

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
GOLF COMMITTEE MINUTES
East Lansing, December 2, 2020

Committee Members Present:

Andrea Clark, Grass Lake	Karen Leinaar, Bear Lake (MIAAA)
Rob Dilday, Utica	Nate Maury, Grayling
Chris Ervin, St. Johns	Shad Spilski, Lapeer
David Feldman, Bloomfield Hills	Justin Thorington, Saginaw
Hugh Felt, Milford	Debbie Williams–Hoak, Saline (MIGCA)
Bob Filter, East Lansing (Finals Manager)	Brian Zdanowski, Greenville
Todd Hursey, Suttons Bay (Finals Manager)	
Mike Ketelaar, Kentwood	MHSAA Staff:
Mick Kildea (MHSAA rules advisor)	Cody Inglis, MHSAA
Jeff Kozinski, Edwardsburg	

The MHSAA Golf Committee met to review policies and procedures for boys and girls golf. Agenda items were compiled from correspondence, staff, committee members and the Michigan Interscholastic Golf Coaches Association. Committee members were briefed on the committee selection process, the responsibilities of the Golf Committee and the process for recommendations and potential policy change to occur.

GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS

A review of the 2019-20 golf committee topics and meeting minutes was completed. These changes included the recommendation to use the iWanamaker app and scoring program for the MHSAA Golf Regionals and Finals as a secondary scoring method. This recommendation to MHSAA staff allowed the ease of transition into iWanamaker being used as the sole scoring method for the MHSAA girls golf tournament this past fall. While the golf committee could not have foreseen the challenges associated with Covid-19 or competing during a pandemic, the use of iWanamaker substantially contributed to girls golf being able to occur at the high school level this fall. The iWanamaker scoring platform was met with positive reviews despite being adopted a mere four weeks prior to the MHSAA tournament beginning. While there were challenges and changes that will be made before the next MHSAA tournament, iWanamaker has been a willing partner in enhancing the product for schools, coaches and the MHSAA. Other positives that were taken from iWanamaker's use included a paperless way to score events in pandemic times, the administrative ease of closing out a round, the ability for others to monitor scoring while not even being on site, coaches being able to track their golfers and an enhanced score focus on scores by managers, administrators and others.

iWanamaker has been used by other state associations and the fact that Michigan did not have to be the "leader" on a product was a positive for the MHSAA and our golfers as the MHSAA was able to reach out to other states to ensure which features to use from iWanamaker. iWanamaker allows tournament organizers to use either the phone app or desktop version to set up tournaments throughout the state using the iWanamaker system of scoring, golf rankings and course inventory. While the main focus for this year was the MHSAA postseason, there was sentiment to have iWanamaker be used by schools during the regular season. Benefits to schools include zero cost, ease of transition to MHSAA tournament entry requirements and the use of other features that iWanamaker offers such as rankings, statistics and seeding of the

MHSAA tournament. The committee, after much discussion, passed a proposal to require the use of iWanamaker for golf schools during the regular season starting in the fall of 2021. This mirrors the required use of iWanamaker for MHSAA tournament entry, which was implemented this school year.

The committee discussed at length scoring integrity and continues to believe strongly that coach involvement is the key to solving this dilemma. While other potential solutions to this issue were raised including the use of observers, MHSAA, school and tournament director involvement and investigations, there are severe limitations with each of those solutions that hinder solving this issue. Teaching life lessons, like integrity is a standard of the rules of golf and educational athletics and coaches are the primary adult in a student-athlete's golf life that contributes in a positive way to this trait being developed. The committee felt strongly that continued emphasis on giving coaches tools to help with their players was key. This includes increased coach education and best practices for coaches and teams. In addition, the process of questioning players about what their scores were on certain holes and the end of the round was key. Coaches need to develop strategies to counteract scoring inaccuracy rumors, insinuations and deal with issues when they arise. While there is some sentiment that investigations should be conducted by the MHSAA or others when cheating is alleged, ultimately it is the coach and school's responsibility to police this aspect of golf and perpetuating rumors or questioning after the fact does not serve the best interest of high school golf if there is no follow up at the local level. The MHSAA and the MIGCA will continue to work together to make scoring integrity an emphasis for coaches who work with young players each day.

