

GIRLS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING
MHSAA Office - East Lansing
October 21, 2015

Members Present:

Kimberly Crum, Mattawan
Michael Emery, Rockford
Tim Erickson, MIAAA
Brian Gordon, Novi
Katie Kozlowski, Brighton
Teri Reyburn, DeWitt

Chris Riker, Portage
Scott Weis, Caledonia

Members Absent:

Haley Crouse, Midland
Sal Malek, Bloomfield Hills

Staff Member:

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

GENERAL REVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The 2015-16 Girls Lacrosse Committee met at the Michigan High School Athletic Association to review its responsibilities as a standing sports committee; review prior Representative Council action; consider proposals from the Girls Lacrosse Coaches Association; recommend to the Representative Council changes regarding US Lacrosse or MHSAA regulations relative to girls lacrosse; suggest points of emphasis for rules meetings; and evaluate current practices and procedures with MHSAA staff. The Girls Lacrosse Committee will also assist in the assignment of officials to all levels of the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament. This Committee meets in October because of the necessity to review US Lacrosse changes which continue to be altered between the time of the National Federation of High Schools Girls Lacrosse Committee Meeting and the US Lacrosse Committee Meeting.

MEETING MINUTES/OUT-OF-SEASON COACHING REGULATIONS

The minutes of the October, 2014 Girls Lacrosse Committee were reviewed for the purpose of providing background regarding prior discussion and actions of the committee. In addition, the limitations of competition were reviewed for grades 7 – 12. The Committee discussed the current MHSAA Out-of-Season Regulations as well as the need for girls lacrosse coaches and schools to be in compliance with the regulations. Concerns included both out-of-season and travel regulations with reminders that coaches are limited to providing coaching in their sport to four students in grades 7 – 12 of the school district in which they coach. The four player period runs from the Monday when August 15 occurs through the Sunday after Memorial Day. The Down Time Regulation (which commences March 1) includes language which states that no competition (intra-squad or inter-squad) between groups that resemble school teams (more than four students in grades 7 – 12 of the district) may occur in that sport at any school facility or any other location with any of that school district's personnel present. In addition, further discussion included the adherence to Interpretation 236 in which a coach may not arrange for a parent or non-staff person to do that which the coach is prohibited from doing under the regulation.

COACHING REQUIREMENTS

Committee members reviewed information regarding coaching requirements for 2015-16 and 2016-17. Effective with the 2015-16 school year, high schools must attest that all varsity head coaches have a valid current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificate. Effective with the 2016-17 school year, each head coach of a varsity high school team, hired for the first time at any MHSAA member high school after July 31, 2016 shall have completed either Level 1 or Level 2 of the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program (CAP). Discussion included how athletic administrators were enforcing the requirements.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Additional health and safety issues were discussed including MHSAA protocol for implementation of National Federation sports playing rules for concussion and the MHSAA Model Policy for Managing Heat and Humidity. Concussion protocol was discussed as well as the concussion insurance and pilot programs available. In addition, the MHSAA Model Policy for Managing Heat and Humidity requires that MHSAA tournament managers at all levels take temperature and humidity readings at the site of the activity 30 minutes prior to the start of an activity and again 60 or 30 minutes after the start of the activity and to follow the protocol based on the heat index reading.

Committee members also received additional discussion points regarding the use of headgear in girls' and women's lacrosse, which has been perhaps the most debated safety issue in the sport in recent years. Current girl's

lacrosse rules allow for use of “soft” headgear and a number of products have emerged on the marketplace. However, there is currently no established standard in place to regulate these products and none of the products currently available has been developed based on scientific testing. On one side of this issue are those who cite the dangers from contact to the head and face. On the other side are those who are concerned that by increasing head and face protection the rule makers would invite hard and high contact which would fundamentally alter the nature of the game and possibly lead to more serious injury. The conundrum continues to be if requiring female lacrosse players to wear helmets will make the sport safer or, as a result of the phenomenon called risk compensation, actually result in more, rather than fewer, head injuries.

