

BOYS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING

Zoom Meeting

East Lansing, October 6, 2020

Members Present:

Steve Ayre, Tecumseh
Jim Carl, Brighton (Coaches Assoc.)
Rick DeBlasio, East Grand Rapids (Advisory)
Robert Dowd, Troy-Athens
Mike Jolly, Warren-De LaSalle (Advisory)
Rich Kimball, Lansing
Chris Riker, Portage Northern
Ray Miller, Canton-Plymouth

Members Absent:

Nicole Norris, (MIAAA), East Lansing
Kevin Wolma, Hudsonville

Staff Members Present:

Cole Malatinsky
Tom Rashid (Recorder)

INTRODUCTION

The week prior to the meeting, the committee was emailed the link to minutes of two previous committee meetings, 2021 classification of teams and current cooperative programs. As of Oct. 6, 2020, there are 134 teams (69 Division 1, 65 Division 2) representing 176 schools among 31 cooperative programs.

The committee was also presented in advance material related to MHSAA protocols for COVID-19 practices allowed to occur this fall on 16 dates and considerations from the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee for possible adoption by the MHSAA for the spring of 2021. Finalized practice and competition COVID-19 protocols will be developed in the months ahead and based on the current status of the virus.

The NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Books sent in the spring of 2020 will serve in the spring of 2021. Except for possible COVID modifications, no new rules will be made and no new books will be provided, except for new teams and new officials.

The committee's multiple functions (recommendations to the Representative Council, sport oversight, seeding, Regional alignment and officials' selection) were reviewed. The committee was informed of action by the Representative Council that changed the summer travel rule for all sports. An MHSAA coach with seven or more players who travels to a team camp within 300 miles or within a state that borders Michigan may participate in that camp against any team present, even if a team from outside the MSHAA travel rule is participating. The MHSAA team must be within the travel limit; other teams attending need not be. This is a summer allowance only, effective June 2021.

2020-21 REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS & TOURNAMENT

Members also received in advance Regional alignments, with the criteria for seeding the tournament. New teams adding lacrosse for 2021 based on geography or changing divisions due to enrollment changes or cooperative agreements being formed were included. Because no lacrosse was played in the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the seeded teams were kept the same for 2020-21. First contact will be made to ask 2020 hosts to host 2021 Regionals. The committee reaffirmed two points regarding the 2020-21 tournament: 1) An alternate site and game location may be sought for games at a Regional host site with an option for a mutually agreed site and date change when both teams have extensive travel. 2) Regional Semifinals may be scheduled on the Tuesday preceding Memorial Day (generally, Semifinals are on the Wednesday and Thursday of this week). The hope remains that the original schedule and format of the Boys Lacrosse Tournament will be played this spring, but COVID-19 may have a different idea. The committee will be updated as information is developed.

16 VOLUNTARY COACH-PLAYER CONTACT DAYS

The 16 Voluntary Coach-Player Contact Days allowed this fall was well received by the members. Most had low attendance due to students who play fall sports. Most included underclassmen. Focus was on individual skill work as opposed to team activity, but it was good to bring those players together. Securing facilities and working into existing schedules was a challenge. One school reported the loss of two multi-sport athletes who stuck with the spring sport and did not play football, as they had previously. Several suggestions surfaced, from having the window occur later in the fall, a longer time period and possibly allow seven days in the winter for unlimited contact. The committee felt the contact day concept was very

positive and allowed for a school to control the schedule and to keep more students connected to their school coaches than non-school club for-profit teams. A motion was passed to urge the Representative Council to study and continue to provide voluntary contact days in future years.

FIVE-QUARTER RULE

Noting that basketball has moved to allowing five quarters in one day over its 20 games, the committee was asked if this was a positive for boys lacrosse. For example, a player could play in three JV quarters and then two varsity quarters on the same day, which might help in specific situations (e.g., providing goalie depth in the event of an injury on the varsity team). There were some concerns that playing two games of lacrosse in one day may be too taxing and possibly subject to abuse as JV games are stacked with talent that is varsity level. Many teams play three games per week, and that means a JV team could be on the field for six games. As a basketball season has not been played yet in Michigan with the rule, the committee took no action except to consider this for lacrosse in another year and have coaches discuss potential value.

NFHS PLAYING RULE MODIFICATIONS DUE TO COVID-19 – FACEOFF ELIMINATION IN 2021

The Committee reviewed a list of possible modifications to playing rules and official mechanics. Among those adopted were extending the players' and coaches' boxes to the end line to ensure proper distancing, limiting table personnel and official pregame meetings and stick checks mechanics which will be clarified closer to the season. The committee did not accept the recommendation that varsity game times be reduced to 10-minute quarters. Several other protocols will be clarified closer to the season, including the use of clear, molded and non-rigid face shields. The committee extensively discussed faceoffs and the NFHS recommendation to reduce faceoffs to two per game at the beginning of the 1st and 3rd quarters. The committee determined that at the present time, in lieu of this protocol, the following shall be the rule and mechanic under COVID-19 protocols for all MHSAA member school lacrosse teams in 2021:

Use of an alternating possession will be implemented as an alternative to conducting a faceoff in boys lacrosse for Spring 2021. Initial possession will be determined by the pregame coin toss with the winner having the option of accepting the possession at the start of the game or deferring to the second half. Should the need arise for additional play time at the conclusion of regulation play, a coin toss will be used to determine possession for that period of play and subsequent periods. The first quarter and third quarter possession will be determined by the pregame coin toss. Alternating possession will be used to determine possession for the start of the second and fourth quarter, and after each goal scored.

The ball will be awarded to the possessing team in its defensive end of the field at a location of its choosing outside of its respective defensive area (box) between goal line extended (GLE) and the end line on the 'team/scorer's' side of the field. Once an official signals the field is ready for play, a whistle will sound initiating play. The 'clearing' team will be allowed unencumbered movement until the ball crosses GLE, at which time the 'riding' team may engage. The clearing team has twenty (20) seconds to get the ball across the midline and another ten (10) seconds to get the ball into its offensive zone.

All of the non-faceoff specific exceptions determining possession in lieu of a faceoff continue to apply.

NON-SCHOOL CLUB TEAM PARTICIPATION DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

Citing the high number of teams and players in the Metro Detroit area on non-school teams that seems to spur repeated and unprecedented success by the school team, the committee discussed limiting the number of players on a non-school team to five or seven players from the same school team. No action was taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Study with possible modifications, and continue for future school years, the voluntary coach-player contact days permitted for spring sports. (6-0).