

2023 GIRLS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, October 11, 2023 – 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Summer Aldred, Detroit (MWLCA)
Cole Andrews, Rockford
Ericka Kurili, Spring Lake
Pat Marsman, Northview
Shari Oole, Grand Rapids (MATS) - Advisory
Reo Rodriguez, Grand Ledge
Allison Rosenau, Rochester
Adrian Trzebiatowski, Swartz Creek
Joe Wallace, Portage (MIAAA)

MHSAA STAFF

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

The 2023-24 Girls Lacrosse Committee met to review its responsibilities as a standing sports committee; review prior Representative Council action; recommend to the Representative Council changes regarding NFHS or MHSAA rules/regulations relative to girls lacrosse; suggest points of emphasis for rules meetings; and evaluate current practices and procedures with MHSAA staff. Several members of the Girls Lacrosse Committee will also assist in the assignment of officials to all levels of the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament. Members of this committee were provided with a history of the teams/schools participating in girls lacrosse and how the sport has grown in numbers of teams and schools. Also provided were the approved cooperative programs, important dates and times, rules changes, participating school tournament information and the manager's manual. From NFHS data, girls lacrosse ranks 10th in participation for the ten most popular girls programs. Additionally, there are currently 91 officials registered in girls lacrosse registered at the time the committee met.

There are currently 92 teams and 128 schools participating in girls lacrosse for 2023-24. The committee generated some information as to possible upcoming programs throughout Michigan. There are currently 27 approved cooperative programs and committee members asked some questions regarding the cooperative program limitations as well as Regulation I, Section 1(E) which provides information on the framework of cooperative programs.

Updated information was received regarding the progress and process of the NFHS/USAL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee, which is now comprised of ten members representative of the states who offer girls lacrosse, with advisory individuals from USAL. The NFHS now writes the rules, publishes and distributes the rules book.

The minutes of the October 2022 Girls Lacrosse Committee were reviewed for the purpose of providing background of prior discussion and actions of the committee. Committee members also reviewed information regarding coaching requirements deadlines for 2023-24.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Additional health and safety issues were discussed including MHSAA protocol for implementation of National Federation sports playing rules for concussion. Discussion included that stick-to-body contact needs to be called consistently and coaches and officials need to be consistent in following rules provided for the safety of the sport. Epidemiology summary reports were provided through the MHSAA Head Injury Reporting System for the 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 school years relative to sport-specific head injuries in girls lacrosse. MHSAA information showed girls participation in lacrosse at 2,777 athletes and a head injury prevalence rate of 1.48% in 2020-21 and 3,053 participants in 2021-22 and an injury prevalence rate of 2.12%. In 2022-23, there were 3215 girls who participated in lacrosse and a head injury prevalence rate of 1.37%.

Girls lacrosse equipment compliance was reviewed. Goalkeepers are required to wear chest protectors designed for lacrosse that meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. The use of headgear is presently optional, and any headgear must meet the ASTM performance standard F3137 and must be permanently labeled with the SEI certification mark. A field player choosing to wear headgear must wear it as the manufacturer intended and securely affixed with the chinstrap in place. USA Lacrosse and the NFHS will continue to work with various sport science/safety groups, rulemaking bodies, and other leaders to understand

best how data will impact policy moving forward. It was reiterated that headgear for both men's and women's players is just one component of an integrated approach to game safety and head injuries. Education, the use of age-appropriate rules, sport-specific training for coaches, and the use of certified game officials are critical factors.

Girls lacrosse eyewear must be SEI-certified and listed on the SEI website. All eyewear must bear the SEI mark for certification by January 1, 2025. In addition, users have the responsibility to maintain the integrity of protective equipment for risk minimization purposes by establishing that equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn.

Additional equipment compliance includes the allowance for goalkeepers to wear a clear, molded and non-rigid helmet eye shield in combination with tinted or clear eyeglasses and that face masks that are soft and non-abrasive be allowed to be worn for health and/or religious reasons. Additionally, players may wear hair ties and other soft, non-rigid items on the arm. Clarification that hair adornments such as beads can be worn in the hair as long as they are secured and do not endanger other players was also reiterated.

Starting in 2023-24, there is a clarification that the goalkeeper's thigh padding must be shorts or pants manufactured with integrated protective padding. Also, the mouth protector rules are aligned with other NFHS sports rules. Compression shirts that meet the NOCSAE ND200 lacrosse standard under the uniform to protect against commotio cordis are allowed for field players and these shirts are not required to meet the color requirements of visible undergarments.

The committee also spoke about how to increase participation in girls lacrosse and also the health and safety of the participants. The opinions included that officials should consistently enforce the rules and coaches should also emphasize the health and safety rules for players. The team culture is very important in increasing and retaining participation in the sport as well as attracting additional coaches. High schools and middle schools working together will also assist in expanding additional programs in girls lacrosse. There was a continual emphasis on making certain that we are supporting coaches – especially female coaches. One of the educators in the room opined that schools have to be diligent in supporting coaches and this philosophy must come from the top down.

2023-24 NFHS RULES BOOK POINTS OF EMPHASIS

This year, the 2023 girls lacrosse rules changes were minimal and continue to align rules to match the flow of the game established by free movement. Many of the rules clarified free position locations for 3-second violations as well as eliminating assessment of a major foul for self-starting outside the critical scoring area. One of the more significant changes is that the duration of play is now four 12-minute quarters rather than 25-minute halves.

