

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETING

East Lansing, January 9, 2019

Members Present:

Kathy Bondsteel, Jonesville
Greg Gallas, Wyoming
Jay Green, Kingston
Jason Kemler, Brethren
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Steve Newkirk, Clare
Brian Osborn, Fowlerville
Mike Roberts, Hillsdale
Pete Ryan, Saginaw
Jon Studley, West Branch
John Thompson, Brighton

Al Unger, Kingsford
Robert Vandenberg, Martin
Pat Watson, West Bloomfield

Member Absent:

Kevin Guzzo, St. Joseph

Staff Members Present:

Tony Bihn
Tom Rashid
Mark Uyl (Recorder)

INTRODUCTION

Origins of the Classification Committee trace back to the 1980s when a forum was created to discuss relationships between public and nonpublic schools, which resulted in some policy changes, especially related to the transfer rule. When the ad hoc committee was made a standing committee, two additional purposes were established: (1) to perform intermediate review (between sport committees and the Representative Council) of proposals related to MHSAA tournament classification for a sport; and (2) to review proposals related to the policies and procedures of counting students and collecting enrollment figures for school classification purposes as well as proposals affecting tournament classification generally.

Because the makeup of this committee usually reflects broader diversity than MHSAA sport committees in that its makeup has fewer coaches and more administrators, and there is usually strong representation of diverse school size, location and demographics, the Classification Committee is also asked to respond to subjects that are not directly related to classification. The Classification Committee has become the principal forum for reviewing policies and procedures related to cooperative programs.

Minutes of the 2018 meeting of the Classification Committee were reviewed.

SPORTS SPONSORSHIP UPDATE

An update was provided on current MHSAA membership demographics, which included current numbers of traditional public high schools, public school academies and nonpublic high schools. Statistics on school sponsorship by sport were provided, along with information on current opt-ups and classification ranges. It was noted that traditional public high schools comprise 78 percent of the membership and 76 percent of all 2018 fall championships were won by those traditional public high schools.

FOOTBALL

A long conversation took place on football, with both the 11-player and 8-player games being discussed. Staff shared fall football survey results from the Update meetings, online coaches survey and 8-player online surveys that focused primarily on regular season scheduling issues and the MHSAA tournament. Much feedback was provided by committee members which will be shared with the MHSAA Football Committee on Jan. 24. The major items identified included:

1. 8-Player Tournament Eligibility Cap – Support does exist for a hard, fixed number for tournament eligibility rather than the current floating number of Class D schools from both survey data and the Classification Committee. The current one-year grace period was noted for a school which was tournament eligible but then was not eligible due to an increase in enrollment above the Class D limit.

2. Encourage further discussion and consideration of the “strength of schedule” proposal for 11-player football from 2018 as the most logical next step to address scheduling and tournament issues. If this change does not adequately address current problems, the next steps would include other approaches such as doubling the playoff field and reducing the regular season by one week or having the MHSAA drive the regular season scheduling process.

SEEDING

The committee revisited this topic from last year’s meeting and reviewed the questions on seeding that were included in the fall Update meeting survey of 2018. Staff has developed a seeding formula that could be used in a number of team sports, but the committee was again reminded that any consideration of seeding will be done through the committee process on a sport-by-sport basis with approval ultimately coming from the Representative Council.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

A lengthy report was given on all elements of cooperative programs – philosophy, deadlines, student enrollment limits, renewals, dissolutions and current issues. Committee members recognized that deadline dates for both new programs as well as late dissolutions of others can create problems, but current approaches to these concerns seem to be working.

The five different types of cooperative programs were reviewed, including the most recent of allowing subvarsity agreements in all sports and the allowance for schools of the same district to form agreements in nine sports without regard to enrollment maximum. This multi-school-district experiment was extended by the Representative Council in November 2018 for an additional two years. The committee discussed the possibility of increasing the enrollment cap for 11-player football from 1,000 students to a higher number such as 1,400 that might permit a Class B and Class C school to form an agreement.

BOARDING SCHOOL UPDATE

An update was given on recent conversations and concerns from the Representative Council on boarding schools and international students. Staff convened a meeting of the five member boarding schools on Nov. 12, 2018, to learn more about the mission, structure and future plans of each boarding school. Following this meeting, staff has met with representatives of the two metro Detroit area boarding schools, and possible approaches and ideas regarding international students were discussed. This topic will be revisited by the Representative Council on March 23, and the Classification Committee provided input that assisted in preparation for this next meeting.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Committee member items included a request that staff further investigate participation rules (e.g., quarters played instead of one game) to help preserve small school programs at both the varsity and subvarsity levels in football, basketball and girls volleyball. Also, a question was asked regarding participation numbers in girls competitive cheer as the consensus within the group was that numbers of participants seemed to be down in many areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

None.