

2023-24 MHSAA CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK AND FIELD COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Friday, January 26, 2024 - 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mike Buslepp, Romeo
Lewis Clingman, Grand Rapids (ATOM)
Jerry Haggerty, Wayland
Jason Hemgesberg, Chesaning
Steve Linn, Deckerville (MITCA)
Joe Lower, Rochester Hills
Mike Nesbitt, Bay City
Gordie Richardson, Gaylord (ATOM)

Tim Ritsema, Jenison (MIAAA)
Michael Schley, Wyandotte
Cari Scholtens, Greenville
Fred Smith, Bangor
Ben Tarbutton, Mancelona
Connor Thomas, Mason
Mike VanDyke, Grand Rapids

GUESTS

Rich Kieft (MATS)

MHSAA STAFF

Cody Inglis (Recorder)

The committee met to review specific National Federation sport rules, MHSAA tournament policies, and interpretations that apply to Track and Field and Cross Country during the regular season and MHSAA tournaments. The following is a review of items discussed by the committee and recommendations to staff for inclusion in tournament information and recommendations that will advance for Representative Council consideration.

Following the welcome, introductions, statement of committee purpose, and the committee's relationship to the Representative Council, the following business was conducted:

DISCUSSION ITEMS

TRACK & FIELD

2023 Committee Minutes and Recommendations were reviewed.

MHSAA Regional JH/MS XC and Track & Field competition was reviewed. The committee agreed to continue in these MHSAA JH / MS competition areas. While the MHSAA XC Regional is not a permanent fixture in MHSAA tournaments, Track and Field continues in its pilot program status for a second year. Lessons learned from the first two years of the MHSAA JH/MS competition were discussed, and tweaks were made to each site, race structure, communication, pre-meet information, and number of competitors.

2024 National Federation rules and editorial changes for Track & Field and Cross Country were reviewed and discussed.

A review of the pilot program of Wheelchair Track and Field after 2023, its' second year. At the 2023 MHSAA Regional and Final Track & Field tournaments, the MHSAA established a Track & Field category for wheelchair participants in four events. These events included the 100m, 200m, 400m, and shot put. The discussion strongly supported the continuation of this program; including strong support to make this category a permanent part of the MHSAA tournament. With six total student-athletes involved in 2023, there is room for growth. The promotion of the wheelchair category was also discussed and will be done through MITCA and the MHSAA rules meetings.

Additional Qualifying Standards for Track and Field Regionals and Finals were reviewed as compiled by the MHSAA Track and Field Standards Committee that met in November 2023.

Participating School Tournament Information and Manager Materials – The committee reviewed both documents.

2024 Track and Field Finals sites were reviewed:

Division 1: East Kentwood HS

Division 2: Hamilton HS

Division 3: Kent City HS

Division 4: Hudsonville: Baldwin Middle School

Coaches being allowed on the infield at Final meets continues to be reviewed. There were challenges to this new concept being introduced at the Finals with it being used as intended. This included too many coaches and time spent in the coaches' boxes. While the committee supports this concept, if it can't be used as intended, coaches will not be allowed on the infield during competition. Finals hosts will continue to implement systems that fit their venues.

MHSAA Finals qualification standards were discussed at length related to when qualification could occur. MITCA presented an early automatic qualification proposal that generated much discussion and support. A proposal to the Representative Council was approved unanimously by the committee. Beginning in 2025, establish an early automatic qualifying window to allow athletes to qualify for the MHSAA Finals throughout the regular season at any meeting that meets the Early AQ guidelines and standards.

MITCA discussion on the Team State competition conducted for 27 years by MITCA continues, and there is a desire among some to pursue this as an option like the sport of Wrestling. The committee discussed a potential proposal, including protocols, scheduling, structure, and timing. The committee continues to recommend further discussion within MITCA before a proposal.

Discussion ensued regarding extending the season to June, including two weeks between Regional meets and Finals. While no proposal was forwarded, there was a discussion about a calendar change.

Indoor Track and potential MHSAA sponsorship of this sport continues. There is sentiment to see if the MHSAA would be interested in adding this sport to its sports tournament offerings. There is also a large percentage of MHSAA coaches who either fail to understand the out-of-season coaching rules or choose to ignore them during the indoor season. This continues to be an issue that the MHSAA will address by pursuing programs and coaches who don't follow the agreed-upon rules. The committee continues to recommend that the MHSAA convene a subcommittee to bring all parties to the table regarding this potential ask in the sport. This subcommittee will meet to gauge interest and discuss opportunities and challenges associated with any potential addition.

Continued discussion regarding adding the Discus event to the JH/MS order of events while removing the 70 m dash. There is still no consensus in this area for the track committee to determine whether a change is necessary. Continued survey results from MITCA and the MHSAA will be reviewed, but no change was suggested.

The committee discussed metric measurements after receiving correspondence from MHSAA staff. At this time, no consideration was given to changing the current system of measuring field events.

Cross Country

Review of 2023 Cross Country Tournament

- Live Results

2024 Cross Country Calendar:

- LP Finals – Michigan International Speedway – Sat., Nov. 2
- UP Finals – Host: Munising HS – Sat., Oct. 19
- LP Regionals – Oct. 25 or 26
- First Practice – Aug. 12
- First Competition – Aug. 16

Site Selection Committee – May 1, 2024

The committee was appraised of MHSAA survey results and staff discussions on 5 divisions in some sports which could include Cross Country and/or Track.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MHSAA STAFF

1. MHSAA staff will establish an Indoor Track and Field subcommittee to discuss this sport.
2. MHSAA Staff will continue to work with Michigan Special Olympics to conduct Unified events at MHSAA Finals in Track and Field.
3. Add a point of emphasis regarding heat and flight sizes.
4. Continue to emphasize in rules meetings and with officials and coaches the MHSAA T&F wheelchair program to grow and enhance the program.
5. Continue to discuss how health and safety remain a primary focus.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. The MHSAA will permanently establish a Track & Field category for wheelchair/adaptive participants in four events. The events will include the 100m, 200m, 400m and shot put. (15-0)
2. Beginning in 2025, establish an early automatic qualifying window to allow athletes to qualify for the MHSAA Finals throughout the regular season at any meeting that meets the Early AQ guidelines and standards. (15-0)