

## **MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

### **Girls Competitive Cheer Committee Meeting**

East Lansing, January 22, 2020

9:30 a.m.

#### **Members Present:**

Angela Boerkoel, Mason  
Mike Brya, DeWitt  
Brian Gordon, Novi  
Chad Hottle, MIAAA  
Kris Isom, Adrian  
Charlie O'Dell, Grand Rapids  
Danyel Prielipp, Marion

Anna Ramirez, CCCAM  
Stacy Smith, Grand Rapids,  
Jessica Trefry, Michigan Center

#### **Staff:**

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

### **COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Girls Competitive Cheer Committee reviewed its responsibilities as a standing sport committee and the process of making recommendations to MHSAA staff and the MHSAA Representative Council. In addition, the Girls Competitive Cheer Committee reviewed the charge of the Girls Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee which met on January 16, 2020. This Sub-Committee studied the technical aspects of girls competitive cheer and made recommendations which were submitted to the Competitive Cheer Committee for additional review.

A draw for the order of competition at the Competitive Cheer Finals was done by committee members, and the Girls Competitive Cheer Tournament Manager's Materials and Participating School Information were also reviewed. In addition, the minutes from last year's Girls Competitive Cheer Committee and the Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee were perused. District and Regional sites were reviewed and members of the Committee also received 2019-20 Competitive Cheer clarifications and interpretations.

### **COACHING REQUIREMENTS**

Committee members reviewed information regarding coaching requirements and deadlines for 2019-20. Coaching requirements include that the athletic director or principal of each school shall attest that all high school coaches (sub varsity or assistant coaches, paid or volunteer) complete an MHSAA rules meeting in their sport. High school administrators are also required to attest that all varsity head coaches have a valid current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification and each head coach of a varsity high school team, hired for the first time at any MHSAA member high school after July 31, 2016 shall have completed either Level 1 or Level 2 of the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program (CAP). Committee members heard the high percentage of compliance that occurred with MHSAA member schools for all of these initiatives.

### **HISTORY OF GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER**

The history of girls competitive cheer was shared with the Competitive Cheer Committee including how the MHSAA first was committed to have girls competitive cheer meet the definition of a sport. To that end, a format was created by Michigan cheer coaches and athletic administrators with the purpose of providing consistent rules, while allowing teams to perform all aspects of cheer techniques and styles designed to promote athleticism. Additionally, meeting the criteria of a sport provided by the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education, was imperative. Girls competitive cheer has provided a great opportunity for girls to participate in a sport in which participation and spectatorship has soared.

### **SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL ACTION**

A summary of Representative Council action which included Handbook changes and sports changes was provided. Electronic signatures became acceptable from the MD, DO, PA or NP who administered the physical examination as well as on the required Student/Parent Consent form. Additional revisions were made to the athletic-related and athletic-motivated rule and the amount for symbolic awards increased from \$25 to \$40. Additionally, post-contest ejections was added to Section 3(D). In Girls Competitive Cheer, the consideration included that the current format of cheer would be reviewed by a Task Force with possible restructure to the rounds of competition.

## **GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER COMPARATIVE CONCUSSION INFORMATION**

Committee members reviewed comparative information from the MHSAA Head Injury Reporting System by sport and year. Comparative data indicates that in 2017, participation in girls competitive cheer was 6720 students and in 2018, participation was 6715. In 2019, participation in Girls Competitive Cheer was 6672. From the 2018 data, there were 20 concussions per 1000 participants in girls competitive cheer, which was a reduction in concussions from the 2017 data. This data for 2019 was also 20 concussions per 1000 participants. Further information shared identified that most of the injuries occurred during practice (either at the middle or end) at the varsity level.

## **EXPANDING PARTICIPATION AND ENHANCING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The MHSAA Girls Competitive Cheer Committee was charged with reflecting how participation numbers could be increased, as well as providing regulations to enhance the health and safety of all participants. Included in the discussion was conversation regarding consideration and review of a new format for middle school as well as a new format for high school girls competitive cheer. Additional conversation included the need to provide safe practice areas for practice and competition, limiting stunting time during practice and the appropriate use of strength and conditioning. Additional suggestions included providing in-service opportunities by the coaches association for new coaches as well as practice planning that results in less burn-out. It was also suggested that participation numbers would improve if the amount of gymnastics skill work and tumbling required was limited and the need for hiring gymnastics instructors was curtailed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMPETITIVE CHEER SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee meets for the purpose of annually reviewing current competition and safety rules and to propose changes and additions to the Competitive Cheer Manual. The committee focuses on the technical aspects of competitive cheer and advises the full committee and ultimately the Representative Council of the rules that may need review, revision or update. Review of the recommendations that come from the Competitive Cheer Coaches Association of Michigan also occurs and discussion occurs regarding each of the technical proposals. The recommendations from the MHSAA Sub-Committee are as follows:

