

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETING

East Lansing, January 13, 2016

Members Present:

Cole Andrews, Oxford
Kathy Bondsteel, Jonesville
David Chrisinske, Middleville
TG Cook, Pittsford
Robin Dilday, Utica
Tim Donnan, Southfield
Mike Garvey, Kalamazoo
Kevin Langs, Climax
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Pete Ryan, Saginaw

Meg Seng, Ann Arbor
Al Unger, Kingsford

Members Absent:

Daniel Hutcheson, Howell
Ryan Knudsen, Leland

Staff Members Present:

Cody Inglis
Tom Rashid
Jack Roberts (Recorder)

INTRODUCTION

Participants introduced themselves and all shared something good about 2015 or that they are looking forward to in 2016.

Origins of the Classification Committee trace back to the 1980s when a forum was created to discuss relationships between public and nonpublic schools, which resulted in some policy changes, especially related to the transfer rule. When the ad hoc committee was made a standing committee, two additional purposes were established: (1) to perform intermediate review (between sport committees and the Representative Council) of proposals related to MHSAA tournament classification for a sport; and (2) to review proposals related to the policies and procedures of counting students and collecting enrollment figures for school classification purposes as well as proposals affecting tournament classification generally.

Because the makeup of this committee usually reflects broader diversity than MHSAA sport committees in that its makeup has fewer coaches and often includes school board members, superintendents and principals as well as athletic directors, and there is usually strong representation of diverse school size, location and demographics, the Classification Committee is also asked to respond to subjects that are not directly related to classification. The Classification Committee has become the principal forum for reviewing policies and procedures related to cooperative programs.

2015 MEETING MINUTES

Topics of the 2015 meeting of the Classification Committee included the format of MHSAA Football, Basketball, Girls Volleyball and Upper Peninsula Golf tournaments and the general topic of seeding tournaments, for which the committee made no recommendations for change. The Classification Committee made a recommendation to allow for cooperative programs above the 3,500-student maximum enrollment for up to three years in cases of declining participation; and the Representative Council did approve that proposal in May.

CLASSIFICATION OVERVIEW

“MHSAA Classification by Sport for 2015-16” as of 3/14/15 was reviewed, providing the number of schools and the enrollment range of each statewide and Upper Peninsula tournament conducted by the MHSAA.

The sports with the greatest decline in sponsorship for 2014-15 (as reported to the MHSAA as of 3/14/15) are girls softball (-8) and girls skiing (-5).

The sports with the greatest increase in sponsorship are girls soccer (+11), girls competitive cheer (+8) and wrestling (+7).

Mr. Roberts provided a report of classification trends in other states. He reported that the nine states are currently adjusting future tournament classifications for schools based on their past tournament successes; while efforts to separate nonpublic schools from public schools have mostly failed, or have been stalled by legislatures or, in New Jersey recently, vetoed by the commissioner of education. It is increasingly the case that initiatives that would affect **only** nonpublic schools are not successful.

In many states, including Michigan, concerns focus less on the legal status of schools and more on the assembly of transfer students at certain schools, both public and nonpublic. The concern is for both incoming F-1 visa students for athletic purposes and for athletic-related transfers (especially in states with open enrollment/school of choice).

The committee reviewed an article from the Fall 2015 issue of *Commonwealth Magazine* about the relationship between school participation rates and community income in Massachusetts, which reopened a topic the committee has discussed previously: whether enrollments of schools should be lowered for MHSAA tournament competition based on factors that affect participation rates. Previous committees have disliked labeling schools “disadvantaged” for athletic purposes, and no recommendations for change have been formulated in this vein.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

The committee discussed the problems faced by some schools in urban areas to maintain participation on teams in some sports, and the effects on other schools when those schools sponsor incomplete teams or discontinue the sport during the season. The committee also discussed the concept of cooperative programs at the subvarsity level only.

LP CROSS COUNTRY

Cody Inglis provided a report on the progress of an MHSAA appointed task force to address incomplete teams and unbalanced Lower Peninsula Regional Cross Country Meets. Several questions and suggestions of committee members and staff were intended to assist the work of the task force whose third meeting is Jan. 14, 2016.

ICE HOCKEY

Mr. Inglis provided a report on plans to address (a) the number of schools in Regionals, and (b) seeding in the MHSAA Ice Hockey Tournament through a task force that has not yet met. The committee was open to a longer schedule for the Preregional and Regional games, and several members expressed the preference to have Preregionals begin earlier as opposed to having the MHSAA Ice Hockey Finals occur a week later.

UP GOLF

For a second year, Mr. Inglis provided an update on proposals to address issues of the Upper Peninsula Boys and Girls Golf Finals, and Al Unger contributed to the discussion, which will be continued by the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee on Jan. 14, 2016.

FOOTBALL

Mr. Roberts reported that the MHSAA Football Committee will be presented from the Central Michigan Athletic Conference a proposal, presented here for preview, that would reduce regular season football to eight weeks, lengthen the MHSAA Football Playoffs to six weeks, double the number of qualifying teams, establish eight divisions prior to the start of the regular season, and award playoff points (half) for losses as well as wins. While several committee members liked one or more aspects of the proposal, there was not unanimity on any aspect or support for the proposal as a package.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Add to Regulation I, Section 1(F):

4. The Executive Committee may approve a cooperative program agreement in excess of the 1,000-student enrollment maximum in baseball, softball, soccer, golf and tennis for two or more schools of the same public school district (same governing board). There must be a demonstrated history of inadequate numbers of participants to support teams.

(Note: This is an experiment for the 2016-17 through 2019-20 school years. The experiment does not apply to public school academies or nonpublic schools. Approval by the Executive Committee is on a case-by-case basis and, as with all cooperative program applications, requires the schools' league or conference approval.) (12-0)