

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE MINUTES
East Lansing, January 24, 2017

Members Present:

Rick Bennetts, Detroit
Tim Blashill, Big Rapids
Aaron Crouse, Pontiac
Jeff Fleming, Berkley
Tim Hall, Sault Ste. Marie
Bob Hayden, Temperance (NFHS)
Tom Hunt, East Lansing
Shawn Jensen, Kentwood
Troy Lynch, Bay City

Mike Quint, Wyandotte (MHSICA)
Shane Redshaw, Fraser
Meaghan Rourke, Allen Park (MATS)
Mike Slobodnik, Grand Rapids
John Thompson, Brighton (MIAAA)
Joe Wallace, Portage

Staff Member

Cody Inglis (Recorder)

The 2017 Ice Hockey Committee met in the MHSAA office to review the MHSAA tournament, policies and procedures governing hockey, playing rules changes, make recommendations to the MHSAA Representative Council, and discuss topics concerning high school hockey in MHSAA member schools. After introductions, the role of the committee was reviewed.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL REVIEW

The committee was given an update on last year's committee recommendation to the Representative Council that was approved for a new overtime procedure in the regular season. This unique situation involves settling a tie in a regular-season two game total goal series. This new option was added to the overtime option rule and discussed. Four-person officiating crew use was also reviewed as this option was approved by the Representative Council in 2015 to be implemented at the Quarterfinal level starting in 2016. A review of this officiating system was done and more and more leagues and conferences are using this system in high profile regular season games and showcases in order to get officials more experience in this format. The four-person officiating system was used for the first time at the 2014 MHSAA Semifinal and Final games as approved by the Council in 2013. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from coaches, officials and players that the game was better officiated, allowed more deserving and quality officials to experience the Finals and focused the officials' attention to their specific jobs, either lining or refereeing the games.

NATIONAL FEDERATION PLAYING RULES

Committee members reviewed the new NFHS ice hockey rules changes and were led by Bob Hayden, NFHS Ice Hockey Committee Chair from Michigan. Bob emphasized some key rules changes including direct vs. indirect head contact as well as the new face off emphasis on players remaining stationary.

MHSAA playing rule adaptations were also reviewed by the committee including the neck guard rule, supplemental game suspension regulations and the maximum players dressed regulation. The committee would like to see the coach given the option of dressing a third goalie for games. The discussion centered on many teams carrying a third goalie on their roster and this player by rule has to sit out and not dress with his teammates. The current rule of dressing a maximum of 22 active players was reviewed and a recommendation to propose an increase in players dressing for a game was supported and forwarded to the Representative Council for their review and approval.

Continued diligence on controlling dangerous hits by coaches and players including blindside hits, hits to defenseless players, checks from behind and boarding remain critical to help the high school game. Players taking responsibility for their actions and coaches teaching the game in these health and safety areas remains a priority. Increased education, coaching and teaching by all should remain high to help all enjoy the game safely and within rules.

Discussion also centered on player health and safety and a review of both MHSAA adaptations as well as NFHS helmet procedures for players and officials. Player helmet use for warm ups, player introductions and the National Anthem were reviewed. Committee members felt strongly that players and officials should wear their helmets at all times while on the ice, except while at their respective blue lines for

the playing of the National Anthem. The committee will forward a recommendation for a MHSAA adaptation to the NFHS rules to the Representative Council for their review in this area.

TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

Updates on the MHSAA tournament were discussed including tournament structure, time schedule and a review of the 2016 tournament. New MHSAA hockey quarterfinal venues were reviewed along with a discussion on the semifinals and finals location. The new USA Hockey Arena, formerly Compuware Arena, home of the MHSAA hockey semifinals and finals since 2003 has started a dramatic upgrade to the facility. These upgrades will enhance the MHSAA finals and future use of the venue past the current contract will be discussed. The committee discussed other venues in the state that could be used for the Semifinals and Finals and while there are several that hold intrigue as to their possibility, scheduling issues are detriments to those sites being used. Hockey administrator Cody Inglis will start discussions and negotiations on a new multi- year contract with USA Hockey Arena.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The committee reviewed several informational items including MHSAA CAP requirements for new coaches starting in 2016-17, MHSAA Sportsmanship in Hockey and how to improve it, MHSAA head injury tracking procedures, MHSAA physical form discussion, MHSAA concussion resources and concussion care insurance, MHSAA enhancements to the Finals tournament and the continued decrease in the hockey officiating pool and suggestions for how to help in this area.

The Michigan High School Hockey Coaches Association reviewed their coaching education series from the fall when they visited Ferris State University, Lake Superior State University and Joe Louis Arena to conduct three coaching clinics lead by University hockey staffs, MHSHCA staff and MHSAA personnel. These clinics were designed to give hockey coaches some key education as well as rules meetings and a state of the game of high school hockey. Overwhelming positive feedback was shared as well as additional thoughts on how to continue to make these clinics better in the future.

Coaches education was a topic that followed the MHSHCA discussion and centered around how to potentially incorporate the very popular MHSAA CAP classes with the USA Hockey Coaches Education series that is required of all youth hockey coaches. Both of these programs are well established and serve a wide variety of coaches. If there could be an incorporation of the best of both of the programs it was suggested by the committee to explore this possibility.

A background with details and discussion on the number of cooperative programs and opt-up programs in MHSAA hockey was done by the committee. This discussion led the group to ask several questions as to the history of cooperative programs, the size of enrollments in MHSAA hockey divisions and the history of opt-ups in hockey. All of these questions reflected a desire by the committee that the issue of cooperative programs and opt-ups in hockey is something that needs to be looked at more closely by other MHSAA committees and MHSAA staff including the classification committee before seeding or tournament reorganization is pursued in MHSAA hockey. Both cooperative programs and opt ups in hockey are in greater use than in any other MHSAA sport and the impact on the hockey division alignment is immense. One specific worry of the committee is that after the divisions are drawn in March, a school could opt down to their original division of enrollment (after 2 years at the higher division) thus skewing the divisions greatly. The committee recommended that MHSAA staff review this procedure to ensure that no problems exist in the divisional alignment.

A draw was conducted for the 2017 MHSAA Tournament Semifinal pairings as follows:

Division 1 – QF #4 vs. QF #2, QF #1 vs. QF #3
Division 2 – QF #8 vs. QF #5, QF #7 vs. QF #6
Division 3 – QF #10 vs. QF #9, QF #11 vs. QF #12

Recommendations to the Representative Council

1. Adjust the current MHSAA adaptation for players in uniform rule from its current 22 active players to include a provision for a 23rd player to be dressed in uniform if that player is a goaltender. (14-0)
2. Add an MHSAA adaptation to the NFHS ice hockey rules to mandate that helmets must be worn at all times by players and officials while on the ice except while standing for the National Anthem. (14-0)