

MHSAA BASEBALL COMMITTEE MINUTES

East Lansing, January 15, 2020

Members Present:

Chris Andrews, Portage
Joel Bont, Byron Center
Mike Brya, DeWitt
Jeff Calcaterra, Bloomfield Hills
Jim Conway, Mt. Pleasant
Brian Gordon, Rochester Hills
Rick Noorman, Grand Rapids
Brian Osborn, Howell
Scott Salow, Homer

Todd Szalka, Trenton
Don Watchowski, Rochester
John Young, Howell

Others Present:

Rich Kieft, MATS

Staff Present:

Brent Rice (Recorder)

The 2019-20 MHSAA Baseball Committee met to review topics involving MHSAA Baseball. Agenda items were compiled from correspondence, staff, committee members and the baseball coaches association. After introductions were completed, the committee reviewed the terms of appointment to the Baseball Committee, the charge and mission of the group relative to the decision-making process and the minutes from the previous meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Tournament Trophy Presentation Format: The committee discussed concerns regarding the presentation of trophies for the Super Regional level of the tournament, which includes both the winner and loser of the Super Regional game receiving trophies. Correspondence was reviewed which described the presentation ceremony as awkward and uncomfortable. A number of options were discussed, ultimately concluding with the suggestion to eliminate the Super Regional name ("Quarterfinal") and trophy, provide each Regional Final winner a Regional trophy and to distribute the trophies between the second Regional Final game and the Quarterfinal game. No change was suggested for the date, time or schedule format.

Tournament Date Considerations: Committee members discussed scheduled dates and days of the District tournament. It was the consensus of the committee that the scheduled dates following Memorial Day are set at the appropriate time.

The committee reviewed District draw options, including the provision for District groups to play District Semifinal and Final games on Friday instead of Saturday. Citing several disagreements between schools during the 2019 season, committee members agreed that District tournament hosts should obtain written agreement from all participating teams if the District is to be played on the Friday. Said agreement should be received prior to the District draw.

The committee had a lengthy discussion about the impact of which day schools played their Semifinal contests. Historical information of the current format was provided regarding travel considerations, and it was compared with considerations for pitching options in light of the recent pitch-count regulations.

Junior High/Middle School Participation: Growing the game of baseball within junior high and middle school athletic programs continues to be a challenge. The committee discussed that school-based programs were initially reduced as a result of budget cuts, and the space was quickly filled with non-school programs. Limited team membership regulations were also cited as

a contributing factor. One potential solution was to increase the number of non-school competitions that are allowed under limited team membership rules.

Regular Season Suspended Games:

The committee reviewed newly proposed language for determining whether/when/how games should be suspended during the regular season. The committee discussed how a suspended game rule would increase consistency, improve adherence to current regulation game rules and reduce unsporting gamesmanship between opponents. Consistency in the application of suspended game rules was mentioned as especially important if the sport were to ever move to a seeded postseason tournament. The intent and language of the rule was debated extensively and the committee decided to amend it so that the default of a called game not completed by rule would be a suspended game, and that only the school administrators would have the ability to agree on additional options provided in the rule. It was determined that this rule would mirror the policy currently utilized up to the Semifinal level of the MHSAA Baseball Tournament.

Discussion Items – No Action:

1. 2019 Update Meeting Question #10: Employment/ownership of sport training facilities by school coaches.
2. Lower registration numbers for baseball umpires due to (1) early scheduled start times, (2) relatively lower officials' fees than other sports and (3) high start-up costs.
3. NOCSAE standard requirements for playing equipment in 2020.
4. Pitch count discussion and option recording/reporting pitch counts using an electronic third-party application.
5. MHSAA travel regulation regarding scrimmages during travel for a spring break.
6. 2018-19 MHSAA Head Injury Report for Baseball.
7. NFHS rule changes, major editorial changes and points of emphasis.

Recommendations to the Representative Council:

1. Beginning in the 2019-20 season, rename the Super Regional level of the MHSAA Baseball Tournament to "Quarterfinal". Additionally, eliminate the trophies and medals for the Super Regional (Quarterfinal) winners and provide each winner of the Regional Finals a Regional championship trophy, to be handed out to both schools between the end of the second Regional Final game and the Super Regional (Quarterfinal) game. (12-0)
2. Make the following changes to the Semifinal level of the MHSAA Baseball Tournament: Divisions 2 and 4 will play Semifinal games on Thursday during even-numbered years, and Divisions 1 and 3 will play Semifinal games on Friday. Divisions 1 and 3 will play Semifinal games on Thursday during odd-numbered years, and Divisions 2 and 4 will play Semifinal game on Friday. (12-0)
3. Add a suspended game policy to the MHSAA playing rule adoptions for baseball in the *MHSAA Handbook*. This policy provides that, by default, a game will be suspended any time the game is called before it reaches regulation, or if called any time with the score tied. (12-0)