

2024-25 MIDDLE SCHOOL / JUNIOR HIGH COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday October 23, 2024- 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Miyasim Bazzi, Dearborn

Keith Cravotta, DeWitt

Michael Johnston, Jenison

Jason Kemler, Manistee

Garnett Kohler, Yale

Jolinda Lucas, Grand Rapids (MIAAA)

Jason Morris, Chelsea (MIAAA)

Brian Southworth, Decatur

Adam Stefanski, Boyne City

MHSAA STAFF

Brad Bush (Recorder)

Cody Inglis

The MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee met to review topics identified for discussion by the MHSAA staff, Representative Council, and member schools. The committee reviewed the meeting minutes and recommendations from the 2023-24 school year. A review of changes in regulations over the past 5-7 years related to middle school athletics were discussed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

MHSAA WEBSITE; ADDITION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SECTION TO THE WEBSITE

There was a recommendation from the committee in 2023-2024 to update the website with a section devoted specifically to middle school athletics. This part of the MHSAA website is now live. The committee encouraged more education for athletic directors to know where it is located and to encourage middle school administrators to use this new section of the website. The webpage includes links to all the areas middle school administrators would use.

REGIONAL CROSS COUNTRY AND TRACK UPDATES

A review and discussion of middle school Cross Country and Track Regional events was shared. A discussion on dividing races by school size was had with no proposal moving forward. There were over 7,300 male and female runners this fall at the Cross Country Regionals. There was discussion of the format and qualifying times for the Track Regional and an update from the Track & Field Committee was given. There were over 5,900 athletes that competed last spring in middle school Track Regional events across the state. The committee also agreed with the fall survey results, and the committee was not in favor of adding any type of state championships at the middle school level.

SOCIAL MEDIA RULE AND RECRUITING NIGHTS

A review of the social media policy was discussed. The challenges of enforcement of the rule were highlighted. There was good discussion of middle school youth nights and recruiting events. The committee felt that there needs to be clearer direction from the MHSAA what schools can and can not do in promoting their high schools and programs to middle school students.

ELIGIBILITY ADVANCEMENT FORM AND 8TH-GRADE “REDSHIRT”

The Eligibility Advancement Form was reviewed and discussed. The potential for more students to qualify exists due to many students that were held back during the pandemic. The committee recommended that we continue to discuss this issue at the annual Fall AD Inservice. The committee also recommended that local schools make decisions on students repeating middle school grades, even in the case that they are for athletic reasons. The committee felt they have seen an increase in parents wishing to repeat a grade for athletic advantages.

LIMITED TEAM MEMBERSHIP RULE

The Limited Team Membership rule was discussed. The fall survey results were also part of this discussion. The committee agreed that the Limited Team Membership rule should not be expanded at this time. They believed that the current rule works and is appropriate for middle school students.

START DATE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS

The committee recommends that the MHSAA develop and promote one common start date for fall sports at the middle school level and bring a possible proposal to a future middle school committee meeting. As schools start earlier across the state the committee believes that to avoid confusion there should be one start date that would be one week after high school athletics start. Many members also expressed this would make it easier for leagues to complete a four-season schedule.

WAIVER APPLICATION PROCESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY FOR 7/8 GRADERS

The waiver process was discussed for schools whose enrollment is under 125 to allow 8th grade students to have high school eligibility and for schools under 75 students to allow 7th grade students to have high school eligibility. There were clarifying questions asked and discussed on the policy. There was also a discussion of league requests for rule variances in middle school athletics to sport directors.

CPR AND EAP REQUIREMENT

The new requirement for the 2024-25 school year was reviewed and discussed. There was discussion of the need for more AEDs in schools and portable units for all venues. There was very positive response from the committee related to the requirements of an EAP for schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

There were no recommendations to the Representative Council.