

## 2023 MHSAA MIDDLE SCHOOL / JUNIOR HIGH COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday October 25, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - MHSAA

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Cravotta, DeWitt  
Jason Kemler, Manistee  
Garnett Kohler, Yale  
Jean LaClair, Bronson  
Jolinda Lucas, Grand Rapids (MIAAA)  
Jason Morris, Chelsea (MIAAA)  
Fred Smith, Bangor

Adam Stefanski, Boyne City  
JD Wheeler, Hartland  
Matt Windle, Boyne City  
Jon Zajac, Tecumseh

### MHSAA STAFF

Brad Bush  
Cody Inglis

The MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee met to review topics identified for discussion by the MHSAA staff, Representative Council, and member schools. The committee reviewed the meeting minutes and recommendations from the 2022-2023 school year. A review of advancements in rules over the past 5-7 years related to middle school athletics was discussed.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### MHSAA WEBSITE; SPECIFIC MIDDLE SCHOOL SECTION TO THE WEBSITE

There was a recommendation from the committee (11-0) for the MHSAA staff to develop a middle school tab or section to the website. This would include middle school rules meetings, requirements, regional host information, and tabs related to middle school under each sport. This was seen particularly important considering the new CPR requirements for middle school head coaches starting in the 2024 school year. See page 92 of the *MHSAA Handbook*.

#### REGIONAL CROSS COUNTRY AND TRACK MEET UPDATES

A review and discussion of middle school cross country and track regionals was shared. A discussion on dividing races by school size, number of medals, and potentially assigning schools to the regional within their zone. There were over 6,500 male and female runners this fall at the cross-country regionals. There was much discussion of the format and qualifying times for the track regionals. It was the recommendation of the committee to allow for 2 entries per event for a school. A third athlete could qualify if they meet the qualifying standard. There were 229 schools that participated this past spring in a regional track meet.

#### WRESTLING WEIGHT CLASS UPDATES

A review of the new wrestling weight classes was discussed. The committee felt the first year of the new weight classes was a positive for schools and athletes.

#### RULES VARIATION AND THE NEED FOR MHSAA APPROVAL AND 5<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER REQUEST

The committee discussed the need for leagues to make a request in writing for any rule's variance for any sport. Examples were shared with the committee. A full discussion on the process of how to request a rules variance was held. The committee also felt the need to keep high school and middle school 5<sup>th</sup> quarter rules separate. Small schools that qualify for middle school students to compete at the high school level should not be eligible to have an athlete to compete in a middle school and high school game on the same date.

#### ELIGIBILITY ADVANCEMENT FORM; POSSIBLE COVID IMPACT

The Eligibility Advancement Form was reviewed and discussed. The potential for more students to qualify exists due to many students that were held back during the pandemic. The committee recommended that we continue to discuss this issue at the annual fall AD In-Service.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL RED SHIRT ISSUE**

Many committee members indicated that they are seeing more examples of students that are repeating middle school grades for strictly athletic purposes. The committee felt this is strictly a local school district decision. It was agreed to continue to monitor the situation statewide but to allow schools to make decisions locally.

### **NEW SOCIAL MEDIA RULE AND IMPACT / LINKS RULE**

A review of the new social media Rule related to coaches following or liking middle school students outside of their school district was held. Committee members felt this is a good rule. Many committee members indicated that some districts have policy that would also not allow this behavior. The middle school committee also would support a links rule for middle school students in grades 7 and 8. This would be an expansion of the current links rule. The survey results from the fall AD In-Service was shared with the group related to the expansion of the links rule.

### **SURVEY HOW MANY SCHOOLS USE 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS**

The committee recommends a survey to member schools to determine how many schools allow 6<sup>th</sup> graders on their middle school teams, what sports they can play, and if they offer stand-alone 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams.

### **WAIVER APPLICATION FOR USING 7/8 GRADE STUDENTS AT HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL**

The committee recommends requiring league approval when schools are approved for using middle school students at the high school level. This would match the cooperative process. (11-0) Similarly to the cooperative process, this would allow for some local oversight and vetting of the situation.

### **NEW RULE: CPR CERTIFICATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL HEAD COACHES**

The new requirement for the 2024-2025 school year was reviewed and discussed. There was discussion of the need for more AEDs in schools and portable units for all venues.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

None.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. – Virtual