

**MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING**

East Lansing, December 1, 2017

Members Present:

Dave Derocher, Reese  
Scott Grimes, Grand Haven  
Vicky Groat, Battle Creek  
Don Gustafson, St. Ignace  
Courtney Hawkins, Mt. Morris  
Kris Isom, Adrian  
Sean Jacques, Calumet  
Karen Leinaar, Bear Lake  
Cheri Meier, Okemos  
Vic Michaels, Detroit  
Chris Miller, Gobles  
Steve Newkirk, Clare  
Pete Ryan, Saginaw  
Fred Smith, Benton Harbor  
John Thompson, Brighton  
Al Unger, Kingsford  
Alvin Ward, Detroit  
Pat Watson, West Bloomfield

Member Absent:

Kyle Guerrant, Lansing

Also Present:

Scott Eldridge, Lansing  
Chris Riker, Portage  
Eric Ramseyer  
Bill Zaagman, Lansing

Staff Members Present:

Tony Bihn  
Jordan Cobb  
Andy Frushour  
Nate Hampton  
Dan Hutcheson  
Cody Inglis  
Geoff Kimmerly  
Andi Osters  
Tom Rashid  
Jack Roberts (Recorder)  
Jeremy Sampson  
Mark Uyl  
Kathy Westdorp

**Accounts of Meetings** – Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Cheri Meier, to approve the following accounts of meetings: Representative Council meeting of May 7-8, 2017; Executive Committee meetings of May 7, June 14, Aug. 2, Aug. 23, Sept. 6, Oct. 4 and Nov. 1, 2017; and Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee meeting of Sept. 27, 2017. Adopted.

**REPORTS**

**Legislation** – Bill Zaagman presented the report of Governmental Consultant Services, Inc., discussing general, school and sports issues involving the Michigan Legislature.

**Litigation** – Attorney Scott Eldridge reported to the Council on the status of legal matters involving or of interest to the MHSAA.

**Administration** – Interspersed through the day's discussion and action items were the following reports:

- "Protecting/Promoting the Brand," by Andy Frushour.
- "Broadcasting," by John Johnson.
- "Officiating Trends," by Mark Uyl.
- "Event Security," by Mark Uyl.

## ONGOING BUSINESS

**Baseball** – Mark Uyl provided observations and survey results related to a rule change for the 2017 season imposed by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee during the summer of 2016, subsequent to the meeting of the MHSAA Baseball/Softball Committee, that required state high school associations to adopt limits on the number of pitches an individual can make, rather than the number of outs. The late change created many questions, including how a proposed change in the MHSAA Baseball Tournament schedule for 2017 would affect and be affected by the new pitching limitations rule. Therefore, the Council was asked to delay action on the new tournament schedule until the new pitching rule could be evaluated.

Results of an October survey of athletic directors and baseball coaches indicated that approximately two-thirds of 867 respondents prefer the new pitch count rule to the previous outs-based rule. Mr. Uyl provided additional details of survey results and advocated for no changes in policies and procedures for the 2018 season.

As for the changes that had been proposed for the MHSAA Baseball Tournament format and schedule, Mr. Uyl reported that support for the proposed changes is very strong and will be less affected by changes in the pitching limitations as each year goes by.

Motion by Steve Newkirk, supported by Pat Watson, to adopt for the 2019 tournament the proposal from the MHSAA Baseball Committee (13-0) that was tabled in May 2017: For the baseball tournament only, begin the Regional round of play on Wednesday following the District with single games at 64 sites for all District champions (Regional Semifinal) followed by the Saturday Regional Final (10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.), followed immediately by the “Super Regional” (formerly the Quarterfinal) game at 3 p.m. to determine the four Semifinalists at each of the four sites. This would eliminate the traditional Tuesday Quarterfinal round for baseball and the four “Super Regional” champions would advance directly to the Semifinals with no change in the current number of awards. Softball would keep the current scheduled with Saturday Regional play followed by the Tuesday Quarterfinal played at 16 sites. The net effect would be baseball playing on its own the Wednesday following Districts, baseball and softball being played concurrently at Saturday Regional sites, and softball playing on its own at Tuesday Quarterfinal sites before both sports come together at Michigan State University for all Semifinal and Final games. Adopted.

