



Mark Uyl, Executive Director

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TO: MHSAA Member Schools  
FROM: Mark Uyl, Executive Director  
DATE: October 23, 2020  
SUBJECT: Representative Council Action- Final Fall Details & Winter Sport Updates

The MHSAA Representative Council met on Oct. 22 and took the following actions on a number of fall and winter sports items and issues.

- Football Final locations for both the 11-player and 8-player tournaments will be finalized and announced in the next few days.
- For 11-player Football Semifinal games in 2020, the team with the greater number of playoff points will host the Semifinal game. If the distance using Apple Maps between the two Semifinal schools is 200 miles or more, the MHSAA will assign that game at a prearranged site if one can be secured in a reasonable location. Host schools with the most playoff points has always been the practice in 8-player Semifinal games, and this will continue again in 2020.
- Winter sports practices and competition are scheduled to begin on time. Schools or conferences may decide to delay the start of winter sports practices or competition and reduce the number of regular-season competitions. No changes to published MHSAA tournament dates are currently proposed.
- Like fall sports, scrimmages are prohibited in all winter sports; the only occasions where students from different schools can be together is for official games, matches, meets and competitions.
- Updated winter sports guidance documents for the safe return to activity will be posted at MHSAA.com early next week. This guidance will include general information along with sport-specific directives for students, coaches, staff, officials and media members.
- Regular-season competition limits in winter sports will restrict the number of teams and individuals at any one competition site. The concept is winter competition will take place as locally as possible with no large-scale events, invitationals or tournaments during the regular season. Out-of-state competition for Michigan schools must follow these MHSAA limitations. The maximum number of schools present at an invitational or tournament shall not exceed . . .
  - Four (4) schools/teams in competitive cheer, gymnastics, swimming & diving and wrestling. In middle school basketball where multiple games are allowed in a day, these events are also limited to no more than 4 schools/teams.
  - No more than 72 individual competitors in bowling or skiing.
  - In dual competition sports such as basketball and ice hockey, where only one game is permitted for a team in a day, host sites must strictly enforce spectator capacity limits on a game-by-game basis. In addition, host sites must actively manage sanitation and cleaning protocols during transition times between games, such as during a freshman-JV-varsity tripleheader or between games of a holiday showcase when a number of teams rotate through a facility during the day. Event organizers and venues must consider proper scheduling, seating areas, and crowd entry and exit to facilitate needed sanitizing and physical distancing protocols.

- For all winter sports, all competition will begin with the 2-spectator-per-participant limitation. Local schools will determine participants connected to athletic events (sideline cheer, dance, pompon, etc.) and in all cases, the maximum number of spectators must be within all MDHHS limitations. For participants who have parents/guardians in excess of two individuals, schools are encouraged to use common sense and flexibility in managing those situations. More updates on spectator policies will be forthcoming as MDHHS guidance changes and is updated in the coming weeks.
- Current MDHHS guidance requires face coverings for athletes in basketball, competitive cheer, ice hockey and wrestling at all times. Face coverings are optional for athletes in active participation in bowling, gymnastics and skiing but would be required at all other times when not involved in active participation.

The MHSAA will continue to be nimble and flexible in these uncertain times. We will continue to provide updates and possible modifications based on the most current information, directives from state government and health department officials and member school feedback.

In closing, the latest research and data informs us all that COVID is not being spread during the school day, at athletic practices or during games between teammates and opponents. However, we are learning that many activities loosely connected to schools and school sports are creating COVID challenges for school districts. Events such as team dinners, “5<sup>th</sup> Quarter” gatherings at homes and restaurants following games and other team-connected but non-athletic social gatherings on the weekends with little to no mitigation measures of face coverings and social distancing is causing COVID numbers in Michigan to increase, putting the in-person academic day and school sports seasons at risk in many parts of our state. We encourage everyone to renew efforts in following all published guidance and directives so seasons may continue to start, progress and finish with closure for each team and student.

This fall has been incredibly tough on school administrators, coaches and staff as we navigate these uncertain times on a day-to-day basis. Please know that the MHSAA thanks everyone as you continue to manage the daily challenges and hurdles connected to COVID in giving our kids the much-needed normalcy and experience of school sports. For many kids in Michigan, this has been the one “normal” for everyone over the past seven months. Again, please know your leadership and work for kids is noticed, appreciated and valued beyond words. THANK YOU!