

Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.
FOOTBALL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2017, 9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Tom Barbieri, Dexter
Ron Bellamy, West Bloomfield
Mike Burger, Pittsford
Brad Bush, Chelsea
Darren Conklin, Plainwell
Jim Conway, Mt Pleasant
Curt Copeland, Grand Rapids
Paula Davidson, Peck
Kirk Evenson, Saline
Jack Fairly, Jackson
Mike Garvey, Kalamazoo
Vicky Groat, Battle Creek
Don Gustafson, St Ignace
Dan Haggart, Clare
Courtney Hawkins, Mt Morris
Don Mckenzie, Lincoln Park
Dee Jay Paquette, Munising
Tony Petkus, Comstock Park
Scott Robertson, Grand Haven
Mike Smith, Eaton Rapids

Jim Sparks, Clawson
Jack Wallace, Okemos
Mitchell Smelis, ATC Fenton

Members Absent:

Dan Boggan, Lansing
Mike Evoy, Detroit
Dan Flynn, Escanaba
Brian Masi, Northville
Scott McVittie, Deckerville
Joe Pontbriand, Powers

MHSAA Staff:

Nate Hampton (Recorder)
Mark Uyl
Geoff Kimmerly
John Johnson
Cole Malatinsky
Lars Murray-MHSAA Intern

The committee met for the purpose of reviewing NFHS playing rules, MHSAA Regulations and 8-Player and 11-Player Tournament procedures/policies and concerns involving 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 2017 season, the earliest practice date is August 7, and the earliest game date is August 24 allowing for two scheduled contests prior to Labor Day.

Tournament Review

The committee was provided 2016 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 2014, 2015 and 2016, there were 229, 216 and 218 schools, respectively, which qualified automatically based on regular season records. The 16 8-Player schools with the highest playoff point averages qualified for the 8-player tournament. There were two 6-3 teams in the 8-player format that did not qualify. There were forty-nine 11-Player and four 8-Player games that were subject to the "Point Differential" procedure.

2016 Enrollment Range by Division

Division 1 2976-1638
Division 2 1631-1117
Division 3 1117-810
Division 4 797-610

2016 Classification by Divisions

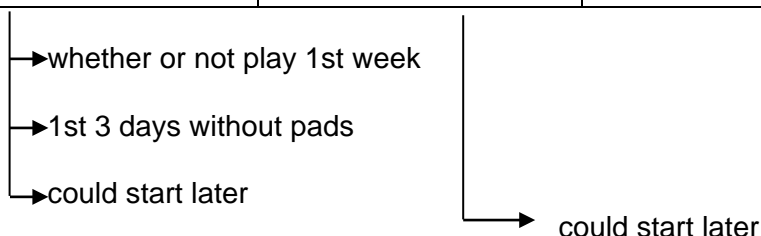
Division 1 32 Class A
Division 2 32 Class A
Division 3 20 Class A, 12 Class B
Division 4 32 Class B

Division 5 610-417
 Division 6 414-345
 Division 7 343-251
 Division 8 249-95
 8-Player 186-48

Division 5 32 Class B
 Division 6 2 Class B, 30 Class C
 Division 7 32 Class C
 Division 8 13 Class C, 19 Class D
 8-Player 16 Class D

2016-2021 FOOTBALL DATES

Year	Earliest Practice	Earliest Game	Labor Day (Games Before)
2017	Aug. 7	Aug. 24	Sept. 4 (2)
2018	Aug. 6	Aug. 23	Sept. 3 (2)
2019	Aug. 12	Aug. 29	Sept. 2 (2)
2020	Aug. 10	Aug. 27	Sept. 7 (2)
2021	Aug. 9	Aug. 26	Sept. 6 (2)
2022	Aug. 8	Aug. 25	Sept. 5 (2)



Monday, August 7 - First allowable day of 3 days of conditioning period (no pads).

Thursday, August 10 - First date of official practice, with pads (if 3 days of conditioning were completed during the week).

Thursday, August 24 - 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.

General Discussion

1. 2016 Committee minutes and Representative Council Recommendations
2. Semifinal facilities/scheduling double headers
3. National Federation Rule changes for 2017
4. National Federation 40 Second Clock Michigan experiment
5. Junior High/Middle School
6. Finals venue review – Ford Field/Greenville HS
7. Health and Safety Issues; Concussion, Heat and Humidity, CPR/AED's, Concussion Protocols
8. MHSAA Concussion Data – NFHS Injury Report
9. Pre-season practice limits – Review and suggestions
10. Rules Meetings Online- Head coach and assistant coach requirements
11. Tournament Ball - Wilson
12. 7-Person Crews Semifinals and Finals – Regular season

13. Preseason Guide
14. Video – Football Safer Than Ever
15. Assign Semifinal/Final home and visitor designations based on playoff point percentage
16. 8-Player direction with additional teams for 2017 – 60+ are indicated

Junior High/Middle School

The committee discussed season limits, game limits, sixth grade participation and school team's relationship to non-school youth and community teams. There was an extended discussion as to why many students choose community teams over school teams, some of the stated opinions included:

1. Community teams play more contests
2. Community teams start practice earlier than school teams
3. Travel and post season activity
4. Community pressure to continue tackle football for the very young.

The discussion also touched upon sixth grade and below participation in school programs that are not tackle football (flag football). There was no consensus as to how to develop stronger school programs given the current state of school finances, encouraging multi-sport participation and finding coaches that are appropriately trained.