**8-Player Football** – At its March meeting, the Representative Council determined that the 2017 MHSAA 8-Player Football Tournament would be conducted in two divisions of 16 teams each; and at its May meeting, the Council determined that the two divisions would be determined after the ninth week of the season and the 2017 Finals of both divisions would be played at the Superior Dome in Marquette. The Council deferred action on the following questions to its December meeting:

1. Should the maximum enrollment for the 8-player tournament be the moving target of the Class D maximum (203 in 2017) or a fixed number?
2. Should there be a grace period for schools that are eligible for the 8-player tournament one year but have enrollment that exceeds the 8-player limit the next year?

The Council discussed the results of an October online survey of all schools with an enrollment of 250 or fewer students and input from meetings and other communications, as well as data from other states.

Motion by Don Gustafson, supported by Pete Ryan, that the limit for the 8-player tournament each year will continue to be the maximum for a Class D school that year. Class D schools which have sponsored 8-player football one year (e.g., 2018) but have an enrollment in excess of Class D the next year (2019) may continue in the 8-player tournament for that year (2019). They must be within the Class D enrollment limit the following year (2020) to continue in the 8-player tournament that year (2020). The enrollments of schools are those established through the Enrollment Declaration Form submitted each February. Adopted.

The Council launched a discussion regarding the MHSAA's role in providing assistance to schools for scheduling regular season football games. An overview of approaches used in other states reveals many state association offices are involved to at least a limited extent in arranging for their member schools' regular season football games. Two options were described.

The suggestion was made to focus first on the simpler option and for 8-player schools only. A trial run paper study for the 2018 season will be prepared in March and distributed to Class D 8-player schools in April before Council approval is sought for a plan that is required of all 8-player tournament schools in 2019 and 2020. It is thought that at least two-thirds of all Class D 8-player schools should support this role for the MHSAA before making it a requirement for schools' participation in the MHSAA 8-player tournaments.

**Basketball Schedules and Sites** - At its May meeting, the Representative Council reviewed the factors that threaten the March traditions that the MHSAA has established over many years at Michigan State University, including the three-day girls Semifinals and Finals, the three-day boys Semifinals and Finals, "Hoopfest," the BCAM reception and the girls and boys "top shooter challenges" and sponsor engagement, as well as many conveniences of having these events in the hometown of the MHSAA. Due to NCAA scheduling conflicts, the Breslin Student Events Center is not being made available to the MHSAA for the girls tournament in 2018 and 2020 or the boys tournament in 2019; and when it is available, the facility is being made available at costs that exceed revenue for the girls tournament.

At its May meeting, the Council voted to conduct the 2018 MHSAA Girls Basketball Semifinals and Finals at Van Noord Arena at Calvin College, and the Boys Basketball Semifinals and Finals at the Breslin Center, both on the weeks now published in the *MHSAA Handbook* (March 15-17 for girls; March 22-24 for boys). It was agreed that decisions regarding future venue changes as well as potential schedule changes for 2019 and beyond would be made during the remainder of 2017 based on input from other facilities regarding availabilities and costs and with input from the membership regarding potential changes in regular season and MHSAA tournament schedules that could reduce or eliminate future conflicts with NCAA Division I institutions. Schools were alerted in May that changes will be considered in the ending dates of the girls volleyball season and the starting and/or ending dates of some winter sports, beginning with the 2018-19 school year.

Staff presented the results of an October online survey regarding preferences for regular season and MHSAA tournament schedules in basketball and input from meetings and other communications as well as a summary of responses to a Request for Proposal to host MHSAA boys and girls Semifinal and Final tournaments. Among many scheduling options, six were highlighted. Requests for Proposals generated several options for hosting the girls tournament but only one venue that was large enough to host the boys tournament.

Motion by Pete Ryan, supported by Chris Miller, to switch the calendars for 2018-19 only so that boys basketball adopts the regular season and tournament schedules that have previously been in effect for girls, and girls basketball adopts the regular season and tournament schedules that have been in place for boys. The Semifinal and Final venues will continue to be Van Noord Arena at Calvin College for girls and MSU's Breslin Student Events Center for boys. Decisions regarding sites and schedules for the 2019-20 season and beyond will be determined by the Council at a later meeting. Schools will be alerted promptly of the 2018-19 schedule.

