

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

East Lansing, December 4, 2009

Members Present:

Jim Derocher, Negaunee
Scott Grimes, Grand Haven
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Renee Bird, Tawas City
Ken Dietz, Watervliet
Eric Federico, Gibraltar
Dan Flynn, Escanaba
Rudy Godefroidt, Hemlock
Kyle Guerrant, Lansing
Chip Hansen, East Jordan
Kris Isom, Adrian
Karen Leinaar, Benzonia
Steve Newkirk, Clare
Pete Ryan, Saginaw
Fred Smith, Buchanan
Arnetta Thompson, Grand Rapids
Mark Woodson, Romulus
Wendy Zdeb, Rochester Hills

Also Present:

Mike Hawks, Lansing
Jim Thelen, Lansing
Daveda Colbert, Detroit
John Thompson, Brighton

Staff Members Present:

Randy Allen
Tony Bihn
Jordan Cobb
Andy Frushour
Nate Hampton
John Johnson
Gina Mazzolini
Tom Minter
Tom Rashid
Jack Roberts (Recorder)
Mark Uyl
Kathy Westdorp

Member Absent:

Lafayette Evans, Detroit

Welcomed to their first meeting were newly elected Council members Daveda Colbert of Detroit and John Thompson of Brighton who will audit the meeting until it reconvenes later in the day for the election of officers for 2010.

Accounts of Meetings – Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Pete Ryan, to approve the following accounts of meetings: Representative Council meeting of May 3-4, 2009; Executive Committee meetings of May 3, June 10, Aug. 11, Sept. 9, Oct. 5 and Nov 4, 2009; Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee meeting of Sept. 16, 2009; and Board of Canvassers meetings of Sept. 14, Oct. 1 and Nov. 16, 2009. Adopted.

Administration – The executive director provided a sport-by-sport review of fall tournaments, focusing on finances and electronic media.

Andy Frushour reviewed initiatives within student services, including the Scholar-Athlete program and the Student Advisory Council's Team Captains Guidebook.

REPORTS

Legislation – Mike Hawks of Governmental Consultant Services, Inc. discussed general and educational issues before the Michigan Legislature.

Litigation – Attorney Jim Thelen updated the Council on the status and issues of two cases, one with the MHSAA as the appellant to the Michigan Supreme Court and the other with the MHSAA as the appellee in the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Because of general dissatisfaction with the court-ordered change of MHSAA tournament seasons and the specific request of the Cascades Conference to once again survey schools regarding the options the US District Court provided from which schools chose in 2002, the Representative Council discussed the limited opportunities and large obstacles that exist to provide schools relief from the problems they are encountering at the local level as a result of the changes. The Council reviewed the controlling law of the case and what might be required to persuade the District Court to amend the Permanent Injunction which has imposed the current MHSAA tournament schedule. While agreeing with most of the concerns being expressed by its constituents and not determining it would never seek judicial review, it was the Council's consensus that the Council should not at this time authorize any steps toward such review, including constituent surveys of relevant topics.

The executive director reviewed the 2009 Update Meeting Opinion Poll, highlighting responses to questions related to discussion and action items on the Representative Council's agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

Academic Checks – At its meeting in March of 2009, the Representative Council directed MHSAA staff to conduct inquiries and discussions regarding the minimum required frequency of academic checks, which is currently ten weeks in semester systems and seven weeks in trimester systems.

The Council reviewed responses to the 2009 Update Meeting Opinion Poll, which did not provide clear direction, as well as written responses from attendees at those meetings. Also provided to the Council were results of informal surveys at fall 2009 Athletic Director In-Service programs which revealed 51.4 percent of 496 attendees represented schools that perform weekly checks, 67.6 percent represented schools that perform academic checks at least every three weeks, and 85.4 percent represented schools that check at least every six weeks.

It was the Council's consensus that this topic should continue to be before MHSAA constituents so they are aware that, in these times of higher academic standards and increased accountability, change in the minimum statewide standard may be appropriate. However, the Council acknowledged that the current education funding crisis is causing many schools to operate with reduced personnel and that it could be problematic to make additional administrative demands on school athletics at this time.

Limited Team Membership Rule – Because of repeated requests for tighter rules for individual sports, especially tennis, at its May 2009 meeting the Representative Council requested staff review the limited team membership rule generally and with special emphasis on tennis.

The 2009 Update Meeting Opinion Poll revealed some interest in a single rule for all sports, but also indicated that approximately 63 percent of respondents favored no change in this rule for any sport.

The Council informally requested that MHSAA staff do an online survey of all tennis schools regarding the proposal the MHSAA Tennis Committee had made to the Council previously, and the Council indicated that a Jan. 1 or later effective date be specified if the limited team membership rule for tennis is modified by the Council in May.

