **Farm Bureau Insurance** – Jack Stucko, director of corporate communications – 517.323.7000

Farm Bureau Insurance and MEEMIC Insurance are year-round MHSAA Corporate Partners