

## **MHSAA BASEBALL / SOFTBALL COMMITTEE**

January 12, 2017

### **Members Present:**

Steve Babbitt, Blissfield  
Bryan Carpenter, Vermontville  
Jeff Conway, Dearborn  
Jim Conway, Mt. Pleasant  
Jeff Hammond, Union City  
Drew Johnson, Otisville  
Chris LaMange, Grand Rapids  
Steve Newkirk, Clare  
Jeff Nowak, Tecumseh  
Brian Osborn, Fowlerville  
Eric Pierce, West Bloomfield  
Kim Reichard, Holt  
John Young, Howell

### **Members Absent:**

Mitch Bohn, Sanford  
Tom Calnen, Troy  
Ken Dietz, Watervliet  
Dave Engbers, Holland  
Brian Kelly, Marine City  
Tim McDonald, Auburn  
Ron Vansloten, Rudyard

### **Guests:**

Lars Murray, Alma  
Dan Tinke, Stevensville

### **Staff:**

Andrea Osters  
Mark Uyl (Recorder)

The 2016-17 MHSAA Baseball / Softball Committee met in the MHSAA office building to review topics involving the MHSAA tournament series in baseball and softball. The group reviewed the charge of the committee and the MHSAA decision making process.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**National Federation Topics:** A brief report was provided on softball bats and potential bat tampering issues, and staff provided a report on bat testing done at the MHSAA Softball Finals. Baseball bat standards were also reviewed, along with the use of the flat-seam baseball in recent years at the NCAA level. Additional discussion centered on the 2017 NF rule changes and MHSAA concussion protocols.

**Health and Safety:** The committee was provided a full report on the approved Baseball pitch count regulation, procedures and forms as approved by the Representative Council in December of 2016 as a result of the National Federation's baseball rule change requiring all states use a pitching limitation rule that includes a pitch count. Additional resources and information on arm conditioning and pre-season preparation will be posted on the Baseball page at MHSAA.com in partnership between the MHSAA and the Michigan Athletic Trainers Society (MATS).

**Tournament Format Alternatives:** A long discussion took place regarding the MHSAA tournament format and pressure it places on baseball teams, especially, when it comes to the five games in eight days for the Regional and Final levels. There is concern regarding weather issues with the Regional-Quarterfinal-Semifinal-Final games scheduled so closely together and this issue has garnered even more focus in light of the new pitch count limitations. An alternative format was discussed that would begin the Regional round of play for Baseball on Wednesday following the District with single games at 64 sites for all District champions (Regional Semifinal) and then the Saturday Regional Finals for two Regions (10 am and 12:30 pm) followed immediately by the

“Super Regional” (formerly the QF) game at 3pm to determine the four Semifinalists at each of the four sites. This would eliminate the traditional Tuesday Quarterfinal round for Baseball and the four “Super Regional” champions would advance directly to the Semifinals with no change in the current number of awards. Softball would keep the current schedule with Saturday Regional play followed by the Tuesday Quarterfinal played at 16 sites. This proposal would better space the Baseball tournament over the final two weeks and would eliminate a real concern with weather given how closely the Regional-Quarterfinal-Semifinal rounds of play are currently scheduled. Softball was again adamant that they wanted to keep the Softball tournament in its current format with no change.

**Classification & Tournament Groupings:** Staff provided an extensive report on growing District issues, especially in Divisions 3 and 4, with many schools no longer sponsoring both Baseball and Softball. It has created imbalance in many Districts given the current approach of classifying and assigning both Baseball and Softball schools together based on the Baseball enrollment number. There was great support for classifying each sport separately and creating District groups for Baseball and Softball independent of each other. Rationale was provided on the District groupings for 2017 and many of the groups reviewed illuminated the need for a change in classification and tournament planning procedures. Other topics such as the Friday District option and host site expectations in both baseball and softball were also discussed.

**Finals Venue:** The committee was provided a report on the new Finals site at Michigan State University and plans for making a good experience even better in East Lansing in 2017.

**Out of Season Coaching:** The group discussed out-of-season coaching regulations with focus given to allowed rotations within a facility. There was strong support of the recent improvements to the rule.

**Other Topics:** Members of the committee briefly reviewed and discussed the recent change regarding 6th grade students on 7-8 grade teams, Michigan points of emphasis for the upcoming baseball and softball rules meeting presentations and bat standards at the junior high level for Baseball.

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

1. Effective with 2017-18, classify schools for the Baseball and Softball tournaments independently and plan each of these two tournaments separately. The two sport committees with separate membership and site selection committees with common members will continue to meet on the same date as in previous years at the MHSAA offices to allow for time for each group to meet independently and/or jointly depending on the topics and issues that would impact each sport on their own or both sports together. (13-0)
2. For the Baseball tournament only, begin the Regional round of play on Wednesday following the District with single games at 64 sites for all District champions (Regional Semifinal) followed by the Saturday Regional Final (10 am

and 12:30 pm) followed immediately by the “Super Regional” (formerly the QF) game at 3pm to determine the four Semifinalists at each of the four sites. This would eliminate the traditional Tuesday Quarterfinal round for Baseball and the four “Super Regional” champions would advance directly to the Semifinals with no change in the current number of awards. Softball would keep the current schedule with Saturday Regional play followed by the Tuesday Quarterfinal played at 16 sites. The net effect would be Baseball playing on its own the Wednesday following Districts, Baseball and Softball being played concurrently at Saturday Regional sites and Softball playing on its own at Tuesday Quarterfinal sites before both sports come together at Michigan State University for all Semifinal and Final games. (13-0)