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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 23, 2007

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Postseason Tournament Attendance Down In 2006-07; Lacrosse, Girls Soccer & Competitive Cheer Set Records

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Aug. 23 – Attendance at Michigan High School Athletic Association postseason tournaments dropped during the 2006-07 school year, but several sports were bright spots, setting new records for spectatorship.

Total attendance for 2006-07 was 1,429,2071 with 1,065,465 fans at boys tournaments; and 363,742 spectators at girls tournaments. Attendance is kept for all sports except golf, skiing and tennis, where admission is typically not charged.

Even with an overall drop, attendance records were set in three girls and one boys sport. Girls lacrosse set new records for Regional play and for the Finals of that tournament, en route to a new overall mark of 3,085 fans. Boys Lacrosse claimed a new record for the Semifinal round of its tournament, and also set an overall standard of 8,042 spectators.

Girls Competitive Cheer continues its impressive growth as a participant and spectator sport, setting records at all tournament levels and an overall attendance mark of 15,829. The Finals attendance for Cheer of 6,821 was the second highest of any girls only event behind Basketball. Girls Soccer set new records for its Semifinals and Finals, finishing with a new overall benchmark figure of 29,212 for all levels.

The overall attendance figures were their lowest since the 1997-98 school year, when 347,638 fan attended girls tournaments, and 1,028,925 spectators were at boys tournaments. MHSAA Executive Director John E. “Jack” Roberts attributed some of the attendance drop to poor weather conditions in the fall, and the possibility that Michigan’s economy and the oversaturation of sports on television may have hurt spectatorship. He added that with almost 90 percent of the MHSAA’s revenue generated by tournament attendance, the Association has been focusing for several months on tournament administration and taking a broad look at societal effects on school sports in general and MHSAA tournaments in particular, and those examinations will continue in the year ahead.

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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