The Girls Lacrosse Committee believes that the focus should be on the rules of the game and the responsibility of coaches to teach the game appropriately. Additional attention should be provided by officials who stick to strict enforcement of the rules that prohibit rough and reckless checking and place a premium on participant safety. Over the past few years, there has been additional emphasis on major rules changes in the girl’s game at all levels which has included increasing penalties associated with fouls caused as a result of dangerous play. This year, an additional new foul for any dangerous contact has also been added.

US LACROSSE/NATIONAL FEDERATION ENDORSEMENT

Beginning with this rule book (2015-16), the publication of the girls lacrosse rules book will change. The process will remain the same except that, following the annual meeting of the US Lacrosse Women’s Rules Committee and the finalization of the rules revisions, the NFHS will publish and distribute the rules book. THE NFHS and US Lacrosse will share resources such as the rules exam and continue to provide rule interpretations DVDs, training materials and rules updates on both association’s websites. The NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee meets in June, 2016.

EQUIPMENT COMPLIANCE

Starting in January, 2014, all lacrosse balls had to specify that the lacrosse ball meets the NOCSAE standard. Additionally, eyewear used in 2016 must meet the ASTM standard of F803 or F3077. The new ASTM standard (F3077) shall be in effect on January 1, 2017. Also effective January 1, 2017, the only optional headgear allowed for use must meet the new ASTM standard, F31317. US Lacrosse has also specified a number of stick and pocket guidelines designed to minimize the aftermarket changes being made to sticks and pockets and to assist in determining their legality for play.

REVIEW OF GIRLS LACROSSE RULES CHANGES PROPOSED FOR 2015-16

Presently, girls lacrosse has rules that are proposed with member state involvement to the National Federation of High Schools in which they review and vote on rules that are sent in by member schools. The rules that were discussed in the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Committee meeting and showed unanimous approval included a few changes. The first was a reminder that a new ASTM eyewear standard was in effect on January 1, 2016 with both the F803 and the F3077 criteria in place. Starting in 2017, only the F3077 stand will be legal for play. The second provision was an allowance for one American flag (not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches) to be worn on the uniform. There was also a clarification of Rule 3, Section 9 which changed the language from the need for two US Lacrosse rated officials to two approved/certified officials with the allowance for State Associations to consider any extenuating circumstances. The final approval was in Rule 7 (delay of game) in which the official will show green and yellow card to the offending player who must leave the field for 2 minutes of elapsed playing time with no substitute.

Following this NFHS meeting, US Lacrosse announced many additional rule changes for girls high school lacrosse which were not discussed in the NFHS Girls Lacrosse Committee. These included rules revisions ranging from changes in overtime and new carding procedures; with additional revisions for equipment and uniforms effective beginning in 2017 or 2018. The MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Committee will continue to review the rules and make recommendations to the MHSAA Representative Council regarding the implementation of these rules.

TOURNAMENT RECOMMENDATIONS/IMPORTANT DATES

Girls lacrosse tournament dates and Participating School Tournament Information were reviewed by the committee as well as the dates regarding online rules meetings. The online rules meeting for girls lacrosse will be available on February 8, 2016 and end on April 14, 2016. Practice for MHSAA Girls Lacrosse begins Monday, March 14, 2016 and the first available contest date is Wednesday, March 23, 2016. The 2015 Girls Lacrosse Tournament was reviewed for any points of improvement. Each year the starting times are reversed in Girls Lacrosse and in 2016, the Division 2 Girls Lacrosse Final will start at 4:30 p.m. and the Division 1 Final will start at

2:00 p.m. Brighton High School will be the host for the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse tournament on Saturday, June 11, 2016. Brighton will host the 2016 and 2017 Girls Lacrosse Finals.

The tournament format and expected regional/semi-final sites were evaluated and there will be four regionals in Division 1 and four regionals in Division 2. Currently there are several games that will be played as "pre-regional games" due to the increasing number of teams in girls lacrosse. Additionally, in the Division 1 semi-finals, Region 3 will play Region 2 and Region 4 will play Region 1. In Division 2, Region 7 plays Region 6 and Region 8 plays Region 5. There will be three field officials for each semi-final and each final. The committee indicated that a surface of either artificial turf or grass was acceptable for regional and semi-final sites. Several sites for the semi-finals will be considered.

