

## **GIRLS GYMNASTICS COMMITTEE MEETING**

East Lansing, October 8, 2008

### **Members Present:**

Stephen Emert, Walled Lake  
Tim Erickson, Rockford  
Walt Gawkowski, Muskegon  
Brenda McDonald, Grand Rapids  
Dennis Noe, Farmington  
John Thompson, Brighton  
Suzy Weldon, Freeland

### **Members Absent:**

John Cunningham, Plymouth  
Kelly Fisher, East Lansing  
Griff Mills, Tecumseh

### **Staff Members Present:**

Kathy Vrugink Westdorp  
(Recorder)

## **GENERAL REVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The 2008 Gymnastics Committee met at the Michigan High School Athletic Association to review its responsibilities as a standing sports committee; review prior Representative Council action; examine current MHSAA gymnastics policy; determine Regional qualifying scores; review prior survey results; and draw for 2009 Gymnastics Finals order.

## **PRIOR REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL ACTION**

Through examination of prior meeting minutes and Representative Council action, there has been earlier discussion and concern regarding the current number of gymnastics programs. Committee members viewed a list of the schools which offer gymnastics as well as the number of teams which are currently competing. Members of the committee also viewed a list of the cooperative programs that presently exist in gymnastics, all of which subsist between schools whose combined enrollment does not exceed 3500 students. Presently there are 75 schools which offer gymnastics and a total of 54 gymnastics teams. In 2007-08, there were 81 schools which offered gymnastics and a total of 57 teams.

In May of 2005 and again in December 2008, the Representative Council responded to constituent requests that the MHSAA Girls Gymnastics Tournament be scheduled for the conclusion of a fall season by directing staff to survey athletes, coaches, administrators and judges. The current surveys were conducted in February 2008 per the request of the Gymnastics Committee and did not support a change in the girls gymnastics season at that time. In the February 2008 compilation of results, the school responses were split equally between supporting a change and opposed to a change. The student response indicated an opposition to the change. The committee reflected upon and discussed the survey that was given to member schools and gymnastics judges. With the change of seasons, school administrators and gymnastics coaches have been faced with even more confined space due to both genders playing basketball in the winter season. In addition, schools that offer competitive cheer have increased significantly. Concerns included within the discussion continued to be the need for additional space for practice and the consideration of competitive cheer and gymnastics in different seasons.

Committee members also expressed some concern about *MHSAA Regulation 238* which includes language that there would be consideration of terminating sponsorship of tournament competition when fewer than 64 schools sponsor a sport for two consecutive years. Presently, there has been no indication from the Representative Council that gymnastics is under that consideration as there are 75 schools which are currently involved in the sponsorship of the sport, many through cooperative programs. In essence, committee members are increasingly concerned regarding diminishing programs in girls gymnastics and the inability to find qualified coaches who are able to understand very specialized safety issues in gymnastics.

The Gymnastics Committee indicated that the approach that needs to be taken at this point is to continue mentoring gymnastics competitors who are currently a part of the program as well as existing gymnastics coaches and new judges.

## **GYMNASTICS TOURNAMENT INFORMATION**

Gymnastics tournament information was reviewed with the committee regarding the October 27, 2008 starting date for tryouts and practice; the first competition date of Saturday, November 15; the Opt-out due date of Friday, February 27; and the regional and final tournaments. Regional tournament sites on March 7, 2008 will be Grand Rapids Kenowa Hills, Haslett, Canton-Plymouth and Farmington Maxwell

Training Center. The 2009 and 2010 MHSAA Gymnastics Finals Tournament will be held at Rockford High School.

### **CALENDAR REVISIONS**

Proposals were reviewed that highlighted some of the more frequently expressed possibilities for changing the starting dates and lengths of high school seasons as well as the major issues created by those options. This proposal indicates the 2008-09 winter starting dates in girls gymnastics to include language that states, *"after 7 separate days of practice for team starting Monday, October 27, 2008 and not before 19 calendar days."* In addition, the MHSAA Tournaments in most winter sports (including gymnastics) will be one week earlier. The committee was appraised that the calendar revision information has also been disseminated at Update Meetings throughout Michigan.

