

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

East Lansing, December 5, 2014

Members Present:

Jim Derocher, Negaunee
Scott Grimes, Grand Haven
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Dave Derocher, Reese
Kris Isom, Adrian
Carmen Kennedy, St. Clair Shores
Maureen Klocke, Yale
Karen Leinaar, Bear Lake
Orlando Medina, Harrison Township
Cheri Meier, Ionia
Jason Mellema, Pewamo-Westphalia
Chris Miller, Gobles
Steve Newkirk, Clare
Pete Ryan, Saginaw
Fred Smith, Buchanan
John Thompson, Brighton
Al Unger, Kingsford
Alvin Ward, Detroit

Member Absent:

Kyle Guerrant, Lansing

Also Present:

Brad Chase, Lansing
Scott Eldridge, Lansing
Sean Jacques, Calumet
Bill Zaagman, Lansing

Staff Members Present:

Tony Bihn
Jordan Cobb
Andy Frushour
Nate Hampton
Cody Inglis
John Johnson
Geoff Kimmerly
Gina Mazzolini
Andi Osters
Tom Rashid
Jack Roberts (Recorder)
Adam Ryder
Mark Uyl
Kathy Vrugink Westdorp

Accounts of Meetings – Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Kris Isom, to approve the following accounts of meetings: Representative Council meeting of May 4-5, 2014; Executive Committee meetings of May 4, June 11, Aug. 6, Aug. 26, Sept. 10, Oct. 1 and Nov. 5, 2014; and Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee meeting of Sept. 30, 2014. Adopted.

REPORTS

Legislation – Bill Zaagman presented the report of Governmental Consultant Services, Inc., discussing general, school and sports issues before the Michigan Legislature.

Litigation – Attorney Scott Eldridge reported to the Council on the status of legal matters of interest to the MHSAA.

Administration – It was reported that the proposed amendment to Article II, Section 2 of the MHSAA Constitution was adopted by a vote of 498 to 29. This will provide some stability for member schools of very small enrollment and to schools with which they may be in cooperative agreements and to the scheduled opponents of those schools.

The executive director reviewed the MHSAA's fall tournaments, including the observation that the weather, overall, was the worst in more than three decades. It was especially bad in November, resulting in a severe decline in attendance at the first four weekends of the MHSAA Football Playoffs, the revenue from which supports numerous other tournaments that are operated at a financial loss.

Andy Frushour reported on several student services, especially the development of an online program for team captains.

John Johnson and Mark Uyl described an initiative called “Be The Referee” which has allowed MHSAA staff to explain rules on a daily radio show and to promote MHSAA programs and services on a weekly television show in the Lansing area, and both the audio and scripts have been posted on the MHSAA.com and Second Half websites.

The executive director detailed the progress of three large projects that have involved MHSAA partnerships with third parties: ArbiterGame, the “School Broadcast Program” with PlayOn! Sports and the NFHS Network, and corporate sales through the Rockbridge Sports Group.

The executive director reviewed the 2014 Update Meeting Opinion Poll, highlighting responses to questions related to discussion and action items on the Representative Council’s agenda. Particular attention was drawn to two questions about MHSAA tournament seeding, both of which were favored by two-thirds of 636 Update Meeting Opinion Poll respondents. One question inquired about seeding at the highest level of team tournaments where all finalists are gathered in one place, much as the MHSAA Team Wrestling Tournament is conducted. The second question asked about seeding the lowest level of team tournaments by placing the two highest seeded teams in each tournament on the top and bottom lines of the bracket and doing a blind draw for all the other teams assigned to that site.

It is anticipated that this topic will be discussed by the MHSAA Classification Committee in January and by all the MHSAA committees for all sports for which one or both of these approaches to seeding may be welcomed. MHSAA staff will work with sport committees to attempt to assure that no proposal advances to the Representative Council that does not provide specific policies, procedures and criteria to implement one or more of these seeding concepts for the particular sport involved and evidence that the proposal has been well vetted and supported by the constituents involved in that sport.

ONGOING BUSINESS

Health & Safety – In terms of time, the MHSAA is at the halfway to two-thirds point in the journey of using “Four Thrusts for Four Years” to focus attention on important health and safety needs of school sports in Michigan; and in terms of initiatives, three of the four action areas have been addressed:

1. Promoting heat and humidity management policies for all sports in all schools – model policy adopted in March 2013 for 2013-14.
2. Requiring more initial and ongoing health and safety training for coaches – new requirements adopted in May 2013 for 2014-15, in December 2013 for 2015-16, and in March 2014 for 2016-17.
3. Revising practice policies, especially in early season, to improve acclimatization and reduce head trauma – football practice policy adopted in March 2014 for 2014 season.

