

Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.
FOOTBALL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 28, 2016, 9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Eric Adams, Lawrence
Tom Barberri, Dexter
Ron Bellamy, West Bloomfield
John Dignan, Warren
Mike Burger, Pittsford
Paula Davidson, Peck
Mike Evoy, Detroit
Jack Fairly, Jackson
Dan Flynn, Escanaba
Mike Garvey, Kalamazoo
Don Gustafson, St Ignace
Kelly Luplow, Clare
Bryan Masi, Northville
Russ McKenzie, Madison Heights
Dee Jay Paquette, Munising
Matt Peters, Owendale

Tony Petkus, Comstock Park
Andrew Pratley, Holland
Mitch Smelis, Fenton (MATS)
Brian Southworth, Decatur
Jim Sparks, Clawson
Jamie Thiede, Algonac
Sean Williams, Baldwin

Members Absent:

Ed Greenman, Battle Creek

MHSAA Staff:

Nate Hampton (Recorder)
Mark Uyl
Geoff Kimmerly

The committee met for the purpose of reviewing NFHS playing rules, MHSAA Regulations and Tournament procedures/policies concerning High School Football. Following is a review of items discussed by the committee as well as recommendations to MHSAA staff and for possible Representative Council consideration.

Calendar

MHSAA staff provided the committee a six-year calendar demonstrating the earliest practice date, the earliest game date and the number of contests prior to Labor Day. For 2016 season, the earliest practice date is August 8, and the earliest game date is August 25 allowing for one scheduled contests prior to Labor Day.

Tournament Review

The committee was provided 2015 Football Playoff Tournament information for both the 11-player format and the 8-player format, with statistical data for all levels of tournament competition. The data demonstrated consistency with previous years under the current format when comparing school classification, division enrollment breaks and the numbers of automatic qualifiers.

In 2013, 2014 and 2015, there were 225, 229 and 216 schools, respectively, which qualified automatically based on regular season records. In 2015 there were fifty one 11-Player and four 8-Player games that were subject to the "Point Differential" procedure.

2015 Enrollment for Finalist

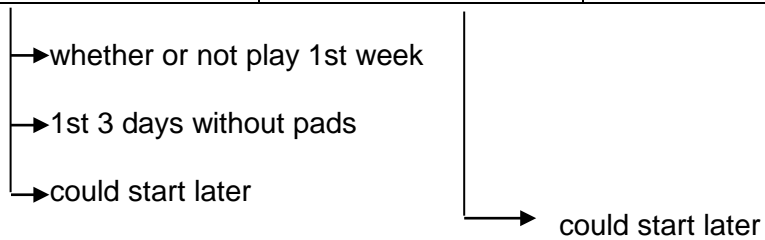
Division 1 1673-2285
Division 2 1168-1537
Division 3 845-1032
Division 4 610-840
Division 5 442-592
Division 6 402-335
Division 7 278-292
Division 8 195-177
8-Player 122-144

2015 Classification by Divisions

Division 1 32 Class A
Division 2 32 Class A
Division 3 22 Class A, 10 Class B
Division 4 32 Class B
Division 5 32 Class B
Division 6 2 Class B, 30 Class C
Division 7 32 Class C
Division 8 16 Class C, 16 Class D
8-Player 16 Class D

2015-2020 FOOTBALL DATES

Year	Earliest Practice	Earliest Game	Labor Day (Games Before)
2016	Aug. 8	Aug. 25	Sept. 5 (2)
2017	Aug. 7	Aug. 24	Sept. 4 (2)
2018	Aug. 6	Aug. 23	Sept. 3 (2)
2019	Aug. 5	Aug. 22	Sept. 2 (2)
2020	Aug. 10	Aug. 27	Sept. 7 (2)
2021	Aug. 9	Aug. 26	Sept. 6 (2)



Monday, August 8 - First allowable day of 3 day of conditioning period (no pads). (possible changes)

Thursday, August 11 - First date of official practice, with pads (if 3 days of conditioning were completed during the week).

Thursday, August 25 - First game date.

- Schools may not conduct inter-squad scrimmages until after nine separate days of practice.
- Interscholastic games (all levels) cannot be played until teams have completed 12 separate days of practice over a 3-week period.

8-Player Football

To date there are 46 schools projected to participate in the 8-Player format for 2016. The committee reviewed the established policy approved by the Representative Council in May of 2009. The recommendation included for tournament expansion when 40-64 schools sponsored to become a 32 team five-week playoff format.

