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Convocation Center At Eastern Michigan University To Serve As New Venue For MHSAA Girls Basketball Semifinals & Finals Beginning in 2007

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Aug. 1 – The Convocation Center on the campus of Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti will become the home to the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Girls Basketball Semifinals and Finals for a minimum of two years beginning with the 2007 tournament.

The Convocation Center opened in 1998, and has seating available for 8,824 spectators. The building is the home to Eastern Michigan University basketball teams, and located adjacent to Rynearson Stadium, the school's football and track and field facility. There are approximately 1,000 parking spaces adjacent to the building, and many more just across the street. The building has previously served as a Quarterfinal venue for the MHSAA Girls Volleyball Tournament.

The Girls Basketball Semifinals and Finals will finish a three-year run this Fall at the Breslin Student Events Center on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing. Following the 2006 event, the Breslin Center's schedule conflicts with the tournament schedule, necessitating the need for a new venue. In relocating to the Convocation Center, MHSAA Executive Director John E. "Jack" Roberts says the Association has found a wonderful home.

"People will find the Convocation Center to be perfect fit for our Finals," Roberts said. "It's the right size. It's classy. It's primarily a basketball arena with an intimate atmosphere and great sightlines. The building has all of the features to accommodate the needs of the tournament behind the scenes, and fans will enjoy easy access to the facility."

"We are very excited to have this event at our venue," said EMU President John A. Fallon. "Being a basketball fan, I look forward to seeing the best teams in the state play ball here."

The Convocation Center will become the ninth site to host all four games of the Girls Basketball Finals. In 1973, the first year of the MHSAA tournament, four separate high school sites were used in Grand Blanc, East Kentwood, Owosso and Alma. From 1974 to 1976, the site was East Kentwood High School.

(more)

2-2-2 – Girls Basketball Finals To EMU Convocation Center

The finals were then played from 1977 to 1980 at Jenison Field House on the MSU campus; in 1981 and 1982 at Calihan Hall on the campus of the University of Detroit-Mercy; from 1983 to 1985 at Read Field House at Western Michigan University; from 1986 to 1989 at the Grand Valley State University Field House in Allendale; Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek hosted the event from 1990 to 1996; and Rose Arena on the campus of Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant was the venue from 1997 to 2003.

Eastern Michigan University has hosted various MHSAA Final Tournaments over the years. As Michigan Normal College, the campus played host to some of the very first MHSAA Finals in cross country, gymnastics and tennis. In addition, EMU has hosted Finals in baseball and track and field, and is now an annual venue for golf, as well as swimming and diving.

The MHSAA Basketball Tournament is the Association's top spectator event for girls. In its experiences at Mt. Pleasant and East Lansing, records have been set for overall, final day and semifinal attendance. In 2004, the Breslin Center set the marks for overall (24,211), semifinal (13,751) attendance, and single session records for doubleheaders during the Finals (6,042 for the Class D-A session) and Semifinals (3,972 for the Class A semis). The single day Finals attendance record belongs to Rose Arena, which admitted 10,958 fans for the four Final games in 1999.

The Girls Basketball Finals currently ranks as one of the top single-weekend amateur sporting events in the Greater Lansing area, with a projected economic impact of over \$500,000 on the local economy.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,700 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 – Additional information about the Convocation Center can be obtained by contacting Pamala Young, Director of Communications at Eastern Michigan University at 734.487.4400. The Convocation Center's Web site address is: <http://www.emich.edu/convocation>

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