

**MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**2019-20 VOLLEYBALL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**December 5, 2019**

Members Present:

Tim Donnan, Southfield  
Kris Ernst, Fowler  
Steve Evans, Beaverton  
Jean LaClair, Bronson (MIAAA)  
Bruce Martin, Saginaw  
Chris Riker, Portage  
Heather Sawyer, Battle Creek (MIVCA)  
Jennifer Thunberg, Bay City  
Robert Tobey, Caro  
Chris Westfall, Ypsilanti  
Jon Zajac, Tecumseh

Members Absent:

Toni Cole, East Kentwood  
Debbie Dewyse, Engadine  
Elisa Zwick, Mason

Others Present:

Jesse Brinks, MATS

MHSAA Staff:

Andi Osters (recorder)

**INTRODUCTION**

The 2019-20 MHSAA Volleyball Committee met on Dec. 5, 2019, at the MHSAA office in East Lansing. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision making process and charge of the Volleyball Committee. Agenda items were compiled from correspondence, staff, committee members and the coaches' association. The committee was reminded that the scope of their work was to focus on growing the game of volleyball, protecting the health & safety of participants and maintaining the proper philosophy of educational, school-based athletics.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**MIVCA "REACHING HIGHER" EVENT**

The committee heard from the Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association and their review of the inaugural one-day event held in the summer of 2019, designed to benefit Michigan volleyball players, parents, coaches and officials. The event, attended by nearly 100 volleyball student-athletes and 15 college coaches, involved skill development, educational components, an officiating clinic and seminars for parents. MIVCA has elected to discontinue their "All-Star Game" and focus entirely on the growth of the Reaching Higher event. Plans are underway to continue the event in the summer of 2020.

**SEASON LENGTH**

Committee members talked about the benefits provided to volleyball players in Fall 2018 as a result of the swapped boys and girls basketball schedules. It was noted that the swap afforded many volleyball players a longer gap between the end of volleyball and the beginning of their those that played girls basketball. Citing this, and a desire to shorten the length of time between the first contest and the Finals, the committee recommended a proposal to abbreviate the season by one week. In concert, a request was made to begin the start of practice on the same day as football, the 16<sup>th</sup> Monday before Thanksgiving, allowing for 12 days of practice before the first allowed contest date.

## **TOURNAMENT SEEDING**

For the third consecutive year, committee members entertained deep discussion on the topic of seeding the MHSAA volleyball tournament. Discussion began with a review of MPR seeding plans in both basketball and soccer, and included review of the wrestling “Top 8” seeding concept. In volleyball, committee considerations centered on seeding concepts at the District or “final four” levels of the tournament. A review of the data present on MHSAA.com, respective to volleyball scores and schedules, informed the committee that 8% of all total volleyball scores were entered during the 2019 season. *The committee requests that the MHSAA conduct a survey of volleyball school Athletic Directors, asking if they favor either (a) volleyball seeding at the district level, splitting the top two teams on the bracket based on MPR, or (b) volleyball seeding of the Semifinal teams in each division.* MIVCA representatives agreed to place emphasis on their membership of the importance, at minimum, of entering all head-to-head, non-tournament matches on MHSAA.com.

## **JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL CONTEST LIMITS**

Discussion took place regarding current limits imposed upon volleyball teams at the junior high/middle school level. The committee agreed that the current limits make sense, and help to preserve a middle school season that is guaranteed to last at least four weeks. There was some sentiment that the middle school volleyball season could be lengthened to encourage student-athletes to spend more time learning the game. No action was taken at this time.

## **MHSAA FINALS VENUE**

Committee members were provided a report of MHSAA Championships held at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek on November 21-23, 2019. It was noted that Saturday’s Finals were attended by near-capacity crowds. The unknown future of the attached hotel property was discussed. Committee members agreed that while other venues should be studied, the arena facility and staff in Battle Creek continue to meet the needs of the sport and the MHSAA.

## **BOYS VOLLEYBALL**

Participation surveys indicate that approximately 40 MHSAA member schools currently sponsor boys volleyball at some level (varsity, club, intramural, etc.). It was noted that several Michigan colleges and universities are showing interest in development of men’s volleyball. The committee reviewed the MHSAA Handbook regulation regarding tournament sponsorship, and agreed to continue monitoring sport growth in the spring of 2020.

## **RESOURCE REVIEW**

- The 2018-19 MHSAA Head Injury Report for Volleyball was reviewed.
- Members of the committee were provided 24 proposed rules changes for the NFHS Volleyball Committee. Feedback was welcomed prior to the January meeting in Indianapolis.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

1. Beginning in 2021-22, abbreviate the volleyball season by one (1) week, and begin practice for the season on the 16<sup>th</sup> Monday before Thanksgiving (August 16, 2021). Semifinals and Finals will be held November 11-13, 2021. Teams will still be permitted 18 dates of competition over the course of 14 weeks. (11-0)