

Finals Have Major Impact On Local Economy

For years and years, the greater Lansing area hosted the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Boys Basketball Semifinals and Finals.

Visitors flocked to the area, filled local hotels, including the old Jack Tar -- the headquarters for the tournament; and play was spread all over town. The games were the talk of the town.

In 1994, the semifinals and finals returned. This time in a new format, with all of the games being played over a three-day period at the Breslin Student Events Center, a short walk from the long-time venue -- Jenison Fieldhouse.

The tradition of a festive weekend in greater Lansing is being reestablished -- and the financial numbers bear that out.

A study conducted during the 1996 MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals indicates that the event is a financial boon to its host community, creating \$10.4 million in direct spending and an economic impact in excess of over \$20 million.

Pace and Partners, a Lansing based full-service marketing firm, surveyed final attendees a year ago as part of a larger study for the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Boys Basketball finals was one of 25 events, sports and non-sports related, where surveys were taken.

The survey estimated that over 50,000 of the 63,000-plus spectators at last year's finals came from outside the greater Lansing area, and that four out

of every ten visitors stayed overnight at least one night. The average visitor spent \$208.51. Those individuals surveyed staying overnight spent an average of \$410.38, spending more on hotel rooms and dining than the non-sports visitor during the 1996 study period.

A total of \$2.9 million was spent on hotel rooms in 1996, and an additional \$1 million was spent in hotel food and beverage establishments. An additional \$1.9 million was spent at other food and beverage outlets in the community. Combining other spending at the event

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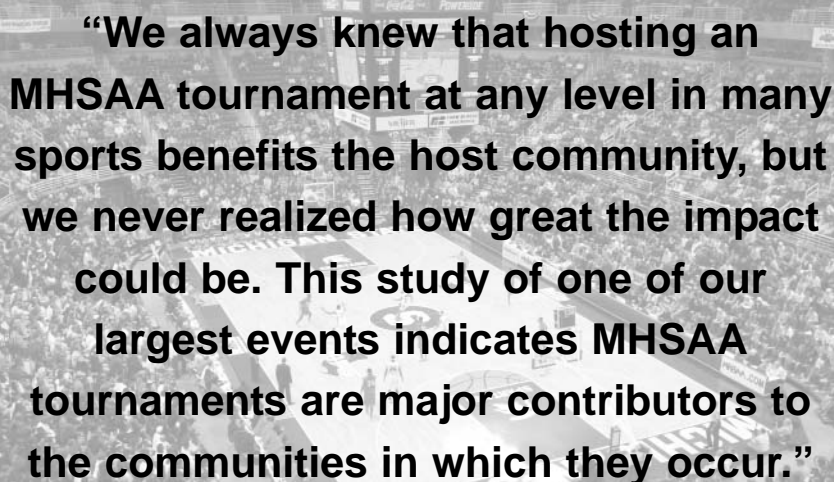
"It appears that the MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals is the largest, single-weekend, annual sporting event in the greater Lansing area," Roberts continued. "We're in the process of completing an arrangement to make the Breslin Center the home of this event for many years to come, and we think this is an exciting time for this community."

"We conducted the economic impact survey to find out just how much money was being spent while visitors are in town. We were very pleased with the overall findings of the study and were especially pleased with the impact the Boys Basketball Finals has on this community," said Tom Galyon, who was president of the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau at the time of the study.

"It was very exciting four years ago when the MHSAA decided to hold the Boys Basketball Finals in this area again," Galyon continued. "We look forward to a long-term partnership with this event and the enthusiasm and sportsmanship it brings to our area."

Since the finals returned to the greater Lansing area four years ago under the three-day, one site format, attendance has averaged over 65,000 per year.

(Reprinted from the 1997 MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals program)



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**— John E. "Jack" Roberts
MHSAA Executive Director**

venue, retail stores and area attractions, the total dollars spent totaled \$10.4 million.

Figuring a conservative multiplier that every dollar spent at the tournament is spent again in the community 1.5 times, the overall impact of the tournament is at least \$26 million.

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