

2024 MHSAA GIRLS FIELD HOCKEY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, November 26, 2024, 9:30am – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eric Albright, Midland
Eve Claar, Ann Arbor
Paige Comito, Bloomfield Hills
Nick Davis, Rockford
Ben Farkas, Hudsonville
Leslie Fry, Chelsea
Lisa Hogan, Ann Arbor (MIAAA)
JT Hogan, Spring Lake
Amy Kilgore, Novi
Maren Langford, Ann Arbor

Martha Munsell, Fowlerville (MATS)
Eric Pierce, West Bloomfield
Meg Seng, Ann Arbor (MHSFHL)
Keely Tamer, Dexter

MHSAA STAFF

Andy Frushour
Maddie Maloney
Paige Winne (Recorder)

The 2024-25 MHSAA Girls Field Hockey Committee met in the John E. "Jack" Roberts MHSAA building to review topics involving the addition of girls field hockey as an MHSAA sponsored sport, rules and regulations and the tournament structure. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision-making process and the charge of the Girls Field Hockey Committee. Agenda items were compiled from staff, the Michigan High School Field Hockey League and the Field Hockey Coaches Association. Future committee meetings will typically be held in January. This meeting was scheduled in November to ensure timely information could be presented to the Representative Council at its December meeting. The committee will next reconvene in January 2026 for further discussions.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

ADDITION OF FIELD HOCKEY

The committee discussed the importance of a smooth transition as girls field hockey becomes an MHSAA sponsored sport, emphasizing the need for clear communication throughout the process. The process of adding girls field hockey to each school's profile will begin in the winter of 2024-25. Additionally, a sport-specific girls field hockey page will be created on the MHSAA website to serve as a central hub for all related resources.

GIRLS FIELD HOCKEY RULES/REGULATIONS

The committee proposed the adoption of specific *MHSAA Handbook* rules and regulations for girls field hockey. These rules are set to be implemented and enforced with the start of summer rules, on the first Monday after Memorial Day (June 2, 2025).

- **Season Dates and Limitations:** The girls field hockey season will align closely with the boys soccer season, including adjustments for "short" years (like fall 2025). For the 2025-26 season, the first date of practice for all fall sports is August 11, with the first contest date set for August 15. Contest limits for girls field hockey include a maximum of 18 contest dates and 4 scrimmages. The "Fifth Quarter Rule" will allow players to participate in a total of five quarters across multiple games on the same day.
- **Multi-team Tournament:** MHSAA staff outlined guidelines for multi-team tournaments, specifying that students may participate in a maximum of three such tournaments during the regular season. Multi-team tournaments can consist of games with no more than 150 minutes of running clock, or two full regulation games. The committee emphasized the distinction between scrimmages and games, noting that playing too many regular season games carries a strict penalty. This multi-team tournament format aligns with current Michigan High School Field Hockey League practices. Each day of a multi-team tournament will count as one of the season's contest dates.

- **Cooperative Programs:** The deadline to apply for cooperative programs for all fall sports, including girls field hockey, is May 1. MHSAA staff provided a list of schools currently in cooperative agreements, noting three schools exceeding the 3,500-student limit. These programs must follow existing regulations and submit a waiver with a rationale for the exception to the executive committee.
- **Rules:** Coaches and officials will use the *NFHS Field Hockey Rules Book*, alongside MHSAA guidance. The NFHS rules books will be distributed to schools biannually and sent to officials upon registration.

COACH EDUCATION

MHSAA staff reviewed the Coaches Advancement Program (CAP). It was proposed that existing varsity head coaches will not be required to complete CAP; however, participation is highly recommended and is available for all coaches. All new head varsity coaches will still be required to complete either CAP 1 or CAP 2.

To support the successful introduction of girls field hockey, it was proposed that the MHSAA rules meeting for coaches be extended during the first few years of the sport. Each coach would take an additional online rules meeting designed to emphasize MHSAA regulations, including membership expectations, season limitations, out-of-season coaching regulations, and more. This approach aims to ensure all coaches are thoroughly educated on relevant MHSAA policies.

OFFICIALS REGISTRATION AND ASSIGNING

The committee reviewed the registration process for girls field hockey officials with the MHSAA. This process includes completing the Principles of Officiating course and the *MHSAA Guidebook* exam during their first year. Officials must also complete an annual online rules meeting to maintain their registration. The committee suggested requiring officials to complete a girls field hockey-specific exam to be eligible for postseason assignments.

