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District Court Denies Sports Seasons Intervention

EAST LANSING, Mich. – July 17 – The United States Federal District Court for the Western District of Michigan in Kalamazoo on Friday (July 13) denied all motions before it in the sports seasons litigation involving the Michigan High School Athletic Association and its member schools, clearing the way for the changes it approved in 2002 to be implemented. No appeal is anticipated.

The Court had received three Motions to Intervene – on behalf of some segments of Lower Peninsula girls tennis, Upper Peninsula girls soccer and Upper Peninsula boys soccer – and a motion for a partial stay filed by those Lower Peninsula girls tennis interests. Their petitions reflected a portion of the disagreements that remain over the Court's Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law; the options the Court provided defendants for achieving equity in Michigan's high school sports seasons; and the choices schools made to achieve the Court's definition of equity.

The seasons changes to take effect in 2007-08 are: tennis for girls and golf for boys in the Lower Peninsula moving to the spring; girls golf and boys tennis in the Lower Peninsula moving to the fall; girls volleyball moving to the fall; girls basketball moving to the winter; and the MHSAA offering Upper Peninsula soccer tournaments for girls in the fall and boys in the spring.

Fall practices begin on Aug. 9 for Lower Peninsula girls golf; and Aug. 13 for girls volleyball, Lower Peninsula boys tennis and Upper Peninsula soccer.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,600 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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