

# **BOYS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **Zoom Meeting**

East Lansing, October 7, 2021

### **Members Present:**

Eric Albright, Midland  
Cole Andrews, Rockford  
Jim Carl, Brighton  
Rick DeBlasio, East Grand Rapids (Advisory)  
Kris Daiek, Riverview Gabriel Richard  
Mike Jolly, Warren (Advisory)  
Rich Kimball, Lansing Catholic  
Andrew Kransberger, Byron Center  
Nikki Norris, East Lansing (MIAAA)

Andy Shira, Forest Hills Central  
Nick Stenson, Birmingham  
Ray Miller, Plymouth  
Don Watchowski, Novi  
Adam Zarotney, Haslett (MHSLCA)

### **Staff Members**

Cole Malatinsky (Recorder)  
Tom Rashid

## **INTRODUCTION**

The week prior to the meeting, the committee was emailed the link to minutes of three previous committee meeting and several reports for their review which included the 2022 classification of teams and enrollment breaks set in April 2021 and current cooperative programs. As of Oct. 7, 2021, there are 129 teams (66 Division 1, 63 Division 2) representing 176 schools among 36 cooperative programs including two in the process of forming. A report of boys lacrosse participation over the past six years, the MHSAA Head injury report from 2020-21, correspondence from one member school, a recommendation from the task force on voluntary coach player contact days, and preliminary materials for the preseason season seeding were also emailed to committee members the week prior to the meeting.

The committee's multiple functions over two meetings (recommendations to the Representative Council, sport oversight, seeding, Regional alignment and officials' selection) were reviewed. The committees had one recommendation to the Council from its meeting of October 6, 2020: "Study with possible modifications, and continue for future school years, the voluntary coach-player contact days permitted for spring sports." Partly in response to this, the Representative Council formed a task force that resulted in a recommendation circulating throughout AD In-service and sport committees in 2021-22.

## **2021-22 REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS & TOURNAMENT**

Members also received in advance preliminary Regional alignments, maps of each region by division, and the stated criteria for seeding the tournament. No changes were made to the seeding criteria for the preseason or late season seeding in May 2022. It was noted that only one year of performance (2021) would be used for this year's seeding due in part to the pandemic cancelling the 2020 season and the committee's preference that only the two-year performance be used to break very close ties in seeding. New teams adding lacrosse for 2022 based on geography or moving divisions due to enrollment changes or cooperative agreements being formed were included. The committee ranked the top eight teams 1-8 in each division based on the criteria and placed one seeded team in each Region. The Regions were finalized pending staff securing host sites. Regions, without hosts designated, were posted on MHSAA.com on Friday, Oct. 9, 2021. On Wednesday, May 11, 2022 the committee will reconvene and place each team on the bracket based on the written criteria and current season competition played on or before Monday, May 9, 2022. The committee made no changes to the calendar or structure for the 2021-22 tournament.

## **VOLUNTARY COACH-PLAYER CONTACT DAYS**

Because sports were shut down due to the pandemic from March-June 2020, in the fall of 2020, the MHSAA allowed 16 voluntary coach-player out-of-season contact days between coaches and any number of players from Labor Day to Halloween. Discussion and surveys among member schools and coaches in some sports supported a review and possible implementation of a similar allowance in 2022-23. In May 2021, the Representative Council determined that a task force should meet and formulate concrete proposals for school discussion and input during the fall of 2021. MHSAA medical insurance will cover the unlimited contact days (even though other out-of-season activity is not covered) provided the student has a valid physical.

Continued:

The basic proposal adds six (6) "contact" dates (eight in hockey), no more than once a week (Mon.-Sun.) where a coach may practice with an unlimited number of players in voluntary sport specific activity. This is in addition to the already existing "4 Player" allowance and other out-of-season activity currently permitted under MHSAA rules. The lacrosse committee viewed the proposal favorably and noted that this may assist in minimizing for-profit travel program involvement and tend to better connect our students to our coaches. It was noted that in smaller schools the voluntary contact days are more of a concern and administrators need to exercise local control. It was suggested that the MHSAA stipulate the specific dates when contact may occur. There was no opposition from the Coaches Association meeting in June 2021. One comment included that students who play other sports will not likely be involved in the contact days and future consideration should be given to increasing the four-player limit to seven players.

#### **FIVE-QUARTER RULE**

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year the committee considered adopting a rule like basketball that allows five quarters in one day. 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) and when schools struggled to field a JV team. In 2020 the committee took no action as a basketball season had not yet been played. In 2020 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. In 2021 the committee felt that it could increase the number of JV games. It was moved and seconded to recommend to the Representative Council that the five-quarter limit on competition be adopted with the modification that a player who accumulates five minutes of personal fouls in the first game of a day (i.e., fouls out and is suspended from that game but not disqualified from the next day of competition) may not play any additional quarters in another game that same day. (Approved 9-0).

#### **NON-SCHOOL CLUB TEAM PARTICIPATON 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. Pointing out that such a regulation may be beyond the authority of the MHSAA to regulate and the impossibility to enforce, no action was taken. The committee recognized that this non-school activity is a significant problem in some areas of the state and urged the staff to again make contact to ensure that the four-player rule for grades 7-12 was being followed by schools whose coaches were connected to non-school programs and indoor facilities.

#### **FINAL TOURNAMENT VENUE**

MHSAA Staff has been in contact since 2019 with the University of Michigan staff regarding use of their facility for the MHSAA finals possibly in tandem with the girls lacrosse finals. Proposals have been received that involved significant increased cost over past years and limited availability of off field warm up space and locker rooms to accommodate a four-game schedule. Some members of the Committee were strongly in favor of pursuing the U of M Lacrosse Facility while others felt that the MHSAA finals should be at member school facilities that can meet the needs of the event, citing better travel for participating teams and keeping funds in member schools. MHSAA staff will continue to explore the options.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

One member school coach wrote to suggest that the MHSAA consider a reduction in the current limits on competition of 18 games in a season and three games in week (Mon.-Sun.). The NCAA limits games to two games per week. Fewer games in a season and in a week would be less taxing on players, officials and transportation and perhaps better serve the educational mission of schools. Discussion occurred but no action was taken.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

Adopt the five-quarter limit on competition with the modification that a player who accumulates five minutes of personal fouls in the first game of a day (i.e. fouls out and is suspended from that game but not disqualified from the next day of competition) may not play any additional quarters in another game that same day. (Approved 9-0).