The remaining area to address more thoroughly is to examine game rules to reduce head trauma and the frequency of the most dangerous play situations in each sport.

The Council also reviewed the longer (eight-year) plan that has had the MHSAA addressing four “H”s of health and safety: (1) **Health Histories** – in 2009-10 and 2010-11, upgrading the preparticipation physical examination form to include more attention to the health history of student-athletes; (2) **Heads** – in 2011-12 and 2012-13, adopting return-to-play protocols following head trauma; (3) **Heat** – in 2013-14 and 2014-15, adopting and promoting a model policy for the management of heat and humidity; and (4) **Hearts** – in 2015-16 and 2016-17, promoting the need for emergency plans and AEDs and implementing the CPR requirement for all high school varsity head coaches.

Junior High/Middle School Issues – Mark Uyl and Cody Inglis provided a final report of the Junior High/Middle School Task Force which met four times during 2014. In March, the Task Force lent a supportive voice to the MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee recommendations to allow MHSAA member junior high/middle schools to increase the length of quarters in basketball from six minutes to a maximum of eight and to increase the length of quarters in football from eight minutes to a maximum of ten. Those changes were approved by the Representative Council in March.

In September, the Task Force prepared a recommendation to the Junior High/Middle School Committee in January and to the Representative Council in March to propose to the MHSAA membership a formal amendment to Section 1 of Article II of the MHSAA Constitution that changes to 6th grade the lowest grade which MHSAA member junior high/middle schools may include in their enrollment, and to modify Regulation III, Section 1(C) to allow these schools to permit 6th-graders' participation with and against 7th- and 8th-graders in all sports except football and ice hockey without the necessity of seeking specific annual waiver from the MHSAA.

The Task Force supports continuing discussion of modest MHSAA tournament opportunities at the junior high/middle school level but did not make a recommendation as to how or when such plans should be made.

The Representative Council raised several important issues that the Junior High/Middle School Committee must address as it considers in January the Task Force proposal to revise the Constitution and *Handbook* regulations and interpretations.

International Students – At its meeting on March 21, 2014, the Representative Council adopted a package of proposals with the objective of equalizing the treatment of J-1 and F-1 visa students and the impact of Federal law on public and nonpublic schools with respect to participation opportunities for international students.

The centerpiece of these changes was to establish an MHSAA process to review international student programs for which the policies and procedures of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel did not provide access.

The new transfer rules of the MHSAA now permit one immediate academic year of varsity level eligibility for both J-1 and F-1 visa students, provided those students have been placed by an "Approved International Student Program" (AISP) and meet all other MHSAA eligibility requirements. The Executive Committee approved all the programs listed by CSIET (full, provisional and conditional), plus five programs of MHSAA member schools which have not had access to CSIET's process. Four commercial programs that could have but did not attempt to get CSIET approval were refused AISP listing.

Michigan leads the nation both in the number of J-1 visa students enrolled in its secondary schools and the total number of both J-1 and F-1 visa students enrolled in these schools. Among the reasons for this leadership position are (1) that the late starting date of fall classes provides openings in Michigan that have closed in states that begin classes much earlier; and (2) that declining student populations and revenues motivate school district leadership to seek international students as a source of replacement funding.

Corresponding with the increase in international student enrollment has been an increase in "direct placements" whereby CSIET-listed programs depart from the principle of blind placement and attempt to accommodate the desire to match students with host families with which they have developed a relationship previously, most frequently being the result of hosting students' siblings. Corresponding with the increase in direct placements, MHSAA staff now conducts inquiry into each direct placement reported by the CSIET and NFHS.

The associate director described recently developing situations that raise concern when several foreign exchange students are matched with several host families who have children with the same sport interest. Sometimes, without intent or knowledge of wrongdoing, an unfair competitive advantage is gained in the sport through the foreign exchange student exception to the transfer rule.

The Council reviewed continuing issues and emerging trends related to this topic that will require close oversight by staff and the potential need for additional changes in MHSAA policies and procedures, including the unwelcomed possibility of a requirement that every student whose legal residence is outside the United States will be processed through a form that allows MHSAA staff to review the circumstances and make decisions regarding athletic eligibility as well as limiting the number of international students on any one varsity sports team.

The Council will determine in March if the MHSAA's process for reviewing school-operated international student programs should continue for an additional year, given schools' confusion over CSIET new policies and procedures and a January deadline for applications that many schools may miss.

