

**CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE
MHSAA Office – East Lansing
Wednesday, January 14, 2009**

Committee Members

Kirk Baese, Elsie
Dave Chrisinke, Allendale
James Dittmer, Ludington
Keith Eldred, Williamston
Chris Ervin, St. Johns
Jim Hilgendorf, Johannesburg
John Hoeft, Pittsford
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Richard Niesen, Kalamazoo
Peter Ryan, Saginaw
Ronald Stoneman, Dansville

Absent

Russell Davis, Jackson
Dan Flynn, Escanaba
Lillian Mason, Grand Blanc
Jeff Melvin, Bangor

Staff

Randy Allen
Camala Kinder
Tom Minter
Tom Rashid
Jack Roberts (Recorder)
Mark Uyl
Kathy Westdorp

INTRODUCTION

In spite of difficult travel conditions, eleven members were able to attend the annual meeting of the Classification Committee which has served the MHSAA for two dozen years to screen and develop proposals related to the policies and procedures of MHSAA tournament classification. Because of the committee's unique make-up, consisting of representatives of MASB, MASA, MASSP and the MIAAAA, as well as the diversity of sizes and types of schools represented, this committee has also served the MHSAA as a sounding board for reviewing important policy matters that may be only indirectly related to classification of schools.

The minutes of the 2008 Classification Committee and Representative Council meetings were reviewed to provide recent background of the committee's discussion and actions.

BOWLING

The Classification Committee supported the recommendation of the Bowling Committee, approved by the Representative Council, that the MHSAA Bowling Tournaments be expanded from three to four divisions of six Regionals each when the number of sponsoring schools exceeds 320. The number has been reached and, with the Classification Committee's support, will result in a four division tournament for both boys and girls in 2010.

FOOTBALL

Classification Committee members discussed many positives and some negatives that schools may experience if football for fewer than 11 players grows in popularity and results in one or more additional divisions of the MHSAA Football Playoffs. A key concern that was identified was separating interest from real commitment by schools to play some, or all, of their varsity football schedule under rules for fewer than 11 players.

SIXTH GRADERS

Classification Committee members discussed in general the topic of 6th grader's participating with and against 7th and 8th graders, and the reasons that small schools react much more favorably than larger schools to proposals to modify MHSAA rules that restrict such participation to the few (but increasing) situations involving very small schools where the MHSAA Executive Committee provides waiver of Regulation III, Section 1. The task force concept proposal – to eliminate the need for Executive Committee action for individual sports (including wrestling) – was discussed.

MINIMUM SCHOOL SIZE

The Classification Committee reviewed a letter asking that the MHSAA Constitution be revised to lower or otherwise modify the requirement that schools have an on-site enrollment of at least 15 students in order to become a member of the MHSAA.

It was the Committee's consensus that there needs to be a minimum on-site enrollment policy, that the fire code, which was used as the basis for 15 minimum, should be reviewed to see if it has changed, that the Membership Resolution should be revised to include a place for the enrollment of middle schools, and that member schools whose enrollment drops to less than the minimum be allowed to complete that school year before requiring that its membership be terminated and cooperative programs are dissolved.

DISPARATE DIVISIONS AND REGIONS

The Classification Committee reviewed the Enrollment Declaration Form, the timing of determining classifications (March) and divisions (April) for the following school year, and the changes that occur in "equal divisions" between April and the start of the following year's tournament as a result of schools adding or dropping sports, cooperative programs being formed or dissolved and decisions to "opt up" or return to lower divisions.

While cross country and competitive cheer were discussed, it was determined the issues in those sports may be more effectively addressed through tournament administration and Regional adjustments than through new classification policies and procedures.

The sport most affected is ice hockey because it is conducted in facilities that are not owned by schools and which must be reserved in the summer preceding the tournament, and the fact that if a division increases to more than 64 schools as a result of the changes between early April and the deadline for cooperative programs and opt-ups or returns (Aug. 15), it would create rat-tails that would require more games to be played in a week than regulations allow and/or create conflicts with the end of the regular season. Several ideas were discussed that might remedy ice hockey's concerns, but it was determined that it should be the MHSAA Ice Hockey Committee that formulates a recommendation for the Classification Committee's review, not vice versa.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

The committee discussed the pros and cons of adding golf and tennis to the list of sports where cooperative programs may be formed between schools of the same district with an enrollment in excess of the Class B maximum.

ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

The committee was asked to react to several eligibility scenarios which MHSAA staff has been monitoring that involve students with IEP's.

Students (with or without an IEP) who transfer from a traditional high school directly to a non-traditional school (without an athletic program) of another school district are not eligible at any school.

Students with an IEP who are assigned to a non-member school are without eligibility at an MHSAA member school.

The Committee did not suggest changes in current rules or their interpretation.

ADDITIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Subsequent to the preparation and dissemination of the agenda, a request by a member school was received for the MHSAA to consider an additional classification for very small schools in the MHSAA basketball tournament, which was considered, but not supported in several previous meetings by the Classification Committee.

NO RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL