

2012 SOCCER COMMITTEE MINUTES

Monday, January 30, 2012, 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Kathy Bondsteel, Jonesville
Richard Campbell, Midland
John Conlon, Kentwood (MHSCA)
Chris Corteg, Shelby Township
Van Dickerson, Kalamazoo (MIAAA)
Jim Emery, Bellaire
Doug Guenther, Saginaw
Mike Evoy, Detroit
Chris Riker, Portage

Mike Vondette, Hemlock
Brian Samuel, Stevensville

MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephan Harris, Grosse Pointe
Abu Towghi, East Lansing

MHSAA STAFF

Tom Minter
Andy Frushour

The 2011-12 MHSAA Soccer Committee met in the MHSAA Office to review topics involving soccer issues and the tournament series. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision making process and charge of the Soccer Committee. Agenda items were compiled from correspondence, staff, committee members and the Michigan High School Soccer Coaches Association, and the following action was taken.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2011 MINUTES & RECOMMENDATIONS: Minutes from the 2011 meeting were approved, and action taken by the MHSAA Representative Council was reviewed.

NON-SCHOOL FINALS SITES: The pros and cons of using non-high school facilities as Finals sites were reviewed. MSU hosted the Girls Soccer Finals in 2011 with only a few minor issues, and fans tended to like the venue. It was noted that, if needed, a handful of high schools are willing and able to host all four MHSAA Soccer Finals at one facility.

ALL FOUR FINALS AT ONE SITE: The Soccer Committee wishes the MHSAA to aggressively research and pursue and plan to bring all four Final games to one site, creating a festival atmosphere for soccer fans. Many other MHSAA sports have all Finals at one venue, and the soccer committee is also open to this format. The Finals site could change from east to west each season and each school year.

UNBALANCED DISTRICT ASSIGNMENTS: As with many MHSAA sports, some top soccer teams often meet in the early rounds of the MHSAA Soccer tournament due to pockets of great soccer talent around the state. There was discussion of the geographic nature of the MHSAA tournament structure and how some seemingly easy adjustments to District dividing lines to help separate traditional powers could be made in some more populated parts of the state, but other more rural parts of the state might not be able to get that benefit. There was no consensus among the committee, and this will continue to be a topic to discuss in future Soccer Committee meetings.

SEEDING THE MHSAA TOURNAMENT: Seeding was discussed often in concert with the previous topic. Many committee members were open to seeding options, especially to split the top two teams into each half of the District bracket, but no consensus was reached on how to determine the seeds. The Michigan High School Soccer Coaches Association is going to work with its membership on this topic, and may even research possible computer methods to determine a power ranking (like Lacrosse) with a goal to create a system that could be used by all MHSAA sports. MHSAA staff will continue to monitor the seeding options used by other MHSAA sports.

REGULAR SEASON OVERTIME: Currently, regular season overtime procedures are determined by league/conference or by prior mutual agreement between competing schools before the game. The committee likes the flexibility of this arrangement, and wishes to leave the overtime options up to local decision.

SOLID WHITE JERSEYS: In the fall of 2014, the MHSAA is scheduled to implement the new NFHS playing regulation requiring solid white uniforms for home teams. Coaches and administrators alike have been nearly unanimous in their disapproval of the rule citing a number of reasons, including: 1) the cost of purchasing new uniforms ahead of the typical uniform purchase cycle; 2) the cost of replacing solid white uniforms more frequently because they are harder to clean; and 3) a sensitivity of female athletes wearing white uniforms.

GOALKEEPER UNIFORMS: In the fall of 2012 NFHS rules require Arabic uniform numbers on all goalkeeper jerseys. The numbers must be different from field player numbers. There is concern from the committee of the necessity of the rule, and for the cost to the school for implementing the rule. Goalkeeper jerseys are bought every year pending the size of the team's goalkeepers, and oftentimes goalkeepers themselves buy the jersey (and will have to add the number themselves).

SCHEDULING MHSAA MEMBER SCHOOLS: The MHSAA is discussing a rule for all sports requiring member schools to play at least half of its games against other member schools. While this isn't a current problem in the soccer community, the rationale for such a rule is favored by the soccer committee.

GOAL DIFFERENTIAL AT SUB-VARSITY LEVEL: Currently the goal differential rule is required at the varsity level only, but there was discussion about requiring the use of the rule at the sub-varsity level as well. If implemented this rule would take away valuable on-field playing time from sub-varsity athletes, even if the game is lopsided. Additionally, if games are ended early, varsity games will not start earlier than its scheduled start time. Leagues and conferences at the local level should continue to make the call on using this rule at the sub-varsity level.

SMALL-SIDED SOCCER: With the MHSAA adding 8-player football, there was discussion of using smaller teams as an option for the smaller soccer-playing schools. There was no sentiment that is needed at this time.

NATIONAL RULES REVIEW: The NFHS Soccer Committee met recently, and its proposed rules were discussed. Of the three proposed changes, the rule eliminating the replacement of a player with two yellows (and thus, a red) received most discussion. The committee understands the rationale of the rule change, but prefers the status quo. Should this rule be passed for 2012, the soccer committee will want to re-visit Michigan's 10-minute substitution following a yellow card.

DISTRICT SCHEDULES: Particularly in the spring season, the District schedule can often be interrupted by school functions and weather (in addition to Memorial Day). There was discussion about pushing the spring Districts to a Tuesday-Monday schedule. There have been many instances of teams playing on back-to-back days, or even three days in a row, which is not an ideal schedule for quality soccer.

OTHER ITEMS: There was brief discussion on leagues using cumulative yellows in the regular season, and a report was received about sportsmanship initiatives in the Macomb Area Conference. There was no action on a coach's proposal to move to six postseason Divisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Research the feasibility of hosting all four Soccer Finals at one location, and actively work to put a plan in place to create a festival setting for this event. (11-0)
2. Permanently delay the implementation of the white jersey rule. (11-0)
3. Permanently delay the implementation of the goalkeeper jersey number rule. (11-0)
4. Support MHSAA proposal requiring at least half of the schedule be against MHSAA member schools (11-0)
5. The committee does not support a pending NFHS rule adoption that would eliminate the substitution of a player after receiving two yellow cards. (8-2)
6. When scheduling the initial game dates at the District draw, prohibit scheduling teams to play three-straight days (rain outs may force back-to-back games). (11-0)