Scheduling Alternatives – The Representative Council requested at its March 2009 meeting that the topics of basketball seasons overlap and the start of spring sports continue to be a part of constituent meetings and the 2009 Update Meeting Opinion Poll, which indicated little support for increasing the offset for girls and boys basketball or reversing the order of girls and boys basketball, but showed significant support for delaying the start of spring sports.

The Council informally requested that MHSAA staff survey all schools online about a one-week delay in the start of spring sports.

Out-of-Season Limitations – The latest look at out-of-season rules was launched by the Representative Council in May of 2005 when the Council directed staff to keep working on out-of-season issues including open gyms, conditioning programs and curriculum classes and adopted “guiding principles” for policy development.

In May of 2006, the Council adopted (1) a seven-day minimum summer “dead period;” (2) a “down time” for every sport just prior to each season; and (3) additional restrictions and requirements for curriculum courses.

In May of 2009, four more policy changes were approved by the Council: (1) the requirement was eliminated that open gyms have diversity of activity; (2) the use of non-competition practice jerseys of schools out of season was allowed; (3) the “three-player” rule was increased to four when the practice or competition does not include individuals not enrolled in that school’s district; and (4) the limited player rule (three or four) now ends on the same date for every school (Monday after Memorial Day).

At that time, the Council also requested MHSAA staff to continue focus on out-of-season rules, especially the time and placement for the “down time,” which occurred at both Athletic Director In-Service and Update Meetings this fall. Responses to three questions on the 2009 Update Meeting Opinion Poll were indecisive.

It was the Council’s consensus that recent changes should be allowed to settle before more changes are given additional consideration.

Officials Ratings – Schools submit more ratings almost every year – up from 153,578 for the 2000-01 school year to a record 177,857 for the 2007-08 school year (there was a drop to 172,565 in 2008-09). Nevertheless, at its meeting in May of 2009, the Representative Council observed that in spite of multiple reminders to each offending school, there were 641 occasions between April 11, 2008 and April 10, 2009 – a record – when a member school failed to rate any officials in a sport it sponsors which requires schools’ rating of officials.

Rating of officials was enthusiastically endorsed by the MHSAA Officials Review Committee in September; and the topic received significant attention at Athletic Director In-Service meetings in October when attendees offered suggestions for improving compliance with the ratings requirement at the local level. That emphasis, as well as publication and circulation of lists of schools failing to comply with the ratings requirements, and email reminders to both athletic directors and coaches brought positive results this fall with only 33 schools in violation (versus 318 for the fall of 2008). No actions by staff were requested by the Council in addition to the continuation of efforts made during the fall, and there was no consensus for additional penalties at this time.

Eight-Player Football – Following expressions of interest in the fall of 2008, the MHSAA conducted three informational meetings in January regarding football for fewer than 11-player teams. On Feb. 5, the MHSAA Football Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Representative Council that (a) a committee be established to formulate regular season and tournament plans for 11-player football teams, and (b) such should be the eight-player version using established National Federation rules published for the eight-player game.

On March 27, 2009, the MHSAA Representative Council approved a month-long process to prepare major components of a plan to accommodate small schools’ interest in the eight-player game to create or preserve the interscholastic football experience for their students and communities. This included two meetings of a planning group in the MHSAA office, between which the work of the planning committee was emailed to athletic directors of all Class C and D schools, whether or not they currently sponsor football. The result of this process was 11 planning points submitted to the Representative Council for approval.

On May 3, 2009, the Council approved the plan for implementation of one or more eight-player football divisions in the MHSAA Playoffs, as early as 2010 if at least 20 Class D schools commit by the previous April to the eight-player game.

At its September meeting, the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee reviewed the growing interest and discussions by Upper Peninsula schools in the eight-player football format. The committee discussed and recommended that, in order to grow eight-player football, participating schools should have the options for maintaining some traditional 11-player games while experiencing the eight-player format; and the committee recommended the following conditions be applied when teams have a blended schedule of 11-player and eight-player games:

- All 11-player games count toward tournament points even against opponents that have opted for the eight-player tournament.
- All eight-player games count toward tournament points even against opponents that have opted for the 11-player tournament.
- An eight-player game not count toward the 11-player tournament.
- An 11-player game not count toward the eight-player tournament.

Motion by Fred Smith, supported by Karen Leinaar, that all eight-player games count toward the eight-player tournament for those teams that opt for the eight-player tournament, and all 11-player games will count toward the 11-player tournament for those teams that opt for the 11-player tournament. Adopted.

