

BASEBALL / SOFTBALL COMMITTEE

January 13, 2015

Committee Members:

Steve Babbitt, Blissfield

Aaron Babicz, Novi

Mike Bakker, Fenton (MIAAA)

Bryan Carpenter, Vermontville

Brian Gordon, Novi

Kris Isom, Adrian

Chris LaMange, Grand Rapids

Troy Lynch, Auburn

Nancy Malinowski, Allen Park

Tim McDonald, Bay City (MHSBCA)

Ted McIntrye, Mt. Pleasant (MHSSCA)

Juston Miller, Lowell

Brian Neel, Mattawan

Mark Rademacher, Grand Ledge

Jon Studley, Caro

Guest:

Jim Liroy, Sturgis

Staff:

Andrea Osters

Mark Uyl (Recorder)

The 2014-15 MHSAA Baseball / Softball Committee met in the MHSAA office building to review topics involving the MHSAA tournament series in baseball and softball.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

National Federation Topics: Discussion took place regarding National Federation playing rules and equipment. Most of the conversation dealt with bats and bat testing in both sports. Concerns about bats and potential bat tampering were discussed, and staff provided a report on bat testing done at the 2014 Softball Finals. Additional discussion centered on the 2015 NF rule changes and MHSAA concussion protocols along with local policies regarding return to practice/play procedures.

Tournament Procedures: Staff provided a report on Upper Peninsula District issues with the rapid growth of softball-only schools in Divisions 3 and 4. This creates a large number of softball schools in the UP Districts with far fewer baseball schools in those same groups. Rationale was provided on the District groupings for 2015 along with feedback received from those UP schools involved that highlighted some of the unique issues and problems in the UP.

Tournament Seeding: A long discussion took place on the concept of seeding the Baseball and Softball tournament at each end of the tournament. One possible approach is at the District level in separating the top two teams into the top and bottom of the bracket with remaining schools "drawn in" at the District draw meeting. The other approach is to seed the "final four" at the Semifinal round with no increase in cost or travel. While many were intrigued by the concept at both ends of the tournament cycle, there was no strong support for seeding either end of the tournament at this time; both coaches associations, however, will discuss and survey and topic within their membership to better gauge any interest in seeding.

Tournament Format Alternatives: There was much interest and support for a change in the MHSAA tournament format. An alternative format was discussed that would increase the Regional to three rounds of play (instead of two) starting with mid-week single games (Regional Quarterfinal) followed by the Saturday Regional Semifinals and Finals. The proposal discussed would eliminate the traditional Tuesday Quarterfinal round and the four Regional champions would advance directly to the Semifinals. This proposal would better space the tournament over the final two weeks and would eliminate a real concern with weather given how closely the Regional-Quarterfinal-Semifinal rounds of

play are currently scheduled. While there was excitement for this alternative approach, the committee directed the proposal back to each respective coaches association for further discussion with recommendations from each group to be shared at the next committee meeting for possible action.

Finals Venue: The committee was provided a report on the new Finals site at Michigan State University and plans for making a good experience even better in East Lansing in 2015.

Out of Season Coaching: The group discussed out-of-season coaching regulations with focus given to both the current 3 (or 4) player rule and the alternative approaches (contact days) provided to leagues and conferences in a recent MHSAA survey. Most favored some change to the current rule but there was no consensus on a specific solution. The greatest disparity in opinion regarding voluntary contact days was between those representing large schools vs. small schools. There was good conversation on the topic with no consensus from group representing all types of schools.

Health and Safety- Pitching Limitations: A long conversation took place regarding the current 30-out pitching limitation rule in light of concerns that not enough rest is being provided before the outs “reset” when the limit is reached. The regulation has been in effect since 1978, and the rule was reviewed in light of current medical trends, pitching limitation rules from other states and pitching count limits used in other levels of baseball such as Little League. While the group leaned toward having a longer rest period, the recommendation was to survey baseball schools through the coaches association regarding the current rule’s effectiveness and identifying possible areas for change in the rule in making sure young arms are protected from overuse injuries.

Other Topics: Members of the committee briefly reviewed and discussed sub-varsity eligibility, 6th grade issues and Michigan points of emphasis for the upcoming baseball and softball rules meetings.

Regional and Semifinal Draws: At the Regional tournament, the pairings are the Highest District Number vs. Lowest District Number and 2nd Lowest District Number vs. 2nd Highest District Number . Semifinal pairings are as follows:

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

None