



michigan high school athletic association

Mark Uyl, Executive Director

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TO: MHSAA Member Schools
FROM: Mark Uyl, Executive Director
DATE: August 6, 2020
SUBJECT: Live Video Allowed For Reduced Spectator Events

The MHSAA Executive Committee has approved a waiver of the MHSAA HANDBOOK regulation related to live video of regular season and MHSAA Tournament events. Here's a rundown of the key points of that action:

- Member schools participating in the School Broadcast Program with the NFHS Network either with traditional hands-on crews or using the Network's automated production solution – Pixellot – will continue to live stream all possible games with traditional crews and all events taking place where a Pixellot unit is installed.
- Member schools not participating in the School Broadcast Program may use their own resources and a platform of their own choice to live stream events without restrictions.
- Member schools not participating in the School Broadcast Program may assign the live streaming rights to a local third party if they choose to do so.
- Local over-the-air TV stations and cable channels may broadcast games live.

Full details of the regular-season and tournament guidelines follow this cover note.

Here are a few additional points to consider:

- When deciding about how you're going to stream games and what games you're going to stream, remember that you have displaced fans at all levels of all sports. As we've found out over the years with the traditional School Broadcast Program, it's impossible to get crews to every game – let alone the "big" Friday night game. Choose something that allows you to cover everything taking place in your gym and your multi-purpose (football-soccer-lacrosse) field.
- The home team should be the only party streaming. We recommend this because space in press boxes will be limited and everyone at the event may be counted for attendance purposes because of the pandemic. The home team should be prepared to provide information as to how fans of the visiting team can watch the game.
- Even with the waiver in place, member schools cannot play in games being originated by an outlet that is national in nature – regardless of the platform. The No Live rule was created to prevent the exploitation of Michigan schools on what amount to be telecasts giving college sports junkies their recruiting fix. We know our local broadcasts will focus on all the kids and the communities.

There is no paperwork required with this waiver, although at some point we may do a survey so that we can create a list fans can access listing all the schools which are streaming events.

Even though we cannot get all the fans to the games in-person, we hope you'll take action to get the games to your fans.



Waiver of Regulation II, Section 14 Regarding Live Video Broadcast/Stream for 2020-21 Regular Season Events Only

If spectator limitations are in place for a regular-season event in an MHSAA Tournament sport, live over-the-air television, cable broadcasts and video internet streaming are permitted within the following limitations:

- The rights to events at schools participating in the NFHS Network are exclusive. No third party involvement may take place without the express written permission of the NFHS Network.
- Over-the-air television station or cable television outlet broadcasts may only be local. Such broadcasts may also be simultaneously streamed live on the internet, provided the outlet makes the game available to the NFHS Network. Live broadcasts by national over-the-air or cable television outlets, and national presence organizations wanting to live stream are prohibited. Member schools playing non-member or out-of-state schools may not accept game contracts where broadcasts or streams are planned by national outlets/organizations.
- Schools participating in the NFHS Network may only stream their events – home or away - on the NFHS Network.
- Schools not participating in the NFHS Network wishing to live stream home events on their own platform through their own means must make access information available to the visiting team. If access is not possible or practical (i.e. Facebook closed group), the home team should provide appropriate access at the venue to the visiting team for its own origination. The home team must be prepared to provide access information to the NFHS Network.
- Should a school not participating in the NFHS Network wish to assign the video streaming rights of one of its home events to a local third party (i.e. a community radio station looking to add value to its broadcast) it may do so. The third party must be prepared to provide access information to the NFHS Network. Assigning live rights to national outlets/organizations is prohibited.

MHSAA Tournament event coverage is not included in this waiver. See the addendum to the 2020-21 MHSAA Multi-Media Regulations for information specific to postseason tournament coverage.

(8/6/20)



Postseason Tournament Regulations **For Live Video Broadcast/Stream With Spectator Limitations**

If spectator limitations are in place for an MHSAA Tournament sport, live over-the-air television, cable broadcasts and video internet streaming are permitted within the following limitations for games prior to the most Semifinals and Finals:

- Fox Sports Detroit and the NFHS Network have first right of refusal to all games. This includes all participants in the School Broadcast Program hosting games. All rights are exclusive – no third parties allowed.
 - Schools hosting events not participating in the NFHS Network have second right of refusal to games declined by FOX Sports Detroit and the NFHS Network.
 - Schools not participating in the NFHS Network wishing to live stream on their own platform must make access information available to the visiting team. If access is not possible or practical (i.e. Facebook closed group), the home team should provide appropriate access at the venue to the visiting team for its own origination. The home team must be prepared to provide access information to the NFHS Network.
 - Local third parties may originate games declined by FOX Sports Detroit, the NFHS Network and member schools. Third-party originations, when they take place, are limited to one per site. The home team third party – as determined by the home team athletic administration - if it has been covering the team regularly during the regular season, will have its request considered first. Third party must be prepared to provide access information to the NFHS Network. Assigning live rights to national outlets/organizations is prohibited.
 - All third-party requests will pay a discounted rights fee as shown below:

Over-the-air television and local cable systems	\$500
Internet distribution only by local outlets	\$175
Video added onto audio over-the-air broadcast	\$125*
- * Video fee added to audio rights fee – minimum \$40-50 per game

(8/6/20)



FAQ's Regarding Live Video Broadcast/Streaming

- **What if we're a Pixellot school, but we don't have a unit at the pool, or a baseball/softball field. Are we limited in any way?**

NO – For those venues, you can stream in other ways, like a Facebook Live, You Tube, etc. page. You could assign the rights and responsibilities to a third party – i.e. booster club parent – to stream with their phone. Remember however, that these streams still represent your school, and done with low production values, they may be likely to pick up comments from fans in the stands that you don't want going out on the internet. You should also know that Pixellot does not work for Track, and you may want to find a way to do your home meets.

- **Wouldn't going to Facebook Live be the path of least resistance?**

YES – BUT! – We've heard from AD's they don't like the fact that folks can comment on those FB Live streams. Most of it is probably harmless, but do you want to risk that one loose cannon?

- **Can we charge a rights fee to a local outlet for regular season events?**

YES – This could represent an opportunity to recoup lost ticket sales, but it might place an undue burden on the outlet because they are not used to paying for regular-season games. You can use the fees shown on the Postseason Tournament Streaming Guidelines for an example.

- **If we're an SBP school, can we have a local TV or cable station come in and do our games instead of streaming it with our crew or Pixellot?**

YES...BUT... – You're obligated to the NFHS Network first and foremost for the video stream. Your local outlet can come in (if space allows) to do their own thing on their own delivery platform. If they want to stream as well, it will take permission from the Network.

- **So if we're a non-SBP schools, do we still have to password protect or paywall protect our school produced streams, and submit a waiver application to the MHSAA?**

NO – You still have the option to charge to watch, or password protect your games. If you password protect your games, you must let your opponent know the password so their fans can watch. For that matter, the home team should always let the visiting team know how the game can be viewed, even without any pay or password walls.

- **We're playing at a neighboring school that charges to watch. We do streams of our home events for free. Can we send a crew to that game?**

NO – Press box space, because of social distancing, is at a premium, and we're asking that there be a limit of one origination at a site for streaming purposes. The **only times** you can send your own crew to an away game would be in the total absence of a home video production or if the home team's production is in a closed group that would make it difficult or impossible for your fans to access the game.

- **Can you give us some recommendations about equipment if we wish to do hands on production?**

YES – Here's some information from the NFHS Network:

<https://playonsports.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/201457143-Equipment>

And here's some information about our audio streaming partner – Meridix.com.

https://www.meridix.com/support/documentation/recommended_equipment.php

Meridix has an app for Android phones and iPhones: - https://link.edgepilot.com/s/10d7309c/eaE_a-ujv0q-M-XjPZRQ1g?u=https://www.meridix.com/download/

Meridix has a free, ad-supported video platform if you wish to go that way.

- **We have a Pixellot and would like to add either the public address announcer or a radio-style broadcast to our internet stream. How do we do that?**

LOOK – At these links from the NFHS Network. We really recommend adding announcers, especially if you have some quality student announcers, to give them some real-world experience. You could also ask your local radio station if they would like to provide its audio.

<https://playonsports.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360041708432-Quick-Reference-for-Adding-Announcers-to-a-Pixellot-Broadcast>

<https://playonsports.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360041702572-Adding-Announcers-External-Audio-to-a-Pixellot-Broadcast>

- **We have a local establishment which wants to stream the game so its patrons can come in and watch while they enjoy food and their favorite beverage. Thoughts?**

UGH – Your streaming needs to cater to your total fan base, not just one place looking to capitalize for its business. Alcohol and high school sports don't mix.

Having said that, if you have a free stream out there, a local watering hole may promote itself as a place folks can gather to watch (state gathering guidelines prevailing, of course). Not a lot you can do other than to inform the business you really don't want that kind of association with your program – unless it's a restaurant as well.

If you're an SBP school, and a local establishment uses a personal subscription (license) to the NFHS Network to show the game to its patrons – the NFHS Network has a cease and desist letter you can serve them. These people are used to paying appropriate fees to cable and satellite companies so they can show their signals, and shouldn't take advantage of the situation because it's "just high school sports." Contact the MHSAA office for a copy of the letter.