RECOGNITION

During a luncheon break, the executive director and President Jim Derocher honored two outgoing members of the Representative Council: appointed member Renee Bird of Tawas City, who served four years, and Eric Federico of Gibraltar, who served 21 years on the Representative Council.

NEW BUSINESS

MHSAA Constitution – The Representative Council had been sent a package of editorial and procedural revisions for the MHSAA Constitution. Two additional modifications were made at the meeting.

The revised package will be resubmitted to the Council in March. If approved by the Council, the proposals will be sent to all member schools. If two-thirds of responding schools approve the changes, they will take effect Aug. 1, 2010.

Amateur and Awards Rules – A restatement and revision of the amateur and awards sections of the eligibility rules had been sent to the Council. Assistant Director Randy Allen explained the staff's process and rationale.

The restatement and substantive changes will be a part of the League/Conference Leadership meeting agenda in February and then resubmitted to the Council as an action item in March or May.

Basketball Video Replay – Newest National Federation basketball playing rules allow by state high school association adoption that game officials may be permitted to use a replay monitor during the state championship series to determine if a try for goal at the expiration of time in the fourth quarter or any overtime period (0:00 on the game clock) should be counted and, if so, to determine if it is a two- or three-point goal. MHSAA staff recommended adoption of this rule for Semifinal and Final games of the MHSAA Girls and Boys Basketball Tournaments so long as both the girls and boys tournament conclude at the Breslin Student Events Center.

Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Vic Michaels, to approve the use of video monitor replays under these circumstances only and according to additional protocols established by the MHSAA. Adopted.

March Magic Hoopfest – Assistant Director Nate Hampton brought forward a proposal from the Basketball Coaches Association (BCAM) for free throw and three point competitions among students selected by BCAM, with the preliminary rounds conducted during the MHSAA/Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau March Magic Hoopfest at MSU's Jenison Field House and the final round of each event at the MHSAA Girls and Boys Basketball Finals at MSU's Breslin Student Events Center.

Motion by Fred Smith, supported by Scott Grimes, to approve conducting the final rounds of the "Top Shooters Challenge" during halftime of selected Finals of the MHSAA Girls and Boys Basketball Tournaments at the Breslin Student Events Center. Adopted.

Football Scheduling – Increasing numbers of schools are having increasing difficulties completing varsity football schedules, citing the unwillingness of schools with similar enrollments within reasonable travel distances to agree to games when they fear losing those games and jeopardizing chances to qualify for the MHSAA Football Playoffs. At the same time, increasing numbers of administrators of these and other schools are expressing increasing concerns for under-funding of both public and private education, and they are searching for ways to reduce travel costs for extracurricular events. The Representative Council engaged in a lengthy discussion of how the MHSAA might address regular season scheduling problems and travel costs.

Motion by Dan Flynn, supported by Arnetta Thompson, to continue the discussion during the winter with groups already scheduled to meet in the MHSAA building, at sessions of the MIAAA Conference in March, and at other occasions that present themselves. Adopted.

School Finance – The Representative Council discussed ideas for conducting MHSAA tournaments and revising MHSAA regulations that would result in greater revenue or lower costs for schools participating in MHSAA tournaments and as schools conduct local interscholastic programs. It was the Council's consensus that the written list of ideas presented be expanded with the additional ideas raised during this discussion, and that the expanded list be distributed to Council members so each can provide a rank order preference of the ideas. This list will then be reordered and staff will prepare more specific proposals for the highest ranked ideas both for preserving or generating revenue and for controlling or reducing expenses.

Meeting Expenses – Expenses for this meeting were approved at the specified hotel rate for accommodations, the IRS-specified meal allowance and a 30¢ per mile mileage allowance round-trip.

Women in Sports Leadership Award – There were six candidates for the Women in Sports Leadership Award, reduced from 13 nominees by the MHSAA Awards Committee. These were presented to the Representative Council for a vote. The name(s) of the recipient(s) will be released at an appropriate time and the recipient(s) will be honored during the 2010 Women in Sports Leadership Conference in February.

Charles E. Forsythe Award – There were six candidates for the Charles E. Forsythe Award, reduced from 12 nominees by the MHSAA Awards Committee. These were presented to the Representative Council for a ballot vote. The name(s) of the recipient(s) will be released at an appropriate time and the recipient(s) will be honored during the 2010 Boys Basketball Final Tournament.

Future Meetings – The next meeting of the Representative Council will be held on Friday, March 26, 2010, 8:15 a.m. at the MHSAA building in East Lansing. The spring meeting of the Representative Council will be held May 2-4, 2010, at Treetops Sylvan Resort in Gaylord. The fall meeting will be held on Friday, Dec. 3, 2010, at the MHSAA building in East Lansing.

The meeting was adjourned.