

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
**ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
East Lansing, January 23, 2018

**Members Present:**

Joel Breazeale, Grandville  
Shane Finney, Bloomfield Hills  
Jeff Fleming, Berkley  
Joe Ford, Lansing  
Rick Gadwa, Hartland  
Brian Gordon, Novi (MHSAA Finals  
Manager)  
Bob Hayden, Temperance (Advisor,  
NFHS)

Shawn Jensen, Kentwood  
Tyler Kindle, Kalamazoo  
Peter Ryan, Saginaw  
Meaghan Rourke, Allen Park (MATS)  
John Thompson, Brighton (MIAAA)  
Don Wright, Chelsea

**Staff Member**

Cody Inglis (Recorder)

The 2018 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 recommendations to the Representative Council. Both recommendations were approved and are currently being used in MHSAA play this school year. They include adjusting the MHSAA adaptation for players in uniform from 22 players to 23 players as long as the 23<sup>rd</sup> player is a goaltender. The other rule change mandates that helmets must be worn at all times by players and officials while on the ice except while standing for the National Anthem or for post-game award ceremonies. A review of each rule change and feedback from coaches were given. General consensus is that both rules are currently working but continued vigilance by coaches, officials and administrators is necessary to ensure compliance.

**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 as well as the NFHS points of emphasis for high school hockey. Bob also updated the group on potential changes being discussed at the NHFS level including health and safety issues, player safety on hits and defenseless player issues. The MHSAA neck guard rule was reviewed as was an incident that occurred in Minnesota from this past summer. The emphasis on the MHSAA neck guard policy was reviewed and confirmed by the committee that this is an important health and safety adaptation that Michigan has for its student-athletes.

MHSAA playing rule adaptations were also reviewed by the committee including the supplemental game suspension regulations. Discussion centered on the reasons why high school hockey has the 2 game suspension after a game DQ. Both past history as well as the higher number of game disqualifications in the sport of hockey caused the concerns that led to the extra game penalty after a DQ. While most agree that the conditions and culture of high school hockey have improved since the 1990's, there is still reason to continue this penalty structure. Continued discussion on supplemental discipline will be a part of future hockey committee meetings.

Continued diligence by coaches on controlling dangerous hits by players including blindside hits, hits to defenseless players, checks from behind and boarding remain critical to help the high school game. Video replay of incidents from the past year was completed and all agreed that the game is safer because of recent rule changes and an emphasis on player responsibility for their actions. This includes coaches teaching the game better and more players coming into the game with an understanding of a new style of play in the game. There is still a need for continued teaching and coaching on the issue of player safety.

## **TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES**

Updates on the MHSAA tournament were discussed including tournament structure, time schedule and a review of the 2017 tournament. There was discussion on the semifinals and finals location, USA Hockey Arena, in Plymouth, home of the MHSAA hockey semifinals and finals since 2003. The MHSAA has signed a 5 year contract with USA Hockey Arena to be the home of the MHSAA hockey semifinals and finals through the year 2022. This contract adoption has been mutually beneficial for both the MHSAA and USA Hockey arena. Upgrades to the facility, a desire to host the MHSAA and a willingness to open the venue for three consecutive days to the MHSAA are all major reasons for the partnership to continue. While in the past other venues and arenas were discussed for MHSAA semifinals and finals, at this time USA Hockey fits the needs and there is no desire or need to go anywhere else in the foreseeable future.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

An update on MHSAA Transfer policies was given including potential changes to the rule. MHSAA rules and regulations were reviewed in the areas of CAP coaching requirements, head injury tracking and concussion care insurance.

The Michigan High School Hockey Coaches Association reviewed their coaching education series from the fall when they visited Western Michigan University, Lake Superior State University and Novi HS to conduct three coaching clinics lead by University hockey staffs, MHSHCA staff and MHSAA personnel. Future plans were shared with the committee in the areas of a one-site coaching clinic, requirements for attendance and involvement of other groups, coaches and speakers.

A background with details and discussion on the number of cooperative programs and opt-up programs in MHSAA hockey was continued from last year's meeting. The high number of cooperative programs – 56 of the 147 programs - as well as high number of opt-ups – 25 - cause this to be a discussion item for now and in the future. Both the cooperative program number as well as the opt-up number are the highest of any MHSAA sport and may necessitate hockey division realignment. 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.

MHSAA historical hockey program numbers were reviewed. The number of schools involved in hockey continues to grow while the number of programs continues to drop. The current number of 147 high school hockey programs in Michigan follows an all-time high of 176 programs during the 2011-12 school year, the number of 275 total MHSAA member schools involved in MHSAA hockey programs continues to grow.

These numbers caused the committee to review the current Pre-Regional model (used since the 2005-06 season) that is currently in use at the initial stage of the MHSAA hockey tournament. In 2005-06 the hockey school numbers were 172. This number necessitated the change to Pre-Regionals. With 147 schools, the committee recommended that the MHSAA go back to the Regional model of assignment at the initial stage of the hockey tournament. With no more than 8 schools assigned to a regional, the Regional model would accommodate all teams and site selection could occur earlier in order to secure ice times earlier for MHSAA tournament games.

## **SEEDING DISCUSSION**

Seeding in the MHSAA hockey tournament has been a discussion item for several years with multiple proposals coming forward from the Michigan High School Hockey Coaches Association. For various reasons, the proposals have not garnered widespread support and thus have not passed as proposals at the MHSAA Representative Council level. Because of this fact, the MHSHCA spent the last two years working, updating and collecting data on seeding and resubmitted a MHSAA hockey seeding proposal. The keys to this proposal are that seeding would occur only at the first round (Pre-Regionals or Regionals) of the MHSAA hockey tournament and at the final round of the MHSAA hockey tournament in hockey (Semifinal round). Additionally, the desire of the MHSHCA is for the MHSAA to develop and use a playoff criteria to determine seeds at the Regional and Semifinal levels. Much discussion was generated on this seeding proposal by the committee even ahead of time, as the MHSHCA wanted the committee to see it prior to the hockey committee meeting. There was unanimous support among the hockey committee members that seeding should occur and three different proposals related to it were put forward by the committee. MHSAA staff coordination of seeding will be required, especially if an MHSAA seeding criteria or formula is used.

A draw was conducted for the 2018 MHSAA Tournament Semifinal pairings as follows:

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

### **Recommendations to the Representative Council**

- 1. Change the MHSAA Pre-Regional system of tournament assignments back to an MHSAA system of Regional tournament assignments with no more than 8 teams assigned to each regional for a total of 24 regions around the state. (13-0)**
- 2. Use an MHSAA controlled RPI-type formula to determine Regional seeds two weeks prior to the start of the MHSAA tournament in hockey. MHSAA staff will determine the formula and test it prior to implementation. If the MHSAA controlled RPI-type formula is not ready to be used - Use the MSHCA seeding proposal and protocol to determine Regional seeds at a “seed” meeting at least two weeks prior to the start of the MHSAA tournament. (13-0)**
- 3. Use an MHSAA controlled RPI-type formula to determine Semifinal seeds and matchups after Quarterfinal rounds are completed in the MHSAA hockey tournament. If the MHSAA controlled RPI-type formula is not ready to be used - Use the MSHCA seeding proposal and protocol to determine Semifinal seeds via a seed meeting conference call with MHSAA staff. (13-0)**