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Bowling Added To MHSAA Post-Season Tournament Schedule In 2003-04 By Representative Council

MT. PLEASANT, Mich. – Dec. 6– Bowling makes its debut as a Michigan High School Athletic Association post-season tournament event in 2003-04, being added to the schedule in a vote taken today by the legislative body of the organization, the Representative Council.

By being added to the winter sports season schedule with separate girls and boys tournaments, the MHSAA will have a total of 26 championships – 13 for girls and 13 for boys, beginning next year.

Sponsorship of bowling as an interscholastic sport by MHSAA member schools has exceeded the 64 school minimum for consideration of MHSAA post-season tournaments. The Michigan High School Bowling Conference estimates that approximately 250 teams existed statewide last year as either interscholastic or community teams.

Details about the administration of the sport will be announced at a future date. It is anticipated that there would be at least a Regional level of competition prior to the post-season tournament Finals, and that the calendar would coincide with existing winter sports which end in an MHSAA sponsored post-season tournament.

“The addition of bowling for girls and boys responds to the growth of bowling in all types of schools in all parts of our state, and it has the most immediate potential for growth in female participation,” said MHSAA Executive Director John E. “Jack” Roberts. “We’re pleased to offer this tournament at a time of year when there is less participation in high school sports than in the fall and spring. It’s a sport that doesn’t require officials recruitment and training and doesn’t add a scheduling burden to already over-used school facilities.”

In making the decision to add bowling, the MHSAA utilized student interest surveys conducted in 1997-98 and 2001-02, its annual sports participation survey of member schools, and a follow-up survey in the summer of 2002 about sports in which the MHSAA does not currently offer post-season tournaments. The MHSAA Executive Committee appointed study groups in August to evaluate bowling, lacrosse, girls field hockey and girls ice hockey. MHSAA staff also met with the statewide leadership of the water polo and equestrian communities.

The Council will act at future meetings to add additional championships. It authorized a survey of member schools to determine participation commitments in potential MHSAA post-season tournaments in girls field hockey, girls ice hockey, lacrosse and water polo, to be completed for review at the Council’s next meeting on March 21, 2003.

The last addition to the MHSAA tournament schedule occurred in the 1993-94 school year, when the first Girls Competitive Cheer tournament took place that winter, attracting more participating schools and spectators than girls skiing and girls gymnastics combined. Prior to that, boys and girls soccer tournaments were initiated in the 1982-83 school year.

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The history of the MHSAA providing post-season tournaments for girls predates the boom in girls participation. Regional skiing meets for girls and boys were initiated in the 1953-54 school year, with a statewide tournament being added in 1974-75. The first statewide MHSAA tournament for girls was in gymnastics in 1971-72. During the 1972-73 school year, girls tournaments began in golf, swimming and diving, tennis, and track and field. Girls basketball followed in 1973-74; softball in 1974-75; volleyball in 1975-76 and cross country in 1978-79. By the time Title IX took effect in 1976, the MHSAA was already conducting nine statewide tournaments for girls. Since 1971-72, when it first offered girls statewide tournaments, the Association has now added 13 tournaments for girls, while boys have had a net gain of 4.

The Fall meeting of the 19-member legislative body of the Association's 1,300-plus member schools is one of its three regularly-scheduled sessions each year. The agenda also included reports from a variety of ad hoc committees convened by the Association to study a variety of other issues impacting high school athletics.

In other actions, the Council approved a policy for the rescheduling of tournament games when postponed and an accompanying ticket refund policy; defined qualifications for candidacy for the Representative Council; voted to maintain the same uniform requirements for softball umpires as in previous years – with dark blue shirts and gray slacks; and modified a requirement for face guards on helmets in skiing, requiring guards only for the slalom event.

The Council also passed a motion opposing the National Federation of State High School Association's movement toward national high school tournaments and its endorsement of the Universal Cheerleaders Association national championships.

Three appointed positions to the Council were also filled at the meeting. Kathy McGee of Flint and Margra Grillo of Gladwin were reappointed to their second and final two-year term on the board, and Fred Procter of Birmingham was appointed to his first term. McGee is the athletic director and girls basketball coach at Flint Powers Catholic High School, Grillo is a board of education member for Gladwin Public Schools; and Procter is the principal at Birmingham Groves High School. Reelected as Council officers were Paul Ellinger, superintendent of Cheboygan Public Schools, as president; Keith Eldred, athletic director at Williamston Middle School, as vice-president; and Tom Rashid, director of health and physical education for the Archdiocese of Detroit, as secretary-treasurer.

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. Three of the four appointed positions to the board were filled at this meeting.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,300 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.