

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

East Lansing, March 23, 2018

Members Present:

Scott Grimes, Grand Haven
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Vicky Groat, Battle Creek
Kyle Guerrant, Lansing
Don Gustafson, St. Ignace
Courtney Hawkins, Mt. Morris
Kris Isom, Adrian
Sean Jacques, Calumet
Justin Jennings, Muskegon
Karen Leinaar, Bear Lake
Chris Miller, Gobles
Steve Newkirk, Clare
Chris Riker, Portage
Pete Ryan, Saginaw
John Thompson, Brighton
Al Unger, Kingsford
Alvin Ward, Detroit
Pat Watson, West Bloomfield

Member Absent:

Dave Derocher, Reese

Also Present:

Jon Beckman, Ishpeming
Mike Berutti, Iron River
Bob De Vries, Lansing
Scott Eldridge, Lansing
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

President Scott Grimes welcomed newly appointed Council member Justin Jennings to his first meeting and he also welcomed members of the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee who are invited to attend this meeting on an annual basis.

Accounts of Meetings – Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Al Unger, to approve the minutes of the Representative Council meeting of Dec. 1, 2017; the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings of Nov. 30, 2017, Jan. 10, 2018 and Feb. 21, 2018; and the minutes of the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee meeting of Jan. 11, 2018. Adopted.

REPORTS

Legislation – Bill Zaagman of Governmental Consultant Services, Inc. reviewed activities of the Michigan Legislature that could directly or indirectly affect member schools' administration of interscholastic athletics.

Litigation – Attorney Scott Eldridge reported on legal issues in which the MHSAA has been engaged.

Administration – The executive director provided a brief review of the status of 2018-19 classifications of member high schools for MHSAA tournament participation. Several changes in internal procedures are being contemplated; and if any of these would have an effect on *Handbook* policies, they will be presented to the Representative Council in May.

Various staff and Council members provided reactions to three new venues for MHSAA tournament Finals in team wrestling, individual wrestling and girls basketball.

Andy Frushour provided an update of student services, including the Student Advisory Council, the Scholar-Athlete program and the seventh “Battle of the Fans.”

ONGOING BUSINESS

Transfer Rule – At its Dec. 1, 2017 meeting, the Council encouraged MHSAA staff to distribute promptly the proposals developed over the previous six months of meetings and surveys – this was done Dec. 11 – and to be available as much as possible to facilitate discussions regarding those proposals among constituent groups – this continues to occur.

It was suggested that a communication be sent soon to superintendents and principals as well as to the leadership of MASB, MASA and MASSP. It appears to Council members that the support for changes surveyed in October has increased significantly during the past several months and that the proposals will be ready for Council action in May.

Basketball Schedules and Sites – At its Dec. 1 meeting, the Council approved 2018-19 regular season schedules for girls and boys basketball as well as the schedules and finals venues for the MHSAA tournaments in 2019. The staff has been focusing on two options for 2020 and beyond: (1) the 2018 and 2019 model that uses two sites for the Finals and accommodates the limited availability of the only site offered that is large enough to host the boys Semifinals and Finals; and (2) a three-week simultaneous tournament that utilizes the larger arena on only two days – one for the girls Finals and the other for the boys Finals.

The Council discussed the pros and cons of these options as well as the plan for communicating with constituents to increase understanding and search for consensus. Other options or hybrids of these options could still be considered, but the Council must act by its December meeting on plans for at least the season and MHSAA tournaments during the 2019-20 school year.

Eight-Player Football Scheduling – At its Dec. 1 meeting, the Council began a discussion of how the MHSAA might assist 8-player schools in their scheduling of regular season games. There is cautious optimism from coaches and administrators with whom staff have discussed this idea and there is interest in seeing the paper study the staff is completing and will send soon to Class D 8-player schools and others, along with the results of a survey.

Council members suggested that there be an option to discuss where schools are placed in geographic regions without regard to their division in order to reduce the length of travel for regular season games. The Council anticipates an update on this topic in May and the possibility of this being an action item at its December meeting.