Coaches Association Awards at MHSAA Finals – At its May 2014 meeting, the Representative Council revisited this topic by receiving a summary of what might be requested if coaches associations were permitted to present their awards at MHSAA tournaments and a worksheet to provide staff feedback regarding opinions and preferences on this topic. Based on this, staff prepared the following recommendation:

The MHSAA-recognized coaches association for each sport may request permission to present one or more awards at the MHSAA finals of that tournament, and the MHSAA director in charge of that tournament may provide an opportunity for the recognition, subject to these conditions:

1. Awards must be for **students**, not adults.
2. Complimentary admission is limited to the honored **student(s) only**.
3. Recognition may include:
 - PA announcement(s).
 - On floor/field/deck during normal break in action.
 - On LED, if available.
 - In souvenir program, if any.

Motion by Steve Newkirk, supported by Fred Smith, to approve this MHSAA tournament policy. Adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

Tobacco and Alcohol Policy – At its Aug. 6, 2014 meeting, the Executive Committee approved the following changes to the tournament managers materials as follows (underscored is new):

“Use of alcohol or tobacco, including e-cigarettes or other smoking devices, is prohibited at MHSAA tournament events by players, coaches and spectators. Managers should stress in coaches meetings that they are not to use tobacco at the tournament venue.”

The Council was requested to approve this change for Page 101 of the 2015-16 *Handbook*:

“For coaches and officials at all MHSAA tournaments, use of tobacco products including e-cigarettes or other smoking devices of any kind within sight of players and spectators and use of alcohol during a contest or at any time before it on the day of the contest is prohibited.”

Motion by Karen Leinaar, supported by Kris Isom, to approve this policy revision for the 2015-16 *MHSAA Handbook*. Adopted.

Out-of-Season Coaching – MHSAA staff has been floating ideas and facilitating discussions toward the end of answering these questions: “How can MHSAA rules be modified to permit more constructive involvement by school coaches with student-athletes out of season without forcing those coaches and students to focus year-round on a single sport, and how can the rules be simplified to better facilitate understanding, compliance and enforcement?”

To date, the following has occurred:

1. Discussed new concepts at July-September league meetings (Tom Rashid reviewed input).
2. Discussed at AD In-Service meetings in September and October (Tom Rashid reviewed input).
3. Addressed at Update meetings.
4. Inquired on 2014 Update Meeting Opinion Poll (results were reviewed by the Council).
5. Surveyed all athletic directors in late October (results were reviewed by the Council).
6. Distributed to all leagues and conferences in November a League Discussion Guide and League Questionnaire.

The next steps are as follows:

7. Major topic of Coaches Associations Presidents Dinner – Jan. 26, 2015.
8. Major topic of League/Conference Leadership meeting – Feb. 11, 2015.
9. Follow-up discussions with league leadership at MIAAA – March 22, 2015.
10. Representative Council discussion – March 27, 2015.
11. Second follow-up discussion with league leadership – TBD.
12. Representative Council discussion and possible action – May 3 and 4, 2015.

MHSAA Tournament Promotion – Assistant Director Mark Uyl described the work of an in-house “MHSAA Tournament Promotion and Marketing Task Force” that has met numerous times since August. This group is examining how to improve attendance at MHSAA tournaments and the customer experience. Seven proposed initiatives were described in moderate detail, and each Council member was provided a “Blue Sky Survey” on which to register his or her opinion regarding 43 other ideas.

Council members expressed support for the MHSAA filling a position which markets MHSAA tournament tickets and does so at early as well as final rounds of MHSAA tournaments.

Women in Sports Leadership Award – There were five candidates for the Women in Sports Leadership Award, reduced from 13 nominees by the MHSAA Awards Committee. These were presented to the Representative Council for a vote. The name of the recipient will be released at an appropriate time and the recipient will be honored during the MHSAA Girls Basketball Finals on March 21, 2015.

Charles E. Forsythe Award – There were five candidates, reduced from 13 nominees by the Awards Committee, for the Charles E. Forsythe Award presented to the Representative Council for a ballot vote. The name of the recipient will be released at an appropriate time and the recipient will be honored during the Boys Basketball Final Tournament on March 28, 2015.

Meeting Expenses – Expenses for this meeting were approved at the specified hotel rate for accommodations, the IRS-specified meal allowance and a 40¢ per mile mileage allowance round-trip.

Future Meetings – The next meeting of the Representative Council will be held on Friday, March 27, 2015, 8:15 a.m. at the MHSAA building in East Lansing. The spring meeting of the Representative Council will be held May 3-4, 2015, at The Homestead Resort in Glen Arbor. The fall meeting will be held on Friday, Dec. 4, 2015, at the MHSAA building in East Lansing.

The meeting was adjourned.