

CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE
MHSAA Office – East Lansing
Wednesday, January 12, 2011 – 1 p.m.

Committee Members

David Chrisinske, Allendale (MIAAA)
Van Dickerson, Kalamazoo
Greg Gallas, Wyoming
Barry Hobrla, Lowell (MIAAA)
Brad Jacobs, Scottville
Tim Jenkins, Tekonsha
Dale Kasza, Kalkaska
Orlando Medina, Detroit
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Ronald Stoneman, Redford
Al Unger, Kingsford

Jim Weidman, Lake Orion
Wayne Welton, Chelsea

Members Excused

Jerry Jennex, Capac (MASA)
Mike Shibler, Rockford (MASA)

MHSAA Staff

Jack Roberts (Recorder)
Thomas Rashid
Thomas Minter

INTRODUCTION

The Classification Committee's primary purposes are to perform intermediate review (between sport committees and the Representative Council) of proposals related to tournament classification for a sport and to initiate or review proposals related to the policies and procedures of counting students and collecting enrollment figures for school classification purposes as well as proposals affecting tournament classification generally.

Because the make-up of this committee usually reflects broader diversity than MHSAA sport committees in that its make-up includes school board members, superintendents and principals as well as athletic directors, and there is usually strong representation of diverse school size, location and demographics, the Classification Committee is also asked to respond to subjects that are not directly related to classification. The Classification Committee has become the principal forum for reviewing policies and procedures related to cooperative programs.

Participants introduced themselves and minutes of the committee's 2010 meeting were reviewed.

OLD BUSINESS

The Committee was advised that on Dec. 8, 2010, the Representative Council approved the same procedures for 2011 as had been approved for 2010 for proceeding with consideration of an 8-player division of the MHSAA Football Playoffs. If, by April 1, 2011, twenty or more Class D schools' superintendents provide a written commitment to 8-player football in 2011, the MHSAA will sponsor and conduct a 4-week, 16-team playoff this fall, culminating at an appropriate facility on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

NEW BUSINESS

Soccer – By a unanimous vote in February of 2010, the MHSAA Soccer Committee recommended to the Representative Council that the MHSAA Lower Peninsula boys and girls soccer tournaments no longer be classified under the "20% Modification" by which the smallest 20% of soccer schools are placed in Division 4 and the remaining schools are spread equally among divisions 1, 2 and 3, and that Lower Peninsula soccer tournaments be returned to a four equal divisions structure.

The Classification Committee reviewed school enrollments and survey results. It was noted that over the past decade the number of schools sponsoring soccer has increased to the point that

almost all Division 1, 2 and 3 districts are at capacity with eight teams; and today, the largest Division 4 teams under the equal division structure would be smaller than the largest Division 4 teams under the 20% modification a decade ago. The Classification Committee concurred with the recommendation of the Soccer Committee on this matter.

Cooperative Programs – The Committee was provided a list of cooperative programs where the number of cooperating schools is four or more; and committee members were asked to weigh the pros and cons of allowing such programs to be approved. There was consensus that the current application process, which requires the approval of a league or scheduled opponents, and the current renewal process – which reviews the program’s win-loss record, number of participants and number of students cut – combine to provide appropriate checks and balances and will tend to assure these multi-school programs remain school-centered in both their means and ends.

The Committee also reviewed the enrollment limits for cooperative programs focusing on the rule that limits the enrollment to two or more schools whose combined enrollment does not exceed the maximum for a Class B school (currently 966), except in sports sponsored by 250 or fewer schools (in which case the maximum is 3500). The Committee decided the maximum should not change from year to year with the Class B maximum enrollment, but be fixed at 1000.

Enrollment Exclusions – A communication from a school administrator asked the MHSAA to consider a policy of not requiring schools to count students who are not permitted on the basis of their religion to participate in interscholastic athletics. This led to a discussion of other factors which tend to reduce participation rates and to curiosity about those factors which tend to be found in the teams that are most successful in MHSAA tournaments. The collection of factual data should precede further discussion, but ultimately it may be determined that practical limitations could limit the ability to act on findings. Any complication of the current Enrollment Declaration process could lead to more delays and errors in the counting and classification process each February and March.

LATE/ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Mr. Chrisinske – The OK Conference is preparing proposals intended to relieve regular season scheduling difficulties league members are experiencing in football.

Mr. Roberts – The Kensington Lakes Activities Association may be submitting proposals to modify MHSAA rules and/or tournament structures of the MHSAA to address issues of competitive inequities league members are experiencing.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Support the Soccer Committee proposal to return the Lower Peninsula boys and girls soccer tournament to four equal divisions. (13-0)
2. Change the maximum enrollment for cooperative programs from the Class B limit (currently 966) to a fixed number that does not change from year to year, specifically 1000. (13-0)