Basketball District Seeding – At its May 2017 meeting, the Council asked staff to examine possibilities for seeding and separating on brackets the top two teams of each geographically determined District of the MHSAA Girls and Boys Basketball Tournaments. At its December meeting, the MHSAA Basketball Committee recommended prompt implementation of a data based plan to seed the District tournament level of the Boys and Girls Basketball Tournaments. Staff have been examining the practical considerations and have been attempting to prepare answers to questions and to establish policies and procedures to implement seeding, if that is the Council’s action in May. Differences of opinion are apparent within the MHSAA’s membership and among Representative Council members.

Student Engagement – The MHSAA has been taking a comprehensive look at what “inclusion” means in interscholastic athletics. Among considerations are how to serve and support a greater number of students, including . . .

- More junior high/middle school students at more grade levels.
- More high school students with a wider variety of interests and abilities.

Staff previewed recommendations of the MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee as well as the MHSAA “Presenting Sponsorship” initiative, all of which are intended to raise the profile of school-sponsored athletic programs for 6th- through 8th-graders, as well as the MHSAA’s profile among these students and their families. The Council was presented a roster of individuals who have volunteered to serve on a work group tasked with developing strategies for expanding the presenting sponsorship initiative to more junior high/middle school league meets and to new events which combine two or more leagues.

Requests for specific actions related to several of these matters and reports on other strategies for expanding student engagement in school-based sports will be presented to the Representative Council in May.

Multi-Sport Participation – An integral aspect of the MHSAA’s priority of “Defining and Defending Educational Athletics” has been the work of the MHSAA Task Force on Multi-Sport Participation during the past two years. Its purpose is to “Prepare strategies and tactics for the MHSAA, allied organizations and local schools and conferences to promote multi-sport participation by student-athletes.”

The Task Force has developed two tools so far:

- “Coaching Our Coaches” – a guide for administrators for recruiting and hiring coaches, mentoring coaches and evaluating coaches; and
- “Recognizing Our Best” – a guide to what schools and leagues are doing to promote and honor their multisport athletes.

The Council received additional specifics regarding the Task Force’s planning of a program by which the MHSAA will recognize and honor schools which have achieved a high benchmark in the percentage of athletes who participate in more than one high school sport.

NEW BUSINESS

Boarding School Students – The Council was provided a brief history of the boarding school student exception to the Transfer Rule and of a significant modification of the exception in 1992, as well as voluntary modifications of the exception as applied to one boarding school since 2015. The Council was informed of more recent issues with respect to another boarding school, and the Council discussed rules modifications that would promote more competitive equity between boarding schools and other schools, both public and nonpublic, in the MHSAA’s membership. It is anticipated the MHSAA will host a meeting with representatives of its four member boarding schools to review perspectives, problems and possible solutions.

Vern L. Norris Award – The Representative Council was presented with the four finalists for the Vern L. Norris Award who had been screened by the MHSAA Awards Committee from nine nominees. The Council selected the recipient of the award, which will be presented at the Officials’ Awards & Alumni Banquet on May 5, 2018. The Council remembered fondly the service and leadership of former MHSAA Executive Director Vern Norris who passed away on Feb. 12, 2018 at age 89.

Meetings – The Representative Council approved expenses for the March Council meeting and reviewed the schedule for the May 2018 Council meeting.

Audit and Finance Committee Report – This committee is responsible for reviewing past financial performance and future projections, reviewing and making revenue and expense recommendations for MHSAA programs, and finalizing the annual budget for the Council’s approval in May. The Council reviewed the minutes of the committee’s Feb. 21 meeting, giving attention to large financial obligations that the MHSAA has assumed for its member schools on an annual basis and challenges the MHSAA is facing to maintain tournament and sponsorship revenues at levels necessary to support increasing services to schools and venue expenses for MHSAA tournaments.

The Council reviewed admission prices for MHSAA tournaments, giving special attention to basketball and football for which District and Regional ticket costs have remained unchanged for 14 and 15 years, respectively, and are less than regular season contests at many schools. The opinion was unanimous that those prices should increase and there were several suggestions for the pace of changes. The 2018-19 budget will be developed using at least two ticketing models.

Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Chris Miller, to approve the Audit and Finance Committee recommendation for National Federation Annual Meeting attendance by Council members, and to approve the specific reimbursement limits for the 2018 meeting in Chicago. Reimbursement will be after the meeting and based on the actual length of stay and require receipts. Adopted.

Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Chris Miller, to approve the Audit and Finance Committee recommendations regarding staff compensation for 2018-19. Adopted.