Additional discussion included desired Regional sites for tournament play. Host managers who are contacted may host all levels of the Regional Tournament if necessary. The alternate site travel accommodation rule for lacrosse was reviewed which indicates that MHSAA staff may change the date, time and location of a previously scheduled tournament game if the originally scheduled game involves extensive travel for both teams and an acceptable site can be secured. The determination includes consultation with both teams and the Tournament Manager and may require that the competing teams secure an acceptable field.

Division 1 and Division 2 enrollment numbers were also reviewed and 39 teams are presently in Division 1 (enrollment 1704 and above) and 38 teams are in Division 2 (enrollment 1703 and below). This is already an increase from 2015-16. There are 17 cooperative programs in girls lacrosse with 77 teams involving 98 schools. It was also noted that three teams have opted up to play in Division 1 during the 2015-16 season. Schools participating in the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament have continued to increase in numbers throughout the years with the initial tournament in 2004-05 consisting of 39 teams (50 schools) to the current status indicated. Committee members also provided the status of several other schools that were possibly planning to offer girls lacrosse in the 2016. Overall each year, schools participating in the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament have continued to increase. Girls lacrosse was the only MHSAA sport to set a participation record during 2014-15 (increase of 1.9 percent).

OFFICIALS AND ASSIGNORS

The Girls Lacrosse Committee also provided input regarding officials and assignors of girls lacrosse where further emphasis must be placed on the level of competition, skill level of team and experience of the officials who are assigned to a contest. Additionally, girls lacrosse officials need to be especially observant when there is a conflict of interest and to make certain that they are indicating the conflict during the season and MHSAA Tournament. In the MHSAA tournament, officials will be assigned by MHSAA Committee.

RULES MEETING SCHEDULE & POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The 2015-16 online rules meeting schedule was discussed and the Girls Lacrosse Committee requested a point of emphasis be given to coaches and officials regarding the out-of-season limitations that exist in girls lacrosse for all levels of play (7th through 12th grade). Further emphasis includes that coaches have a better understanding of their role and responsibility as leaders of an interscholastic team. Additionally, an emphasis will be provided on the responsibilities of coaches in treating the playing field as an educational setting. The Committee requested that an additional point of emphasis be made on the expected behavior for all game personnel on the sidelines and on the field.

OFFICIALS

Officials training continues and sessions are scheduled on Saturday, February 6, 2016 at the MHSAA which will be held in conjunction with the Women in Sports Leadership Conference. It was further noted that the fees for regular season competition and assignment of officials are set by schools and that using an MHSAA registered assignor is voluntary. Official's selection for tournament assignments will be made for all levels of the Girls Lacrosse Tournament by the Girls Lacrosse Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Alter the US Women's Lacrosse new Rule 4, Section 7 (overtime play) to permit the current (2014-15) overtime procedures that are in place and not adopt the US Women's Lacrosse new rule of sudden victory (first goal ends the game) for tournament play. The Girls Lacrosse Committee recommends that this recommendation be considered in the December Representative Council Meeting in order for it to be used in the 2015-16 girls lacrosse season. (Current rule to be used is listed below.) (8-0)

Current Overtime Procedures to be retained:

When the score is tied at the end of regular playing time and overtime is to be played, both teams will have a 5-minute rest and toss a coin (visiting captain calls) for choice of ends. Two 3-minute halves of stop clock overtime (clock stops on every whistle) will be played. The clock will be stopped after 3 minutes of play in order for teams to change ends with no delay for coaching. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team which is ahead at the end of six minutes wins the game.

If the teams are still tied after six minutes have elapsed, the teams will have a 3-minute rest and change ends. The winner will then be decided on a "sudden victory" stop-clock overtime of no more than six minutes in length with the teams changing ends after 3 minutes. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team scoring the first goal wins the game.

Play will continue with "sudden victory" stop-clock overtime periods of six minutes in length (two 3-minute halves) with 3 minutes in between and change of ends until a winning goal is scored.

The rationale is that this sudden victory rule would create an unsafe environment under the current conditions of the draw and that the game of girls lacrosse is already a short contest (50 minutes – much of it running time).