

JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Zoom Virtual Meeting

MHSAA, February 17, 2021, 9:30 a.m.

Members

Chris Adams, Napoleon
Bill Cataldo, Cedar Springs
Karyn Furlong, Gull Lake
Don Gustafson, St. Ignace
Jason Kemler, Brethren
Jolinda Lucus, Grand Rapids

Steve Newkirk, Clare
James Okler, Grosse Ile
Adam Schihl, Clawson
Dave Smith, Gaylord
Steve Uyl, Caledonia
Robert Wright, Sand Creek

MHSAA Staff

Cody Inglis

The MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee met to review topics identified for discussion by the MHSAA staff, Representative Council and member schools.

The committee began by reviewing responsibilities and purpose including a thorough review of the JH/MS committee meeting minutes from February of 2020. Staff updated the committee on the responsibilities, purpose and topics on the agenda.

MHSAA JH/MS Survey results and review

The committee reviewed the newly completed MHSAA JH/MS survey given to member schools for feedback and perspective. Key data garnered from the survey includes:

- There were almost 700 member schools who responded to this MHSAA JH/MS survey.
- The relatively new (2018) MHSAA adjustment to the limited team membership rule has had some impact on increasing participation at member schools, but more education about this rule is needed to let parents, students and schools know about the allowance to play two outside of school competitions in the same sport, in the same season.
- Survey respondents were clear in not supporting MHSAA involvement in JH/MS flag football at this time (26% in favor, 74% showing no interest).
- MHSAA leagues and conferences at the JH/MS level operate both in the three and four season models with nearly 50% of respondents in the traditional three season model while 47% operate in the four season model. The initial look at this survey question opens up a number of questions that the JH/MS committee will need to look at in the future when determining if and when JH/MS tournaments can be sponsored by the MHSAA at either the regional or statewide level.
- JH/MS member schools, leagues and conferences operate their JH/MS basketball games in different formats including both 6 minute and 8 minute quarters, two halves and some provide a 5th quarter for maximum participation.

The survey results have been shared with MHSAA staff along with representatives from league and conference meeting in order to get data to the appropriate groups making decisions and serving MHSAA JH/MS membership.

MHSAA JH/MS season delays and postponements

The committee discussed the effects of the pandemic on JH/MS participation numbers and discussion ensued on “What happens as we transition through the pandemic?” and “Do participation #'s increase

or decrease?" Other discussion centered on specialization and how the pandemic changed parents views on outside non-school programs. Monitoring kids in areas such as mental and emotional wellbeing and what a lack of participation and connection to athletic programs and school sports would look like were concerns of committee members. In addition, the challenge of finding officials continues to impact JH/MS scheduling and game schedule and would this improve or get worse as we go through Covid. Feedback from the committee recommended that the committee continues to monitor Covid and its' effect on JH/MS sports in future JH/MS committee meetings.

General JH/MS Discussion Topics

The committee spent time discussing areas that the MHSAA could enhance JH/MS membership and serve JH/MS even better moving forward. While there was no consensus on these topics or areas, the committee felt strongly to continue to discuss and brainstorm with MHSAA membership to determine which direction should be followed. These areas include:

- Requiring rules meetings for JH/MS coaches and having specific JH/MS content available.
- Establishing season start and finish dates for MHSAA JH/MS sport seasons.
- Publishing a manual for JH/MS athletic directors on how to successfully administer a season ending tournament.
- Establishing a JH/MS specific coaching conference for educational athletics.
- Establish an MHSAA CAP specific course for JH/MS level coaches
- Support JH/MS level coaches with more coaching information and content on the MHSAA website.
- Establish and make clear what JH/MS expectations are for coaches and the student-athletes they serve and coach.
- Create a public service announcement or TedTalk on what JH/MS athletics is and should be for all aspects of JH/MS including the athlete, parent, athletic director, official and coach.
- Provide MHSAA JH/MS specific banners for purchase by member schools.

A potential MHSAA JH/MS Athletic Director in-service discussion occurred on whether something could be planned for in the future. The MIAAA JH/MS committee will take the lead on this idea and work to solidify ideas and concepts. In addition, the MIAAA conference will offer a key time for brainstorming and presentations on different JH/MS topics. Several members of the MHSAA JH/MS committee will be a part of these presentations and help coordinate JH/MS specific content for the MIAAA conference. This is a key educational opportunity for the ever changing JH/MS athletic administrator to get new ideas and find mentors in educational athletics.

MHSAA JH/MS Regional Cross Country Regionals

The committee was updated on plans related to the already approved MHSAA JH/MS Regional Cross Country meets to be held around the state in the Fall of 2021. Information on the meets including potential sites, dates and protocols to be developed with site hosts and schools. Potential sites would be looked at by the MHSAA and schools would be notified once the okay for these races and events was given. The committee was updated that because of Covid there may be a delay in getting this information out to schools about these events and in some cases schedules may be set. The JH/MS committee believes that starting these meets, even in Covid would be a great way to start this concept moving forward.

