

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETING

East Lansing, January 11, 2023

Members Present:

Mike Brya, DeWitt
Jeff Engbers, Hudsonville
Don Gauthier, Imlay City
Tim Genson, Scottville
Josh Glerum, Zeeland
Leasa Griffith, Mendon
Nick Herblet, Sturgis
Darren Kecskes, Romulus
Vic Michaels, Detroit

David Pratt, Hillsdale
Mike Quinn, Lake Odessa
Mike Roy, Vicksburg (MIAAA)
Robert Vaught, DeTour
Marty Weese, Blanchard
Mike Watson, Bloomfield Hills

Staff Members Present:

Camala Gillette
Mark Uyl (Recorder)

INTRODUCTION

The Classification Committee began in the 1980s as a forum to discuss relationships between public and non-public schools. Eventually, two additional purposes were established: (1) to perform intermediate review (between sport committees and the Representative Council) of proposals related to MHSAA tournament classification for a sport; and (2) to review proposals related to the policies and procedures of counting students and collecting enrollment figures for school classification purposes as well as proposals affecting tournament classification generally. The Classification Committee is also asked to respond to subjects that are not directly related to classification. The Classification Committee has become the principal forum for reviewing policies and procedures related to cooperative programs.

Minutes of the 2022 meeting of the Classification Committee were reviewed and it was noted that there were two recommendations approved by the Representative Council during the 2021-22 school year which addressed football opt-ups and tournament classification, both of which have been very positive changes.

SPORTS SPONSORSHIP UPDATE

An update was provided on current MHSAA membership demographics, which included current numbers of traditional public high schools, public school academies and non-public high schools. Statistics on school sponsorship by sport were provided, along with information on current opt-ups and classification ranges.

UPDATE AND UP SCHOOL SURVEY RESPONSES

Results from both the Fall 2022 Update Meeting survey and UP School survey were shared with committee members with special attention being given to responses regarding the allowance of high schools smaller than 100 and 50 students being able to use students in the 8th and 7th grades in selected sports.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

An update was provided on the change for 22-23 in ice hockey classification with cooperative programs and stand-alone teams being divided equally in three divisions. This change was a result in years of work by the MHSAA Ice Hockey Committee. Committee members were also informed that a cooperative program survey will be conducted with schools later in 22-23 at the request of the Equity Committee.

CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

Current Policy & Issues – An overview of the policy change for 22-23 in the process whereby divisions are determined in each sport was provided. Schools that have either been opt-outs or no-shows for the initial round of the tournament for two consecutive years are no longer included in the initial classification process of determining division lines and breaks. It was noted that this change has moved enrollment breaks upward, which has created a wider enrollment span in the smaller divisions. The data has confirmed that the consistent opt-outs and no-shows tend to take place in the smaller two divisions in all sports.

ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

Student Eligibility for High Schools Under 100 and 50 Students - The committee discussed at length concerns from small member schools (those below 125 students) to increase the enrollment cutoff number to allow more 8th and 7th-grade students to participate and compete at the high school level in selected sports. The current regulation allows high schools under 100 students to use 8th-grade students in all sports except football, ice hockey and wrestling; schools under 50 students can use 7th and 8th-grade students in these sports. Discussion focused on approaches that would either increase the current numbers or allow for a waiver request process through the Executive Committee with all committee members contributing to an excellent discussion.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Boarding Schools – A brief overview was provided on boarding school requirements and Exception #13 of the transfer rule that allows students at these five boarding schools eligibility. Concerns from member schools have been received that Exception #13 is only available to five member schools that have dormitories while the other fourteen exceptions to the transfer rule are available to all 750 member schools. Staff shared that these issues will be surveyed and discussed by the membership.

Emerging Sports & Sponsorship – The committee discussed a proposal from the Michigan Water Polo Coaches Association, along with other possible emerging sports for MHSAA sponsorship. MHSAA staff will engage with these emerging sport communities to review basic sponsorship requirements in terms of the number of schools sponsoring a sport along with other factors and consideration in adding opportunities. Initial results from this fall's Emerging Sports Survey from students was shared with committee members.

Opt-Ups, “Opt-Downs” and Division Structure - Committee members were given data of all current schools that have “opted-up” in all sports. The concept of schools being able to “opt-down” was discussed when schools “opt-up” after initial divisions are set in late March and early April each year. This topic will continue be discussed along with Fall 2023 surveys of schools to gauge interest in an additional division in sports sponsored by at least 600 member schools.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Allow high schools with less than 125 students to request an Executive Committee waiver with cause and rationale to allow the use of 8th-grade students in all sports except football, ice hockey and wrestling. Schools with less than 75 students can make this same request with cause and rationale to use 7th and 8th-grade students in all sports except football, ice hockey and wrestling. (15-0).