

**2024 BOYS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Thursday, October 3, 2024, 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rick DeBlasio, East Grand Rapids (Advisory)  
Erik Frank, Mattawan  
Jonathan Goei, Grand Rapids  
JT Hogan, Spring Lake  
Brian Kaminskis, Clarkston  
Rich Kimball, Lansing

Matt Laurinec, Livonia  
Nikki Norris, East Lansing  
Mitch Smelis, Fenton (MATS-Advisory)  
Joe Stadelmaier, Midland  
Jeremy Strunk, Grandville (MHSLCA)  
Justin Thorington, Traverse City

**MHSAA STAFF**

Dan Hutcheson  
Cole Malatinsky (Recorder)  
Laura Roberts

The 2024-25 MHSAA Boys Lacrosse Committee met in the John E. “Jack” Roberts MHSAA building to review topics involving boys lacrosse and the tournament series. The week prior to the meeting, the committee received the published minutes of the two previous committee meetings.

The committee also received several reports for their review, including the 2024-25 classification of teams and enrollment breaks set in March 2024, and a list of current cooperative programs. As of Oct. 5, 2023, there are 127 teams (62 Division 1, 65 Division 2) representing 178 schools among 35 cooperative programs. Also included in this information packet was a report of boys lacrosse participation over the past nine years, MHSAA Head Injury Report data from 2023-24, and preparation materials for preseason season seeding. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision-making process and the charge of the Boys Lacrosse Committee, including the unique functions related to seeding. Agenda items were compiled from correspondence, staff, committee members, and the boys lacrosse coaches association.

**2024-25 REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS & TOURNAMENT**

One of the unique functions of the committee is its role in preseason seeding and tournament alignments. Committee members received, in advance, preliminary Regional alignments, maps of each region by division, summary data/results for teams from the 2024 and 2023 seasons, and the stated criteria for seeding the tournament. No changes were made to the seeding criteria for the preseason. It should be noted that one-year performance (2024) was the focus during the preseason seeding, with the committee’s preference that two-year performance (2023) only be used to break ties in determining the top eight teams. The committee ranked the top eight teams 1-8 in each division based on the criteria and placed one seeded team in each region. The regions will be finalized pending MHSAA staff securing host sites. Regions without hosts designated will be posted on MHSAA.com as soon as possible following the October meeting, including any new programs or cooperatives notifications and approvals. On Wednesday, May 7, 2025, the committee will reconvene and place each team on the bracket based on the written criteria and current season competition played on or before Monday, May 6, 2024.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**POSTSEASON SEEDING CRITERIA**

Following concerns during the 2023 season with teams playing limited competition against MHSAA tournament opponents prior to the postseason seeding meeting, the committee reviewed the postseason seeding criteria. The 2023 committee approved the addition of language within the published postseason seeding criteria explicitly stating that under committee discretion, teams with fewer than eight (8) posted results against MHSAA tournament teams at the time of the postseason seeding meeting could be

negatively impacted with regard to Regional bracket and overall seeding, given the effect such a limited schedule has with regard to MPR data, head-to-head results, and results against common opponents. This language was once again reviewed and reaffirmed by the committee for the 2025 postseason tournament seeding.

### **2025 TOURNAMENT CALENDAR**

The committee reviewed the 2025 tournament calendar. The current plan is to continue to play MHSAA Lacrosse Finals at the U-M Lacrosse Stadium, with the Boys and Girls Finals games alternating between Friday and Saturday from year-to-year. The committee expressed the preference that in years where the Boys Finals are held on Friday, the Boys Semifinals be held on Tuesday, preserving the two day period for rest/preparation between the Semifinals and Final, and help with scheduling flexibility in the event of weather issues on the Semifinals date.

### **POSTSEASON TOURNAMENT FORMAT**

The committee once again put forth a proposal by MHSAA staff regarding the MHSAA tournament format and seeding. Under the proposal:

The MHSAA Boys Lacrosse Tournament would continue to be conducted in two (2) equal divisions based on school enrollment. Schools would be placed in one of eight (8) Regionals in each division based purely on geographical considerations. Regional champions advance to the Quarterfinal round, Quarterfinal winners advance to the Semifinal, and Semifinal winners advance to the State Championship game.

All teams in an MHSAA geographic Regional would be seeded and placed on a pre-determined bracket line according to MPR (#1 vs #8, #4 vs #5, #3 vs #6, #2 vs #7), rather than placed by the committee under the current format.

Quarterfinal matchups will be determined by matching geographically adjacent Regional numbers (Region 1 vs Region 2, Region 3 vs Region 4, etc.), rather than determined by committee.

The Sunday following the Quarterfinal round, a Seeding Committee would meet to seed the teams advancing to the Semifinal round, determining the Semifinal matchups based on published criteria similar to what is currently used to seed the tournament by committee.

This proposed format more closely aligns with the tournament format and seeding used in other MHSAA sports, and addresses the criticisms and issues faced under the current format. The committee received simulated tournaments using data and results from the past three seasons showing under the proposed format, there would have been no change in the eventual state championship matchup in either Division.

No action was taken regarding the proposal, and coaches on the committee were generally not in favor of the proposal as presented.

However, the proposal did spur discussion among the committee related to the current MHSAA Boys Lacrosse tournament seeding process and alternative formats, like a district model. It was suggested by Michigan High School Lacrosse Coaches Association leadership on the committee for the coaches association to form a subcommittee to explore tournament seeding and structure changes that will potentially be more favorable to all teams in the MHSAA tournament, not just the top programs in the state.

### **NFHS RULES CHANGES**

The committee reviewed recent changes and points of emphasis under NFHS playing rules for the sport of boys lacrosse for the 2024 season and the upcoming 2025 season. The committee discussed the eye-black rule, which was a point of emphasis for the 2023 and 2024 seasons. Under NFHS rules, eye black (grease or non-glare stripes or stickers) must be a single solid stroke and may not include words, numbers,

logos, or other symbols. While this is not a new rule, and is supposedly consistent across NFHS sport rule codes, committee members expressed frustration that the rule does not appear to be consistently enforced across the different sports.

Additionally, the committee discussed contact to the head and neck and suggested that even with the 2024 rules changes, there was no real change with regard to how the game was called and no decreased incidences of contact to the head and neck. Consistent rules enforcement and decreasing incidences contact to the head and neck will continue to be a point of emphasis for the 2025 season

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

There were no recommendations to the Representative Council.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO MHSAA STAFF**

1. In years where the Boys Finals are held on Friday, the Boys Semifinals should be held on Tuesday. This schedule allows for a two-day period between the Boys Semifinals and the Finals to ensure adequate rest and preparation time for teams. The decision also provides flexibility in the event of weather-related issues on the day of the Semifinals, enabling adjustments without compromising the Finals date.