



# media information



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## MHSAA Football Finals Heading To Ford Field

**DETROIT, Mich. – Jan. 27** – The Michigan High School Athletic Association has entered into a multi-year agreement with Ford Field to host its Football Finals beginning with the upcoming 2005 playoffs. The announcement took place today in a press conference at the state-of-the-art facility in downtown Detroit involving personnel from the City of Detroit, Ford Field and the Detroit Lions.

The move to the 65,000-seat facility is only third in the 30-year history of the tournament. In the tournament's first year – 1975 – the finals were split, with two classes of competition taking place at Waldo Stadium in Kalamazoo, and two at Perry Shorts Stadium in Mt. Pleasant. The event moved indoors in 1976 to the Pontiac Silverdome, the second year that facility was in business, which has hosted over 1.75 million fans for 176 title games in the last 29 years.

“With the future of the Pontiac Silverdome in doubt, this is a necessary move for high school football in our state, and it will be great to have our premier games played in one of the premier facilities in the country,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “Ford Field has much to offer our game's participants and spectators. They will enjoy the opportunity to begin playing the Finals at Ford Field this November, just two months before the venue will host the 2006 Super Bowl.”

With the move to Ford Field will come other changes in the event, the most notable of which will be a single \$9.00 admission to watch four title games in a single day. “We always felt, our \$9.00 ticket for two games, which previously included on-site parking at the Finals, was a great bargain,” said Roberts. “That same ticket will now allow a fan to watch all four games on a single day, and we feel that Ford Field has worked hard to provide parking that is in close proximity to the facility at a reasonable price.”

Parking, at lots operated by Olympia Entertainment, will provide approximately 2,700 spaces adjacent to Ford Field or Comerica Park at a cost of \$6.00 for passenger cars. “We want our fans to drive to the Olympia parking lots, which will offer an outstanding value and which are some of the closest – if not the closest – lots to Ford Field.”

In addition, there are private lots just south of Ford Field with an additional 700 spaces available. Roberts added that private lots generally follow the lead of the Olympia lots in terms of pricing.

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## 2-2-2 – Football Finals Heading To Ford Field

“As the games approach, we will encourage fans to visit the MHSAA Web site often to become familiar with the parking areas around Ford Field and to learn about the facilities’ many amenities. For those fans planning to watch multiple games, the stadium has a variety of in-house dining options available, making an all-day stay attractive.”

Because of Ford Field’s location, accessible by freeway from all directions, housing options will be available downtown and on the perimeter of the city, all within a 30-minute drive. “Visitors to this event will be able to find the kind of lodging they want, with the amenities they want, at competitive prices, all within a reasonable distance, regardless of the direction they will coming from.”

The Association will also engage in promotional efforts for the event and seek corporate support for it with the assistance of the Ford Field/Detroit Lions marketing staff. “High school sports by their nature must keep a low commercial profile, but it has become necessary to engage the support of corporate partners to help underwrite the costs of these events,” Roberts said. “We plan to work closely with the marketing staff at Ford Field to attract such support, including a major sponsor. This kind of effort will keep our expenses low and assist us in conducting programming in all sports.”

Roberts also complimented the Pontiac Silverdome for its many years of service. “Our run of 29 consecutive years at the Pontiac Silverdome was the second longest at any site ever for an MHSAA Final event, and we are appreciative of how well the building and its staff served our schools and their fans,” Roberts said. “We leave the Silverdome with some great memories of great games, and salute the people behind the scenes there and the City of Pontiac for being an excellent host to the event.” The only facility to continuously host an MHSAA Final event longer than the Silverdome is Stowe Stadium in Kalamazoo, with 58 years of service as a Boys Tennis Finals venue beginning in 1947.

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 – Fact sheets about the MHSAA and Ford Field, a parking map and a timeline of the MHSAA Football Finals, are included with this release. To learn more information about Ford Field, links will be provided on the Football page of the MHSAA Web site or you can directly access that information at [www.fordfield.com](http://www.fordfield.com).**

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