

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

BOYS LACROSSE COMMITTEE FOLLOW-UP MEETING

East Lansing, January 17, 2019

Members Present:

Steve Ayre, Tecumseh
Jim Carl, Brighton (Coaches Assoc.)
Rick DeBlasio, East Grand Rapids (Advisory)
Mike Jolly, Warren-DeLaSalle (Advisory)
Dave Kransberger, East Kentwood
Jerry Meter, Bloomfield Hills
Tim Ritsema, Jenison
Pete Ryan, Saginaw
Cody Smith, Romeo
Matt Wilson, Bloomfield Hills

Members Absent:

Sue Calvo, Swartz Creek (MIAAA)
Mike DeWitt, Rockford

Staff Members Present:

Cole Malatinsky
Tom Rashid (Recorder)

Introduction

This special follow-up meeting was requested by the Lacrosse Committee at its regular meeting on Oct. 9, 2018. The MHSAA executive director approved this in part because of a last-minute proposal for tournament restructuring in 2020 and because several agenda items from the committee were not addressed at the Oct. 9, 2018 meeting.

In mid-December 2018, members were emailed attachments related to a recommendation to separate the 2019-20 Boys Lacrosse Tournament into two or three divisions based on the new Michigan Power Rating (MPR) which will be used for the first time this spring as part of the seeding process for the MHSAA tournament. Committee members were sent the current 2018-19 structure of two divisions by enrollment, 2018-19 three divisions by enrollment, 2017-18 three division by MPR and 2017-18 two divisions by MPR. A four-page document from the MHSLCA was also sent to the committee in advance that covered many topics including indicating minimal support from the Coaches Association for creating divisions based on the MPR.

Related to other topics on the agenda, the committee was sent the 2017-18 MHSAA Concussion Report, the NFHS Lacrosse Injury Summary, a history of NFHS rule changes related to safety, the 2019 rule changes, and the 2019 Boys Lacrosse Regional alignments with host sites and time and seeding criteria.

Unfinished Business

Health and Safety: Cole Malatinsky presented three reports related to injuries and concussion in boys lacrosse which is 9th among MHSAA sports in reported concussions. The number of concussions reported in boys lacrosse was approximately 17 per 1,000 participants and consistent for the three years reports have been collected. The committee discussed the impact of rule changes and increased penalty time related to concussions.

NFHS Rule Changes for 2018-19: These were reviewed specific to the increased penalty time for targeting and hits to defenseless players. The committee added a point of emphasis to the online rules meeting (available Monday, Jan. 28 - April 13, 2019) that coaches insist on proper fitting equipment, especially shoulder pads which should cover the chest, and protective cups. Some members expressed that the game was less physical than in years past and that the big hits that were involved in lacrosse have significantly decreased. The game has changed for the positive.

Continued

Multi-Team Tournament Allowance: The committee favored following the lead of girls lacrosse and boys soccer that, under the multi-team tournament allowance, to permit the option to play two regular timed games rather than three running time 25-minute halves. The committee noted that this allowance is mostly used in junior varsity and middle school games, but it may assist in travel for varsity teams. Given the addition of teams from northern Michigan, this would make a double-header on a non-school day more efficient. The committee also felt that one over-time period should be permitted in this allowance in varsity level games.

Participation Levels in Boys Lacrosse: Sponsorship of middle school sponsored teams remains far below most other sports. Some members attribute this, in part, to the attractive travel and vastly higher number of games played by non-school teams often sponsored by for-profit entities. Others noted scheduling and facility problems, as well as the fact that schools likely will not fund, and thus not sponsor boys lacrosse. The good reasons and challenges connecting high school and middle schools to lacrosse were discussed.

The Committee was informed about the **MHSAA Presenting Sponsor** program for middle school events and supported the MHSAA serving as a Presenting Sponsor for two or three boys lacrosse middle school age events already planned for this spring. Committee members from Cranbrook, which holds an eight-team middle school age tournament, volunteered. East Grand Rapids would seek to have an event in the Grand Rapids area. There was also a suggestion that the MHSAA contact Lansing-Waverly to see if it might be interested in MHSAA support and presence at its annual middle school event.

New Business

Future Tournament Structure: The Oct. 9, 2018 Lacrosse Committee recommendation was revisited. The committee voted in October to recommend expanding the MHSAA tournament to three divisions for the 2020 season, based not on the enrollment of schools but on the Michigan Power Rating (MPR), as well as explore a two-division tournament based on the MPR. Following the October meeting, members of the Michigan High School Lacrosse Coaches Association discussed the proposal in two conference calls and several individual conversations and found little support for this change. The MHSLCA advanced other suggestions for rule changes to travel and out-of-season coaching limits. **The committee unanimously voted to withdraw the recommendation to divide by three divisions based on MPR.** The committee discussed, but no action was taken, again offering an MHSAA Tier II tournament where teams could opt out of the MHSAA statewide tournament. No teams were interested during the three years this was offered previously. Citing the current number of teams (130) and anticipated future growth, the committee recommended adding a third Boys Lacrosse Tournament division beginning with the 2021 season. There would be approximately 45 teams in each division and 4-8 teams in each of 8 regions per division. This format also could allow for a later start to the tournament and take up less of the regular season calendar.

Out-of-Season Coaching Limits: The MHSLCA advanced topics that included the unintended consequences of coaching restrictions that drive players who want to play more lacrosse into non-school year-round travel programs. Good discussion took place recognizing the large number of first-year high school players, the difference between fall sports – which have much contact with players in the summer just before the season begins – and winter and spring sports which have several months under the four-player rule limit prior to the season.

Out-of-Season Coaching Limits (Continued): It was suggested that four days of voluntary practice with no limit to the number of players be allowed off-season during the school year (November-March). This small number of days could be coordinated between students who play fall and winter sports and would not detract from multi-sport participation but might, with other currently allowed activity (four-player work, open gyms, rotations), connect lacrosse players closer to their school coaches.

2019 Tournament: This coming season the tournament seeding will be done through the new Michigan Power Rating. The online entry and update of schedules and the ongoing entry of scores during the season was reviewed by Cole Malatinsky. Throughout the season, the MPR will be visible at MHSAA.com. Eight of the coaches serving on the committee will be assigned two Regions out of their division to focus in advance of the May 8, 2019 seeding meeting. The coaches were reminded of the following: In October, it was determined that a note would be added to the seeding criteria that each of these committee members would email the coaches in the Regions they are focusing on the week before the May meeting, seeking input on the MPR ranking as posted and seeding of the tournament.

Coaches Wanted Posting on MHSAA.com: The committee asked the staff to look into the possibility of a Coaches Wanted registry similar to the Games Wanted section. Lacrosse has a shortage of coaches, and this may assist. It may also be that this could be used for other sports and possibly in the search for athletic directors.

Recommendations To The Representative Council

Withdraw the previous recommendation to expand the MHSAA tournament to three divisions for the 2020 season, based not on the enrollment of schools but on the Michigan Power Ranking. Also, explore a two-division tournament based on the MPR. An additional committee meeting will be held. (8-0)

Beginning with the 2021 season, establish a third division of the Boys Lacrosse Tournament with teams in equal divisions based on enrollment. It would result in approximately 45 teams in each division; 8 regions of 4-6 teams per division. (8-0)

Permit coaches of boys lacrosse (and perhaps all coaches or all winter and spring sport coaches) four voluntary days of practice with any number of players out of season during the school year (November – March). All other out-of-season regulations apply. (8-0)