The process for assigning officials was also reviewed, with a focus on utilizing coach ratings, assigner and association recommendations, and committee feedback. The committee emphasized the role of officials' associations in improving communication between coaches, officials, and assigners. Recruitment and assignment challenges were acknowledged, with suggestions to explore incentives for new officials and to encourage former coaches to transition into officiating.

The MHSAA will discuss incentive opportunities to support the recruitment and retention of officials. In addition, the MHSAA will explore options for consistent field hockey official's uniforms.

TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

The committee discussed the structure of the girls field hockey postseason tournament, focusing on whether to maintain two divisions or transition to a single division. The history of the field hockey tournament structure was reviewed, noting key changes in the tournament over the years. MHSAA staff presented data on the number of schools currently sponsoring the sport, the use of Michigan Power Ranking (MPR), options for seeding, and the potential impacts of each structure. The group discussed seeding strategies, regional alignment, and the benefits of using a single-division format that could promote competitive balance and ensure meaningful tournament progression. Emphasizing more local competition was explored, along with ways to honor teams with trophies in the early rounds. In addition, there were initial discussions on the growth of the tournament, and how many new teams would dictate adding a second division. Tournament format discussions will continue, and a formal proposal to adopt a single-division postseason format will be presented to the Representative Council.

The committee also discussed keeping the Finals on the last Saturday in October. Since this is a light weekend for other MHSAA tournaments, this date will ensure live streaming, adequate media and staff coverage of the championship games. MHSAA staff noted potential discussions with Michigan State University and the University of Michigan to explore the possibility of one of these sites hosting the Finals.

PARTICIPATION AND GROWTH

The committee discussed the potential for growth in the field hockey program, highlighting an increase in the number of schools sponsoring the sport from 32 to 36 over the past two years. Strategies to further expand participation were explored, with a focus on overcoming barriers such as facility limitations and equipment costs. The committee proposed the following initiatives:

- Allowing exceptions for field size to accommodate the sport in more schools.
- Collaborating with the coaches association to host free play days or learn-to-play events.
- Providing informational materials on grants and other cost-effective programs to help establish new programs.
- Offering incentives for officials, including streamlined registration and education pathways.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The importance of Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), now mandatory for all teams, was emphasized. The MATS representative highlighted the need for teams to practice their EAPs regularly and ensure that Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are readily available. Additionally, resources were identified to assist schools in acquiring AEDs if needed.

STATE ADOPTION RULES

The committee reviewed the overtime rules and recommended maintaining the current format used by the Michigan High School Field Hockey League for postseason games only.

The required MHSAA tournament overtime procedures are:

- Play a 10-minute sudden-victory overtime period with a team of six field players and one goalkeeper. Teams do NOT change goals at the end of the regulation game. The winner of the coin toss shall choose to be on offense or defense to begin the overtime period. On a penalty corner, there shall be 3 defensive players and a goalkeeper behind the end line.
- If the game remains tied after the 10-minute period is played, then it will go to the one-on-one overtime procedure. A series of five shots on goal shall be taken by individual players in a one-on-one situation (attacker vs. goalkeeper). To begin this procedure, the attacker stands on the 25-yard line and the goalkeeper stands on the goal line. Play continues for 8 seconds (10 seconds on a grass field) with follow-up shots permitted.

NOTE: A foul or violation by the attacker ends the procedure. For an unintentional foul by the goalkeeper, the one-on-one shall be retaken. For an intentional foul by the goalkeeper, a penalty stroke shall be awarded. Any player on the approved roster may take the penalty stroke. The procedure also ends when: (1) the 8 (or 10) seconds has elapsed; (2) a goal is scored; (3) the ball goes out of play over the end line, sideline.

There will be no overtime in the regular season. However, leagues may choose to adopt the postseason overtime procedures for their end-of-season, bracketed tournaments. For fifth quarter purposes, overtime is considered an extension of the fourth quarter.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MHSAA STAFF

1. Require all officials to complete a sport-specific exam to be eligible for postseason assignments.
2. Establish a separate rules meeting requirement for all girls field hockey coaches, focusing on *MHSAA Handbook* regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Implement *MHSAA Handbook* rules for girls field hockey starting June 2025, including but not limited to:
 - a. Season dates and limitations (aligned with boys soccer).
 - b. Contest limits of 18 dates and 4 scrimmages.
 - c. Introduction of the "fifth quarter" rule
 - d. Guidelines for multi-team tournaments and cooperative programs. (12-0)
2. Conduct the field hockey tournament as a single-division format. (12-0)
3. Adopt a traditional set of fall schedule dates, with the Finals held on the last Saturday in October. (12-0)
4. Adopt the reduced-player and one-on-one overtime procedures for postseason tournaments, with optional use in regular-season bracketed tournaments. (12-0)