

# Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.

## FOOTBALL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 19, 2022, 9:30 a.m. via Zoom

### Members Present:

Chris Bell, Lake Orion  
Brad Bush, Chelsea  
Chris Ervin, St Johns  
Mike Evoy, MIAAA  
Mike Farley, Grand Haven  
Scott Farley, MHSFCA  
Mary Haslinger, Flint  
Chris Hartman, Kingsford  
Lorenzo Robertson, Kalamazoo  
Brian Lemons, Brighton

Pat Russman, Portland  
Steve Bouvy, Millington  
Vic Michaels, Detroit  
Jim Sparks, Novi  
Michael Fosburg, Remus  
Mike Burger, Pittsford  
John Guth, Warren  
Bradley Brunet, Wyoming  
Doug Haggart, Clare

### Guest:

Kevin Fleming, Fenton, ATC-MAT

### Member Absent:

Matt Bird, Muskegon

### MHSAA Staff:

Will McKoy (Recorder)  
Brent Rice  
Geoff Kimmerly

The committee met for the purpose of reviewing NFHS playing rules, MHSAA regulations and 8-player and 11-player tournament procedures/policies and concerns involving high school football. Following Committee introductions, a review of the 2020 meeting minutes and statement of relationship to the Representative Council the following items were discussed.

### Tournament Review

The committee was provided 2021 Football Playoff information for both the 11-player format and the 8-player formats. The committee talked about participation numbers for 8 player schools involved in the 8-player Finals.

### Discussion Topics

The committee discussed the possibility of increasing the enrollment cutoff for or adding an additional division for 8-player. The committee didn't feel like this would be a good move at this time given decline in participation at all levels and in all divisions. No action was proposed or taken.

A proposal from staff was made to the committee to expand the scope of instant replay at our Finals. Each head coach will be entitled to one challenge during regulation. To initiate a challenge, the head coach must first request and be granted a timeout. Challenges must immediately be presented to the officials after the timeout is granted (i.e., a team that is granted a timeout and then engages in a conference before challenging a call will not be permitted to make a challenge). Challenges will not be permitted if the timeout is not granted prior to the next legal free kick, legal snap, or challenging team's pre-snap foul. All personal or unsportsmanlike fouls will be enforced, even if the call is overturned. If a team has no timeouts remaining in the half (or overtime period), they may not challenge a call. If the call is overturned after review by the replay officials, the timeout will not count against the team's allotted timeouts and the head coach will receive one additional challenge for the remainder of regulation. Each head coach will receive one challenge per overtime period if the team has a timeout available. If a play is overturned, the replay officials will correct all aspects of the play including time, position of the ball and whether the clock will be started on the RFP or snap. The game clock or play clock may be reviewed only as it directly relates to the overturning of a call on the field.

The MHSFCA proposed several rules/regulation changes which included:

- To adjust the Five Quarter rule to include special teams plays. Kicking plays would be exempt from the quarter count in the 5 Quarter per week rule. The committee believes that this is critical for two reasons

including helping programs with low numbers maintain sub-varsity teams, and player safety which allows regular players on small teams to get necessary rest breaks on special teams, provided by players from other levels.

- Seeding of regional instead of districts. The committee discussed if this would make for more equitable district pairings, teams with higher playoff points getting more home games, without significant travel increases.
- Allowing shoulder pads to be worn at college camps: The committee discussed if the current prohibition on shoulder pad use puts Michigan student athletes at a disadvantage in the college recruiting process when competing at college camps with student-athletes from other states. Staff noted that only 3 Big Ten states currently allow shoulder pads at college recruiting camps.
- Adjustment to player ejection penalty. According to the new proposal, football players that are ejected would sit 4 full quarters of play, instead of that contest, plus the next contest. The committee discussed if this would be more equitable. For example, under current rules, a football player ejected in the first quarter of a game will miss approximately 20% of the regular season. Comparatively a basketball player ejected in the fourth quarter of a game would miss only about 5% of his/her regular season.

The committee discussed at length the possibility of changing the football playoff qualification procedure from the current Strength of Schedule Playoff Points to all schools qualify for the tournament. Some on the committee believe that the current system does bigger schools a disservice when required to schedule games versus schools of a smaller division. The committee talked about the difficulty of bigger schools to schedule opponents with the current point structure. Others on the committee believed that more data needs to be collected and the MHSAA should allow the current system to be used for a few more years to see the full effect on scheduling and conference alignments.

The committee also discussed the possibility of allowing homeschool teams to participate at the varsity level against MHSAA member schools. There was no interested in making any changes to this regulation and there was no action taken to make changes to the current restrictions.

### **Recommendations to Representative Council**

1. Approve the expansion of instant replay for the 11-player Football Finals to include that head coaches will be permitted one challenge during the game. (16-2)
2. Expand the use of the "5-quarter rule" to exempt special teams plays (kickoffs and scrimmage kick plays) from the application of the rule. A down in which the offensive team is in a scrimmage kick formation, or a free kick occurs does not count in the quarter limitation. (14-4)
3. Amend the ejection regulation for football which would allow players to only be out for 4 full quarters of play, instead of that contest, plus the next contest. This makes the ejection penalty more equitable. (12-6)
4. Allow Michigan high school football players to wear shoulder pads at college camps that use them. (13-5)
5. Seed playoff regions instead of districts. Football districts will be formatted 1v8 and 4v5 on one side of the bracket, with 2v7 and 3v6 on the other side of the region bracket. (15-0-3)