1. Allow for teams to transition to stunts or loads from the flatback position.
2. Restructure the Middle School format to Cheer A to include components of both Round 1 and Round 2 and move the tumbling components of Round 2 to Cheer B.
3. Increase difficulty in Round 3 to greater differentiate a middle school and high school Round 3 (as well as increasing difficulty due to the additional skills that have now been provided at the high school and middle school level). Middle school teams would be allowed a maximum of 15 (800) and high school an increased amount of 20 (1000).
4. Increase allowances for static inversions to include the rotation or movement by the bases while the flyer is in the inverted position and to allow additional flairs at the point of the static inversion.
5. Provide additional work to the Girls Competitive Cheer Task force to review a portion of the district Round 3 descriptions regarding the current difficulty numbers that are being turned in.
6. Request the Girls Competitive Cheer Coaches Association to further survey their constituency regarding adjustments to the middle school format and the parameters that are being considered.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMPETITIVE CHEER COMMITTEE**

The Competitive Cheer Committee continues to discuss several topics regarding the evolution of girls competitive cheer as a sport. This includes discussion regarding the restructuring of the various rounds, especially at the middle school level. The Task Force met four times regarding the possible restructuring of the rounds to incorporate tenets of Round 1, 2 and 3 into two rounds of competition at the high school level. There is sentiment that all the rounds were important and that Round 2 often separates teams further as it is the most athletic round. Others indicated that by removing Round 2, there would be savings from "needing gymnastics coaches" and additional participation. In essence, what needs to be determined is how a format change can improve the sport and the long time effects of doing so. Additional opinion was not to eliminate any requirements but, change the focus of the time differently by reformatting the rounds with player participation and safety as a primary focus.

Changes for Middle School Cheer were also considered and there will be additional input requested from the Coaches Association and middle school coaches. The Committee felt that the starting point for this

transition to two solid rounds of competition would be at the middle school level. Discussion included other proposals that came from the Competitive Cheer Coaches Association and the Sub-Committee which included altering the score sheet for jumps, adopting a graduated choreography chart, changing suspended rolls and allowing positioning in the draw of girls competitive cheer regionals and finals. There was also conversation regarding Regulation 12(B) in Girls Competitive Cheer which may include additional MHSAA review.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A continuance of the practice of having a spring/summer editing group of coaches and judges review the Competitive Cheer Manual and further update the Manual was recommended. This practice would include a review of non-safety and safety related violations, and lend further clarity and parameters to existing rules. This would also involve the inclusion of girls competitive cheer recommendations approved by the Representative Council and discussion of ways to provide a format for greater participation at all levels. Additionally, this group would be charged with adding any other new updates to the Girls Competitive Cheer Manual.

### **2019-20 GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER TOURNAMENT INFORMATION**

The 2019-20 Competitive Cheer Tournament will hold Districts on Friday and Saturday, February 21 and 22, 2020. There will be six Districts in four Divisions which will each have four teams progress to eight Regionals the following week on Saturday, February 29, 2020. Four teams from each of the eight Regionals will move to the Finals at the DeltaPlex in Grand Rapids on Friday, March 6 and Saturday, March 7, 2020. This will include four separate sessions of competitive cheer. The Competitive Cheer Committee also reviewed the 2020 plan for assigned seating at the DeltaPlex which includes tickets specified for school seating and spectator seating and embraces the concept for assigned school and spectator seating to assist with the large crowds at the DeltaPlex.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

The Girls Competitive Cheer Committee makes the following recommendations to the Representative Council:

1. Technical Recommendations:
  - a. Allow at the high school level to transition to stunts or loads from the flatback position. (10-0)
  - b. Allow at the high school level for bases to rotate or move while the flyer is in the inverted position (in a static inversion) and to provide for the allowance of additional flairs at the point of the static inversion. (10-0)
2. Provide three (3) safety judges and five (5) panel judges at Regional Girls Competitive Cheer Tournaments. This would add one additional safety judge at the Regional MHSAA Tournament level. (10-0)
3. Provide the additional option for Girls Competitive Cheer Officials to wear a specified black quarter-zip with MHSAA logo. (10-0)
4. Allow middle school teams to increase the number of competitions to three per week, as long as one of the three is on a non-school day or a day not followed by school (Monday through Sunday). (10-0)