

2024-25 MHSAA BASEBALL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, January 16, 2025- 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Adams, Camden
Jay Alexander, Detroit
Brad Antcliff, Beal City
Jeff Calcaterra, Birmingham
Kris Herman, Maple City (MHSBCA)
Shayne Mishler, Montrose
Billy Mitchell, Rudyard
Matt Seidl, Pinckney

David Sidenbender, Niles
Don Watchowski, Novi (MIAAA)

GUEST

Brianna Hendra, Wayne (MATS)

MHSAA STAFF

Brad Bush (Recorder)

The 2024-25 MHSAA Baseball Committee met in the John E. “Jack” Roberts MHSAA building to review baseball topics and the tournament series. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision-making process and the charge of the Baseball Committee. Agenda items from correspondence, staff, committee members, and the softball coaches association were compiled. Agenda items from the 2023-24 meeting were reviewed. It was noted that the approval of an online pitch count recording system was delayed by one year to the 2026 season by the Representative Council.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

NEW NFHS RULES

Staff reviewed new NFHS rules with the committee. The new rules included bat drying agents, including pine tar, allowable to 18 inches on both wood and non-wood bats. This rule was implemented for safety of all bats to improve the grip for athletes. The other new rule relates to ejections in baseball which allows an umpire to forfeit a game if a coach, player, or team personnel does not leave the field in a reasonable amount of time after an ejection.

SCRIMMAGES

The committee is concerned about making sure all coaches and athletic directors understand the difference between a game and a scrimmage. It must be clear to all schools involved of the differences between a scrimmage, a practice session involving more than one school, and a game, which must be counted toward the regular season limit of 38 games. A scrimmage includes not charging admission and altering at least one playing rule to make it clear that it is a scrimmage and not a game. All of these points will be included in the preseason rules meeting to ensure that all parties are aware of these regulations. Part of the discussion included concerns about scrimmages that are being held that are reported on social media as a game, including game scores, box scores and statistics, which cannot be happening.

PITCH COUNT PRESENTATIONS

The committee heard two fifteen-minute presentations from PitchKount and GameChanger. These two companies discussed and demonstrated their products. These are the two online pitch count options to fulfill the 2026 policy for all varsity coaches to list the pitch counts of all pitchers on a transparent online format. There was discussion among the committee after the presentations and the committee was unanimous that if there is no cost to the MHSAA or schools, that PitchKount was the best option. It was noted that coaches are very happy with GameChanger as a product and that 80% of the teams in Michigan use GameChanger as their electronic scorebook.

5 DIVISION DISCUSSION / TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

The possibility of 5 divisions for the MHSAA tournament was discussed. Options for how the tournament could look and be structured was presented. Good discussion on the positives and negatives of such a plan were discussed by the committee members. The committee did not support moving any recommendations forward.

PLAYING ON MULTIPLE LEVELS ON THE SAME DATE

Committee members discussed the need to allow athletes to play on multiple levels in the same day in baseball. As there is no 5th-quarter rule, the game of baseball currently does not allow athletes to compete on multiple levels in the same day. Many smaller schools are reporting they play double headers with varsity and JV playing one game in a day. With participation and pitching concerns there is a need for many schools to allow an athlete to play one game on each level in a day. The 38-game limit would still be in effect for all athletes and teams. The depth of pitching in many areas is a concern. Teams feel the need to play both levels on the same day, utilizing the umpires hired, as it can be difficult to get umpires for one game on two days.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS AND AEDs

The committee reviewed the requirements for MHSAA tournament hosts, specifically that an AED be within three minutes of the tournament site. It was recommended that tournament hosts include this information at the district draw meetings in the spring to ensure that at least one AED will be on-site for the MHSAA Baseball Tournament.

LOW SEAM VS HIGH SEAM BASEBALLS

There was a discussion of the approved ball for the MHSAA tournament. The Rawlings ball that has high seams is currently the ball used for the tournament. At other levels of baseball, a low seam ball is used which has less drag and travels further. The MHSBCA did not find support to move to a different ball and the committee is also happy with the current baseball used for the MHSAA tournament.

BAT TESTING AT MHSAA FINALS

Coaches have concerns about bats that are altered to increase the power of the bat. There are bats that are sold online that are “rolled” or altered in a way that does not allow them to meet BBCOR standards. Bats are tested in college baseball and could be tested at the MHSAA finals at MSU. The committee felt that this is not a current safety issue and has not been enough of an issue that it needs to be tested. There was also concern for some schools that a bat might not pass the test and it was not altered in a way to break the rule, and could leave the team short on bats for a game.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Allow athletes to play on multiple levels of baseball on the same day. (10-0)
2. Recommend using PitchKount as the online platform for pitch count recording if there is no cost to the MHSAA or member schools to take effect for the 2026 season. (10-0)