Staff suggested that expansion should not occur until 40-plus teams successfully complete a season of tournament qualifying teams. In 2015 with 43 teams, two were not eligible because of enrollment, and two teams did not meet the tournament minimum seven game requirement, leaving only 39 Class D teams which met the minimum tournament requirements.

General Discussion

1. 2015 Committee minutes and Representative Council Recommendations
2. Semifinal facilities/scheduling double headers
3. National Federation Rule changes for 2016
4. National Federation allowed experiments for 2015

5. Junior High/Middle School – The football committee supports the JH/MS Committee recommendation for an earlier start season start
6. Finals venue review – Ford Field/Greenville HS
7. Health and Safety Issues; Concussion, Heat and Humidity, CPR/AED's, Concussion Protocols
8. Pre-season practice limits – Review and suggestions
9. Online Rules Meetings – Head coach and assistant coach requirements
10. Wilson – Tournament football required
11. 7-Person Crews Semifinals and Finals
12. Targeting rules and player penalties
13. Preseason Guide – Practice policies
14. Video review of Flagrant Disqualifying Fouls
15. Allowing shoulder pads at summer camps
16. Assign Semifinal home teams based on playoff point percentage rather than by region designation
17. Formulate a new next game disqualifying period
18. 8-Player Semifinal games played at neutral sites
19. Pewamo-Westphalia Football Proposal (no motion for adoption)
20. Safer Than Ever – The committee reviewed the MHSAA/MHSFCA produced video with applause and appreciation
21. Final Field Phones – Reviewed current allowance of 2 up (press box) and 3 down (field), no change

MHSAA Practice Policies

Entering into this discussion, the committee was provided a number of articles and other relevant materials on practice policies.

Following an in-depth review of current practice policies – the committee was placed in four discussion groups and was asked to discuss the following:

MHSAA Practice Policies Pre-season and In-season – Policy objective; Establishing the best practical balance for student health and safety. Also, to reasonably limit overall exposure to multiple blows to head and body (head impact exposure) and to minimize concussion risk, while maintaining the integrity of the game.

Topic Questions:

1. Is the objective correct?
2. Do the current pre-season and in-season policies meet the objective?
3. Can we defend publicly the policies that some suggest are too liberal with allowed contact 6 hours (MI) vs 60-90 minutes (other states)?
4. What suggestions or changes would you recommend?

The committee then had a lengthy detailed discussion centering on adding a maximum contact period for in-season practices and clarifying which practice sessions are considered collision practice.

7 Person Crews

Assistant Director, Mark Uyl, provided data that supported the use of 7-person crews. In 2014 and 2015, the MHSAA used 7-person officiating crews at the Semifinal and Final levels. In 2013 (and years prior), 5-person crews were used at all levels of tournament play. The data demonstrated that with the 7-person crew on average fewer fouls were called and the lengths of the games were less.

Video Appeals and Evaluations

Mr. Uyl showed several play clips of flagrant foul calls made during the season that provided evidence to the committee that using current technology of single camera angles or picture quality do not equip reviewers with enough information to overturn the in-game decisions of officials on flagrant disqualifying fouls.

Recommendations to MHSAA Staff

1. Where possible, assign double header Semifinal sites

Recommendations to the Representative Council

1. Practice Protocols – Recommend that after the first game, no more than 90 minutes total of collision practices be allowed in a week. “After the first regular-season game, teams may conduct no more than two collision practice days in any week, Monday through Sunday. It is recommended that not more than 90 total minutes of collision practice occur in a week. During other days of practice, players may wear helmets and other protective pads (neither is mandatory). Blocking and tackling technique may be taught and practiced. However, full-speed contact is limited to players vs. pads, shields, sleds or dummies.” (16-3)
2. 8-Player Format – Select neutral sites for Semifinal contest rather than the current practice of allowing teams with the higher playoff percentage to host. (13-3)
3. Football Timing: Allow MHSAA staff to request NF permission to experiment with the 40-second play clock. If granted, individual schools with agreement of opponents and/or league may request MHSAA permission to conduct the contest using this timing option. Currently, there is inconsistency among referees in terms of when they mark the ball ready-for-play after the previous play ends. The 40-second play clock provides more consistency as the ball must be snapped within 40 seconds of the end of the previous play and is not dependent on the referee’s subjective signal. In the case where play is continuing with no stoppage or interruption, the offense will have 40 seconds from the end of the previous play to snap the ball. If play has been stopped (timeout or penalty), the offense will have 25 seconds from the time the referee sets the ball and starts the play clock following the administration of the timeout or penalty. (24-0)