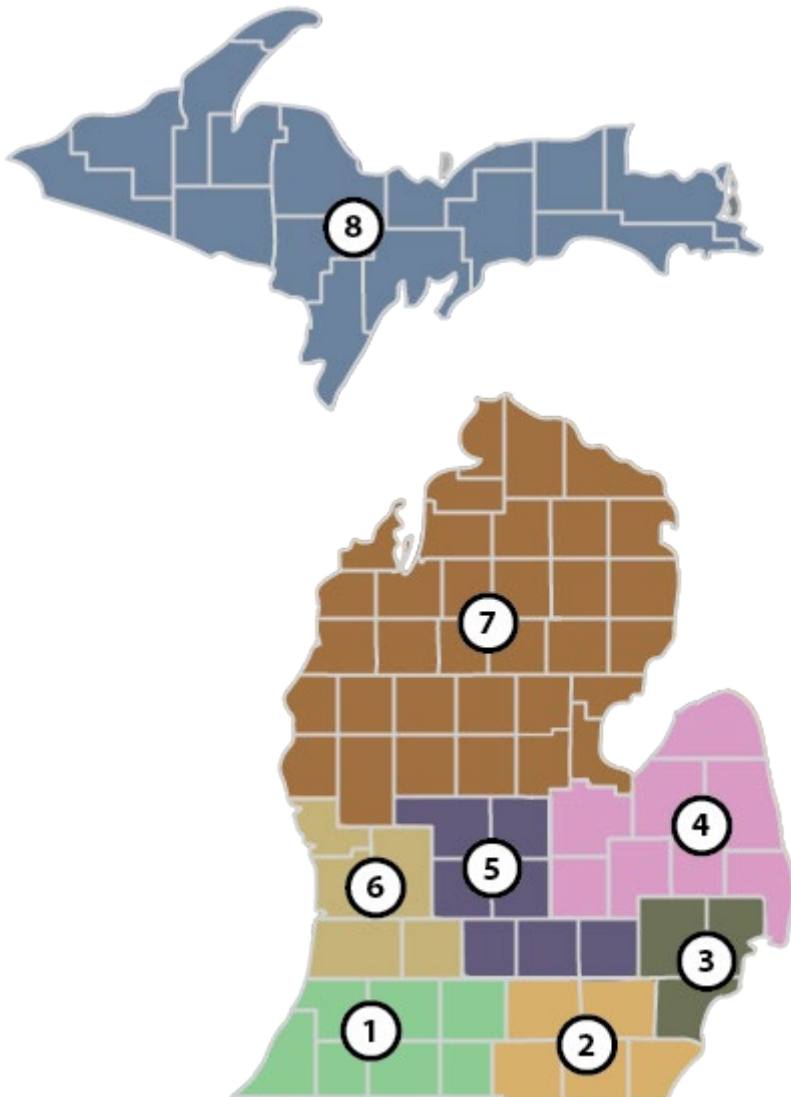
Here are some further details for the MHSAA JH/MS Cross Country Regional races for this Fall.

- MHSAA JH/MS Regional races can be hosted anytime during the month of October at the eight preselected sites. This determination was made by the host school.
- There is no cost and no entry fee for participation in the MHSAA JH/MS Regional race.
- The eight preselected Cross Country Regional races are one per zone (see map). Any MHSAA member JH/MS schools in that defined geographic area would be eligible to compete at the host site for their zone.

- The Regional races will be done by gender in each zone. There will be two regional races of 2 miles at each site – one girls and one boys. If race sizes get too large, a host school can separate into two sections of races per gender to better accommodate racers.
- A school can determine who will compete for that school. A school can enter no runners, one runner to 100, dependent upon the size of their school.
- Athletic.net will be used as the registration platform for the MHSAA JH/MS Cross Country Regional for schools, teams and individuals. Those Regional races have been created in Athletic.net and are listed on that site for entry.
- The MHSAA JH/MS Regional race will NOT be counted against the schools' MHSAA contest limit in JH/MS Cross Country.
- MHSAA trophies and medals will be awarded in each gender. The top 20 in each gender will receive medals while the top team will also receive an MHSAA team trophy.
- MHSAA host schools will hire at least one MHSAA registered XC official to start and officiate the Regional.
- The MHSAA will provide bib numbers for each MHSAA JH/MS XC Regional race and participant.
- The admission policy will be either \$6.00 per person or \$10 per carload. Digital Ticketing can be used via GoFan.

Remember that a school will use [Athletic.net](https://athletic.net) to enter their runners, and they must be an MHSAA member school at the JH/MS level in order to compete in this MHSAA event. This Regional meet DOES NOT count against their season maximum of 10 regular season meets as this is a post season MHSAA event.

The JH/MS committee continues to believe that there would be a positive impact on the MHSAA and school based sports if Regional MHSAA JH/MS events would be sponsored. The growth in this area could be done in a responsible way within schools and the scope and perspective of JH/MS sports would not be lost.



General JH/MS Discussion Topics

The committee spent time discussing areas that the MHSAA could enhance JH/MS membership and serve JH/MS even better moving forward. Discussion and brainstorming among the committee included the following areas:

Coaches Association cooperation for JH/MS events
Limited Team Membership rule
Covid updates and challenges
JH/MS participation and attrition going into HS – ideas and thoughts
MIAAA position statements and updates
MIAAA Conference – JH/MS update and sessions
5th quarter rule for JH/MS? Review

Meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.