MHSAA Practice Policies

MHSAA staff member Cole Malatinsky reported to the committee results of our recently completed "Practice Protocols- Player-on-Player Contact Survey".

Following the 2016 MHSAA Football Committee recommendation, the MHSAA surveyed member schools sponsoring football in an attempt to collect data on actual player-on-player collision contact during practice. A summary of those survey results:

- 441 schools responded: 127 Class A; 136 Class B; 116 Class C; 62 Class D.
- The majority of schools (58.9%) have 2 or fewer days of full speed player-on-player collision contact practice during the pre-season (i.e. before the first practice).
- The vast majority of schools (96%) have 2 or fewer player-on-player collision contact practice sessions per week during the regular season (wording of the question on the survey likely caused some confusion).
- The vast majority of schools (96.5%) follow the recommendation of no more than 90 minutes of player-on-player collision contact practice per week during the pre-season.
- The majority of schools (82%) follow the recommendation of no more than 90 minutes of player-on-player collision contact practice per week during the regular season.
- There was no difference between the average head injury reports and regular season winning percentage among schools with 5+ preseason player-on-player collision contact practice days, 3+ regular season player-on-player collision contact practice sessions, 0 preseason player-on-player collision contact practice days, and 0 regular season player-on-player collision contact practice sessions; average head injury report and regular season winning percentage equal to averages seen for all schools.
- Schools would track/chart player contact time using pre-determined practice plans and track/chart by position group or as a team depending on coach and/or player personnel; no interest in attempting to track contact time by individual player.
- A number of schools indicated they have already made conscious effort to limit full speed player-on-player contact during practice.
- Largest concerns voiced by schools regarding limiting player-on-player collision practice time was the effect this would have on the ability to teach and practice proper blocking and tackling techniques, and if a contact time limit were to become a policy, a clear definition of player-on-player collision contact would be needed.

The discussion's direction looked to establish a mandatory maximum contact limit per week. The discussion also included the current allowance for a team to participate in a contest and scrimmage in the same five-day period. There was no consensus for changing this current provision in our football protocols.

Discussion also sought more no-padded practice/teaching/acclimatization days during the pre-season. One suggestion was starting the first allowed practice the Wednesday prior to our current start and mandating only a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday practice, not Saturday and Sunday.

40 Second Clock Experiment

Mr. Brad Bush, Chelsea confirmed that his league used the 40 second clock option and league coaches and officials were excited and urged continued use of the 40 second clock option.

In 2016, there were 64 Varsity contest and 51 Junior Varsity contest that used the :40 second clock protocols. School teams and contest officials' responses to questionnaire:

- 90% found more consistency in getting the ball spotted using the :40 second play clock.
- 96% found that the crew was efficient in getting the ball marked for the snap.
- 98% of both officials and coaches would prefer the :40 second format.
- 98% experienced fewer delay penalties.
- 89% experienced fewer pre-snap infractions.

Officials

MHSAA Assistant Director, Mark Uyl, presented data that demonstrated more 7-person crews are being used during the regular season and that player and coach ejections were basically unchanged. It was noted that school appeals for MHSAA staff to review film of officials calls relating to targeting were considerably less than the previous year.

8-Player Football

The committee engaged in a lengthy and detailed discussion on the current growth in schools sponsoring 8-Player football. The original plan for the 8-player tournament called for expansion to a 32-team field and five-week format when the number of MHSAA Class D member school sponsoring a full season of the 8-player game exceeded 40 for several years. Having reached the point of expansion, many questions are being raised.

Basic Question: Would Class D schools be served well by a 32 team field and a five-week format, like the 11-Player tournament? Or, would two 16-team divisions and continuing the four-week format be best?

It appears there will be 60+ Class D schools and 3-5 Class C schools sponsoring 8-Player football at the varsity level for the 2017 season.

The Representative Council, Classification Committee and the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee have had recent discussions on this concern. Without a recommendation all seemed interested in a plan that involved two 16-team divisions.

Two things happened during the 2016 football season that were not unexpected but which now require discussion leading to action.

1. The 2016 football season was the first during which the number of Michigan High School Athletic Association high schools sponsoring 8-player teams exceeded the number of Class D schools sponsoring 11-player teams; 48 playing 8-player with 40 playing the 11-player game.
2. The 2016 8-player tournament was the first to exclude a six-win team. In fact, two from the 16-team field and four-week format.

Discussions also noted a concern for 11-player Class D schools having increased difficulty to maintain 11-player programs, not due to lack of numbers of players or on field success or the desire to continue with 11-player participation against like size Class D and C schools, but because of expense for travel to complete a nine game schedule of 11-player games.

Recommendations to the Representative Council

1. Seek help from the Junior High/Middle School Committee to develop strategies in football to grow school programs. Season start and number of games allowed. (22-0)
2. After the first regular season game, limit teams to no more than 90 total minutes of collision practice in any week, Monday through Sunday. During other practice sessions, 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. (remove two days of collision contact per week)

Monitoring protocols will be determined by the local school, league or conference. (21-0)

3. For MHSAA Semifinals and Finals, designate Home and Visitor by playoff point averages as opposed to current Regional advancement. (22-0)
4. Request MHSAA and NFHS to continue 40 Second Clock experiment for the 2017 season. (22-0)
5. 8-Player Football - The committee recommends a Two Division 16-team four-week tournament and maintain the Class D enrollment cap for tournament eligibility. (21-1)