

BASEBALL / SOFTBALL COMMITTEE

January 19, 2010

Members Present:

Sue Barthold, Kentwood
Ken Dietz, Watervliet
Matt Eldred, Otsego
Keith Green, Hemlock
Ed Greenman, Battle Creek
Tom Kaechele, Caledonia
Dave Mammel, Coleman
Tim McDonald, Bay City

Kristalyn Musselman, Tecumseh
Debbie Norman, Allen Park
Barry Palmer, St. Johns
Brian Parsons, Grandville
Mark Rademacher, Westphalia
Michael VanHoven, Flushing

Staff:

Randy Allen
Mark Uyl (Recorder)

The 2009-10 MHSAA Baseball / Softball Committee met in the MHSAA office building to review topics involving the MHSAA tournament series in baseball / softball.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Review of 2009 Representative Council Action: The committee was reminded that the Representative Council approved use of the Softball Tiebreaker to be used starting with the 11th inning of all MHSAA tournament games. The Council also eliminated the possibility of rain-shortened game in the Semifinals and Finals in Battle Creek.

National Federation Topics: A lengthy discussion took place regarding National Federation playing rules and equipment. Most of the conversation dealt with the move to the 43-foot pitching distance in softball. The pros and cons of this rule change were discussed in light the implications for all levels of play from junior high/middle school to varsity competition. Survey information from the softball coaches association was shared with the committee which summarized current views on which levels should move to 43-feet from the current distance in 2011. Other items covered included defensive face protection and face mask standards, new BBCOR baseball bat standards commencing in 2012, use of softball metal cleats and a brief review of the new NF rule changes for 2010.

Out-of-Season Update: Members of the committee reviewed the out-of-season coaching issues, specifically the allowance of four players in some situations when coaches are working with students within their school district.

Tournament Procedures: Conversation took place regarding the current tournament schedule and issues it creates with the Regional, Quarterfinal, Semifinal and Final games being played within seven calendar days. Additional comments were made regarding the current Semifinal and Finals schedule; the committee consensus was to keep the current schedule of game times. Information was also provided on cost containment and the revised tournament rescheduling policy.

Rules Meetings: The rules meeting schedule was reviewed, and committee members had the opportunity to identify any additional points of emphasis. Two suggestions included rules on discarding defensive face protection in softball and an emphasis on the allowable game shortening procedures in both sports. The process for rules

deviation requests was also reviewed. The committee was very supportive of online rules meetings, as well.

Competition Limits and Spring Sports Starting Dates: The committee discussed various cost containment ideas relative to regular season scheduling. There were mixed views on a reduction of sub-varsity scheduling maximums as school districts explore various cost saving measures. There was a strong, clear consensus that the first allowable date for spring practice should not be moved later (no change) and there was considerable support for winter sports to look at the calendar in moving winter tournaments one week earlier to reduce the winter-spring sports overlap.

Additional Items: Committee comments and areas of concern included toughening the transfer rule to one full school year, revisiting the scheduling of Regional games on weekdays (earlier than Saturday) and the practice of some schools scheduling more than 56 games + dates with the assumption that games will be lost due to weather.

REGIONAL AND SEMIFINAL DRAWS: At the Regional tournament, the pairings were drawn as Highest District # vs. 2nd Highest District # and Lowest District # vs. 2nd Lowest District #. Semifinal pairings were drawn as follows:

Division 1	QF #4 vs. QF #2	QF #1 vs. QF #3
Division 2	QF #6 vs. QF #5	QF #7 vs. QF #8
Division 3	QF #11 vs. QF #10	QF #9 vs. QF #12
Division 4	QF #16 vs. QF #15	QF #13 vs. QF #14

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Beginning in 2011, all high school level softball (varsity, JV and freshmen) shall utilize the 43-foot pitching distance. In games played by students at junior high/middle school level, the maximum pitching distance shall be 40-feet (14-0).