### **2007-08 OUT-OF-SEASON COACHING CLARIFICATIONS**

Committee members reviewed recent changes to out-of-season and summer coaching controls which took effect in June 2007. Information regarding the Summer Dead Period, Preseason Down Time, and Curriculum Courses was discussed. Specific information was given regarding the preseason down period when no open gyms, camps, clinics or competitions with groups that resemble school teams shall occur at the school or be sponsored elsewhere by the school.

In addition, MHSAA Handbook Regulation II, Section 11 was studied by the committee. Efforts are being made to provide this information to the Gymnastics Coaches and Judges Associations.

### **2007-08 GYMNASTICS RULES CHANGES**

National Federation rules revisions made the second year of the two year cycle were received by the committee members. These include a hand placement mat (round-off pad) which may be used in vaulting for assistance in hand placement and extra cushioning. The mat may be 36 inches X 36 inches X 1 3/8 inches or 36 inches X 54 inches X 1 3/8 inches. One manufactured hand placement mat may be used on the runway (not on the board) for any vault and a manufactured sting mat shall not be permitted to be placed on the runway for vaulting. An additional rule change includes the need for the pistons/pedestal (vertical uprights) of the vaulting table to be padded with the manufacturer's protective padding. The protective padding is required for risk minimization for the gymnast.

### **2008-2010 PROPOSED GIRLS GYMNASTICS RULES REVISIONS**

Over 100 proposed rules revisions and editorial changes have been submitted to the National Federation Girls Gymnastics Committee. These revisions and changes were given to each committee member with the request that the revisions be thoroughly reviewed and any comments regarding the revisions should be sent to the MHSAA.

### **COACHES AND JUDGES EDUCATION**

Information was shared regarding the need for coaches to receive continuing education in all aspects of coaching. The multi-leveled Coaches Advancement Program was reviewed by the committee and discussion included the need for both new and veteran coaches to continue striving for additional educational opportunities.

### **TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL QUALIFYING SCORES**

The 2002 – 2007 team and individual qualifying scores for regional entry were reviewed. The 2007 regional participation information and scoring distribution for events at each site were received and discussed in order to assist the committee's charge to establish 2008 qualifying scores. In all cases, team entries can be accommodated by Regional hosts. The committee determined that the 2008 Regional qualifying scores will remain consistent with the 2007 Regional qualifying scores. These scores are as follows:

**Vault – 7.8    Bars – 7.0    Beam – 7.4    Floor Exercise – 8.0    Team – 119**

### **FINAL TOURNAMENT DRAW AND HOSTING**

Committee members verbalized the tasks, equipment and procedures that are necessary to conduct an efficient meet. These procedures included judge's use of headsets, the use of a spring floor in warm-up and competition, score table personnel who time coaches inquiry, the need for a visible scoreboard and the necessity of having conscientious score flashers and timers. In addition, committee members participated in a draw for order of competition at the 2008 Finals. First, second and third place teams at each Regional were assigned a number by blind draw. The number the team received determined the order of competition on vault, bars, beam and floor exercise.

Monday, February 25, 2008 was established as the date when regional and state designated officials would meet at the MHSAA in a continued effort to provide additional consistency in judging during regional and state tournament play. Further information was distributed regarding the number of judges registered in gymnastics in 2006-07. There were 97 total judges (7 male/90 female) registered MHSAA judges.

### **EDUCATION**

There was a desire to make certain that the education of new officials and coaches remained a priority in gymnastics. The officials who were present indicated a willingness to continue to encourage additional gymnasts who had graduated from their programs to become officials.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

1. Conduct a survey in February, 2008 regarding a gymnastic change of season from the winter season to the fall season. (4-3)
2. Propose that teams that qualify for the MHSAA Gymnastics Finals be composed of students who are academically eligible and have also qualified for the MHSAA Regional Tournament in at least one event. (7-0)