Several changes to protocols and strengthening of policy will continue to be enhanced for the MHSAA tournament but an emphasis on the regular season must be done by coaches to ensure that these protocols are not "new" for players in the postseason. The committee felt the use of iWanamaker will help with scoring integrity issues if used the right way and follow up is being done by coaches on their players.

The committee discussed the lack of clarity of the rules of golf by coaches who many times are charged with the enforcement of the rules, especially during the regular season. The committee discussed a requirement for coaches to take a golf rules test, watch videos on the rules of golf or attend rules seminars put on by Golf Association of Michigan (GAM) or the United States Golf Association (USGA). The education should not end there, as players also need to be educated about the rules of golf. There are several free resources on golf rules including MHSAA rules videos, USGA rules tests, videos and free rules publications available both online and in print. The committee encouraged a renewed focus from the MHSAA on the rules of golf and working with GAM and the MIGCA on coach rules education. The MIGCA's emphasis on regional or conference liaisons could also be a program that could be used to get out rules education to coaches and teams and the MIGCA will investigate this aspect. In addition, revamping the MHSAA rules meeting requirement to include video and rules of golf will be determined by the MHSAA for future meetings.

A discussion ensued on the number of coaches allowed on the course to coach for the MHSAA tournament. There is a desire among some to increase this number, specifically for teams that carry more than one coach on their roster during the season and then one or more coaches can't actively coach during the MHSAA postseason by rule. This rule was established as the coaching restrictions were lifted in the early

2000's as a way to ensure that parents, swing coaches and others not directly associated with the golf program did not gain access to players during a round of play. Coaching on the course can be a very effective way for coaches to help players during the round and get them back on track. It can also slow the pace of play if done incorrectly or too often. There is a concern among the committee that allowing more coaches would run counter to its' intended result. This would mean longer rounds, more people on the course during play, more non-school associated and specialty coaches and teams feeling like they need to add additional coaches just to have another coach on the course to keep up with others. At this time, the committee was not in favor of advancing this concept.

The MIGCA asked that mental health and diversity discussions continue to be pursued at the MHSAA level and other committees for all sports, including golf. Living through the pandemic has allowed many to see that mental health issues are magnified and more challenging for students, especially when changes or loss of seasons occur. Continuing to emphasize the positive health benefits of sport done right remains a priority of the MHSAA. Diversity and inclusion efforts for all remain a focus of the MIGCA and MHSAA and allowing further discussion with the MHSAA Equity committee is key to enhance this needed discussion.

TOURNAMENT REVIEW

The committee reviewed the MHSAA girls golf season and the unique season and tournament that was recently completed. The Covid-19 pandemic forced many decisions to be made in order to keep a high school girls golf season in Michigan. This included strong health and safety protocols to be followed in order to play high school golf. These guidelines and considerations caused limitations of field sizes and forced events such as tournaments and invitationals to be postponed or severely modified. Focus on physical distancing and not have congregation areas was key. The MHSAA Finals was limited to one 18 hole one day round and conducted at the Forest Akers courses of Michigan State University. One aspect of the pandemic changes that met with success was an online coach Zoom meeting prior to the Finals with tournament management and MHSAA staff. The meeting focused on key aspects of the Finals protocols to be discussed prior to the event and questions to be answered for clarity that could in turn be relayed to players and parents prior to arrival on site. This new aspect was a great success and will be something that will be implemented even in non-pandemic times.

Preliminary tournament alignments for boys' golf were shared with the committee. MHSAA staff shared that at least some Covid-19 MHSAA return to golf protocols would be in place for the boys golf season like they were for the girls season. This would include reduced field sizes and thus modifications to the tournament would need to be made including a return to the Pre-Regional or District model used in Cross Country in the Fall, as well as the current Regional and Finals model of advancement and tournament play. The reason behind the Pre-Regional or District round of play determination is sheer numbers of teams and schools in boys golf compared to girls golf. There are approximately 200 more boys golf teams which makes Regional field sizes to 18-20 teams, too big to fit the current pandemic standards. A return to Pre-Regionals or Districts will allow the safe reduction of the field size at all levels. Further modifications will be implemented as we continue to draw closer to the spring and will be approved by the MHSAA Representative Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Require the use of the iWanamaker scoring program and app during the MHSAA golf regular season starting for in the 2021 school year. (12-1)