



# media information



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Representative Council Addresses Arms Race Issues In School Sports**

**LEWISTON, Mich. – May 9 –** To address the escalating pressures on coaches and student-athletes in educational athletics, the Representative Council of the Michigan High School Athletic Association passed several measures at its annual Spring meeting which concluded here today.

The package of measures passed included:

- Reaffirmation of the Association's position against national competition in high school sports;
- Establishing a seven-day summer "dead period;"
- Establishing a pre-season "down time;" and
- Strengthening existing regulations covering sports-curriculum courses.

The Council not only affirmed the MHSAA's policies in opposition to national scope competition in athletics for secondary schools and students, it criticized recent decisions of the National Federation of State High School Associations to endorse or sponsor such competition and the decision-making process that has excluded the input of educators who serve as state high school associations' board of directors.

In establishing a summer "dead period," the MHSAA joins a number of other state associations in having such a rule. Beginning in the summer of 2007, schools would have the flexibility to designate their own seven-day period, although the Association is recommending that the period include July 4. During that period, schools will not be able to conduct open gyms or conditioning programs, and coaches will not be able to have any kind of instructional contact with student-athletes. The dead period does not apply to the regularly-scheduled practices and competition of non-school summer baseball and softball programs, and student-athletes would continue to be free to pursue athletic activities off campus and without their coach being present.

The "down time" for all sports, effective beginning with the 2007-08 school year, will be a period immediately preceding the first day of allowable practice for a sport. During that period, schools may not conduct open gyms which involve that sport, and no competition may take place between groups that resemble school teams at any location with any of those schools' personnel present. The down time would begin August 1 for Fall sports, March 1 for Spring sports, and 14 days prior to the first allowable practice for Winter sports. During the fall dead period, football and boys soccer coaches could only work with three players on sport-specific skills, instead of seven; and the three-player rule in all other sports would still be in force. The down period and dead periods may not overlap.

(more)

## **2-2-2 – Spring Representative Council Meeting**

The MHSAA Handbook has not prohibited sports from being a part of schools' curriculum offerings, but the Council's action will now prohibit the offering of any single-sport class if the MHSAA offers a post-season tournament in that sport. Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, if a class offers instruction specific to an MHSAA tournament sport, the class must offer instruction on at least of three topics in equal proportion taught to all students enrolled, and the class must be open to all students.

The Representative Council is the 19-member legislative body of the MHSAA. All but five members are elected by member schools. Four members are appointed by the Council to facilitate representation of females and minorities; and the 19th position is occupied by the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee. The Spring meeting is usually the busiest of its three sessions each year. The Council also considered a number of committee proposals and discussed a variety of eligibility and operational issues.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,800 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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**NOTE – A complete release reviewing the Spring Representative Council meeting will be available on about May 24.**

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