**Girls Volleyball** – The Council examined survey data that indicates nine in ten high school athletic directors favor a girls volleyball season that starts practice two days earlier and both starts and ends the MHSAA Girls Volleyball Tournament seven days earlier. Council members reviewed practical and political arguments. The Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association had submitted a position paper in opposition to a shortened girls volleyball season.

**Transfer Rule** – At its May meeting, the Representative Council asked the staff to conduct a review of the MHSAA transfer rule. Since then, the staff has conducted a series of meetings for staff, as well as for staff with Council members. Discussions have occurred at league meetings in the summer and at Athletic Director In-Service meetings in the fall. The topic was the dominant subject of the Update Meetings across the state. Multiple surveys have been circulated for additional constituent input.

As a result of this, a work group of staff and Council members is proposing revisions in the transfer rule which the Council discussed, the central theme of which is that the rule would become more lenient for a sport a transfer student has not played in high school during the sports season prior to transfer, but would stipulate a longer period of ineligibility the next season for a sport a transfer student has played on a high school team at any level during the sports season prior to the transfer.

This sport-specific transfer rule proposal will be discussed at multiple venues during the winter, including the MHSAA League Leadership meeting in February, the MIAAA Conference in March and at any other venue to which staff is invited. The Council may vote in either March or May.

**Junior High/Middle Schools** – At its May meeting, the Representative Council voted to table the Junior High/Middle School Committee recommendation to revise Regulation III, Section 12(A) so that, during the junior high/middle school sport season in any MHSAA sport except football, a member of the school team in that sport is allowed to participate in a maximum of two (2) non-school meets or contests in that sport while not representing his or her school. An event held on not more than three (3) consecutive calendar days would be considered a single meet. The Council wanted more discussion by the membership before considering this recommendation again.

Subsequent discussions and survey results were discussed, demonstrating mixed opinions regarding the benefits of the proposed change among the MHSAA membership as well as the Representative Council.

Also discussed were increases in contest limits and MHSAA sponsored events at the junior high/middle school level. Action on all three topics could be taken by the Council in March or May, depending on input received during the next three months.

**Basketball District Tournament Seeding** – At its May meeting, the Representative Council voted to not approve the Basketball Committee recommendation to adopt the “KPI Flex Seeding Plan” for determining District and Regional brackets and pairings for the Boys and Girls Basketball Tournaments but asked staff to examine seeding options for the District level only. Subsequent discussions and survey results were discussed, and many opinions were expressed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Inclusion** – The Representative Council engaged in a discussion that considered potential athletic programs and student populations the MHSAA could serve during the decade ahead. Council and staff members heard summarized data from the annual sports participation survey completed by member high schools and from the MHSAA’s periodic student interest survey of 7<sup>th</sup>-, 8<sup>th</sup>- and 9<sup>th</sup>-graders; and the Council was informed of what other states are doing to serve additional populations of students. There was discussion of some programs that come with many assisting features and other programs that have special difficulties for school sponsorship.

The Council was presented 14 suggested questions to use when evaluating new tournament possibilities in the future. One question will force the Council to consider if educational athletics in Michigan would be better served by adding more tournaments at the high school level or launching new tournaments at the junior high/middle school level. The questions will guide staff as they respond to frequent requests that the MHSAA provide tournaments in additional sports.

**Women in Sports Leadership Award** – There were six candidates for the Women in Sports Leadership Award recommended by the MHSAA Awards Committee. These were presented to the Representative Council for a vote. The name of the recipient will be released at an appropriate time and the recipient will be honored during the MHSAA Women in Sports Leadership Conference on Feb. 4, 2018.

**Charles E. Forsythe Award** – There were five candidates recommended by the Awards Committee, for the Charles E. Forsythe Award presented to the Representative Council for a ballot vote. The name of the recipient will be released at an appropriate time and the recipient will be honored during the Boys Basketball Finals Tournament on March 24, 2018.

**Meeting Expenses** – Expenses for this meeting were approved at the specified hotel rate for accommodations, the IRS-specified meal allowance and a 40¢ per mile mileage allowance round-trip.

**Future Meetings** – The next meeting of the Representative Council will be held on Friday, March 23, 2018, 8:15 a.m. at the MHSAA building in East Lansing. The spring meeting of the Representative Council will be held May 6-7, 2018, at Treetops Resort in Gaylord. The fall meeting will be held on Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, at the MHSAA building in East Lansing.

The meeting was adjourned.