The 2023-24 points of emphasis again include stick-to-body contact as well as dangerous play in the 8-meter arc. The MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Committee requested that rules meeting points of emphasis should include sportsmanship and the commitment to fair and ethical play as well as respect for one's opponent and an attitude of goodwill toward all participants. Additional points of emphasis include a knowledge of the rules by both coaches and officials as well as effective management of the game.

TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

A review of the current tournament structure included a discussion of the utilization of the Michigan Power Ranking (MPR) system that is now being utilized in girls lacrosse. Numbers of school teams were also reviewed to examine the expansion of the divisional structure. Information regarding the MPR rating formula included the provision of measuring a team's strength relative to other teams, based on games played against other MHSAA teams' strengths while separating the top two on opposite sides of the bracket in a regional tournament. The rest of the bracket is configured randomly. It will be especially important that scores are reported early and often for this formula to be effective. There was some discussion to have additional teams "seeded" so that the All-State selection would align with the ranking of the team, which was not endorsed by the committee. There was some interest in looking further into expanding into more regions once there is additional growth in the number of teams established in girls lacrosse.

REVIEW OF GIRLS LACROSSE RULES CHANGES PROPOSED

Several years ago, the rule of "sudden victory" overtime was not adopted by the MHSAA Committee. The 2023-24 Girls Lacrosse Committee affirmed that the previous overtime rule will continue to be retained. This includes that when the score is tied at the end of regular playing time and overtime is to be played, both teams

will have a 5-minute rest and toss a coin (visiting captain calls) for choice of ends. Two 3-minute “halves” of overtime will be played. The clock will be stopped after 3 minutes of play in order for teams to change ends with no delay for coaching. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team that is ahead at the end of six minutes wins the game. If the teams are still tied after six minutes have elapsed, the teams will have a 3-minute rest, and change ends. The winner will then be decided on a “sudden victory” stop-clock overtime of no more than six minutes in length with the teams changing ends after 3 minutes. The team scoring the first goal wins the game. Play will continue with “sudden victory” overtime periods of six minutes in length (two 3-minute halves) with 3 minutes in between and change of ends until a winning goal is scored. The committee elected to retain the rule citing there was equal opportunity for play in the established six minutes.

FIFTH QUARTER

Conversation also included the 5th quarter regulation which some sports are currently utilizing. With girls lacrosse now playing quarters rather than halves, the 5th quarter can be more readily instituted. There were some concerns that some coaches were not going to follow the rule and use it to their advantage. If this occurs, utilization of this option would need to be further considered. Regulation II, Section 10 (Limitations of Competition) would need to be altered to read: “A student or team shall participate in no more than five quarters in a day and in no more than three games and/or interscholastic scrimmages of lacrosse in one week (Monday through Sunday), including regular and MHSAA tournament play.” Overtime would be considered an extension of the fourth quarter. Additionally, for purposes of the 5th quarter rule for multi-team tournaments, and if two teams from one school are at the same event, the allowance would be to allow participation in no more halves or quarters than what is being played by the school’s highest team level that day.

RECORD BOOK

There was discussion regarding the record book and how the parameters were established in terms of career victories. Much of the information is established from the NFHS as well as how records have been kept in other sports. If there is information that should be included in the record book, it may be submitted by an MHSAA member school athletic administrator on official letterhead; submitted by a media member or by a member of the public. Appropriate documentation must include copies of scorebooks or game/season statistical summaries, copies of yearbooks, and copies of newspaper clippings. The Record Book is updated on a seasonal basis.

2024 MHSAA GIRLS LACROSSE TOURNAMENT

The teams and schools participating in the 2023 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament were shared with the committee. There may be additional schools that will still offer girls lacrosse in the 2023-24 season. Division 1 and Division 2 enrollment numbers were also studied, and 47 teams are presently in Division 1 (enrollment 1720 and above) and 45 teams are in Division 2 (enrollment 1719 and below). There are 27 cooperative programs in girls lacrosse with 92 teams involving 128 schools. Schools participating in the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament have continued to increase in numbers throughout the years. The initial tournament in 2004-05 consisted of 39 teams (50 schools) to now more than double the current status.

Girls lacrosse tournament dates, Participating School Tournament Information, and the dates regarding online rules meetings were reviewed. The online rules meeting for girls lacrosse will be available on February 12, 2024, and ends on April 18, 2024. Practice for girls lacrosse begins Monday, March 11, 2024, and the first available contest date is Wednesday, March 20, 2024. The 2023 Girls Lacrosse Tournament was also reviewed for additional points of information.

The tournament format and expected regional/semi-final sites were evaluated and there will be four regionals in Division 1 and four regionals in Division 2. Currently, there are several games that will be played as “pre-regional” games. The Division 1 structure is currently at 12-12-12-11 and the Division 2 structure is currently at 11-11-11-12. There will be three field officials for the Regional finals game, the Semi-finals and the Finals. The committee also reviewed the intended regional sites and several sites for the semifinal games. Host managers may host all levels of the Regional Tournament if desired.

The alternate site travel accommodation rule for lacrosse was reviewed which indicates that MHSAA staff may change the date, time and location of a previously scheduled tournament game if the originally scheduled game involves extensive travel for both teams and an acceptable site can be secured. The determination includes consultation with both teams and the Tournament Manager and may require that the competing teams secure an acceptable field.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Provide for the allowance in girls lacrosse, the option to participate in no more than five quarters in a day with overtime considered an extension of the fourth quarter. For multi-team tournaments, if two school teams are at the same event, allow participation in no more halves or quarters than what is being played by the school's highest team level that day. (9-0)