



michigan high school athletic association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2008

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Three Sports Set Tournament Attendance Records During Winter; Basketball Attendance Dips

EAST LANSING, Mich. – May 5 – Attendance at Michigan High School Athletic Association postseason tournaments in bowling and girls competitive cheer continued to set records during the recently completed winter sports season, and were joined by chart-topping numbers in boys swimming and diving.

The winter of 2007-08 saw some kind of increases in all post-season tournaments over the previous year, except basketball, which reached all-time lows for spectatorship.

Bowling attendance has hit record highs each season since its first MHSAA tournament in 2003-04, but took its biggest leap this year with a 23.5 percent increase over a year ago, with 9,956 admissions. Competitive Cheer's numbers were up in each of the past four years, and this year's total of 18,635 fans was up 17.7 percent over last year's record. Cheer had an all-time high attendance of 6,939 for its Finals at the DeltaPlex in Grand Rapids, a figure for its four divisions of championship competition that ranks higher for the first time this year than any other girls only event – 1,030 higher than basketball this year, and 3,909 higher than volleyball.

Boys swimming and diving, with three divisions of competition in the Lower Peninsula for the first time this year, set a new record for Finals attendance with 5,592, and for its overall tournament at 6,239, a 34.4 percent increase over a year ago. Gymnastics fans came out in larger number this year than a year ago, with a 10.3 percent increase. Ice hockey and bowling tournament attendance were each up about one percent over 2006-07.

Basketball tournament attendance has been in a downward spiral for girls and boys over the past five years, and the totals of 150,562 for girls and 345,075 for boys were the lowest figures since 1990-91. Compared to a year ago, the tournament series was down 7.2 percent for girls, and 12.8 percent for boys. The level of the girls tournament which had the biggest drop from a percentage standpoint were the Semifinals and Finals, which were down 32.4 percent over the 2006-07 tournament – 5,898 fans. Most of the decrease in the boys tournament was in 45,730 fewer fans for District and Regional play; but the Semifinals and Finals were down 13.7 percent – a drop of 8,278.

Overall attendance for the same sports compared to a year ago was down 7.4 percent – with 737,500 fans in 2006-07 compared to 683,131 this year. For the 2007-08 school year to date, tournament attendance is up from 1,227,214 in 2006-07 to 1,293,367 this season – an increase of 5.4 percent. Attendance at boys events is up 7.1 percent over last year, while girls attendance is down 0.6 percent. Compared to the 2005-06 school year, attendance this season is down 12.4 percent after winter tournaments.

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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