

2025 MHSAA CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, January 13, 2025, 9:30 am. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Engbers, Hudsonville
Kendra Faustin, Comstock Park
Nick Herblet, Sturgis
Mike Kapolka, Chelsea
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Mark Olmstead, Shelby
Mike Quinn, Lake Odessa
Mike Roy, Vicksburg (MIAAA)

Chris Schultz, Dearborn
Cody Smith, Romeo
Jason Vogel, Kent City

MHSAA STAFF

Camala Gillette
Cody Inglis
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 an intermediate review (between MHSAA 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 2024 meeting of the Classification Committee were reviewed and it was noted that the Representative Council approved one recommendation. The approved change added girls and boys lacrosse to the list of cooperative programs, regardless of size, for two or more schools of the same public school district (same governing board). It was noted that this was a minor change to the *MHSAA Handbook*, adding lacrosse to list of multiple sports.

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 championships and runner-up schools, along with top 5 finalists in individual sports, based on the type of school (public and non-public).

UPDATE SURVEY RESPONSES & DIVISION STRUCTURE

Results from the fall 2024 Update Meeting survey were shared with committee members, with special attention being given to areas with strong support. Staff also provided updated school size demographics that were discussed by school personnel who attended one of the seven fall tour sessions.

One item of note was the suggestion that staff survey member schools to determine if a school wishes to receive the MHSAA Wall Calendar mailing. In other words, schools would need to “opt-in” if they wish to receive copies of the annual wall calendar.

A good discussion took place on the concept of divisions, specifically the consideration of an additional division in sports sponsored by at least 550-member high schools. It was reported that

the December 6 meeting of the Representative Council included support for a task force that will study the “divisions discussions” more thoroughly. Committee members provided solid input and guidance, recognizing the importance of opportunities for kids while balancing the challenges that additional divisions would create in those sports. The input provided by the Classification Committee will be shared with the Council, along with feedback received from the various involved sports committees, when the issue is discussed again in the future.

EMERGING SPORTS AND MHSAA SPONSORSHIP

A lengthy conversation took place about emerging sports and MHSAA sponsorship. The group reviewed current guidance from the *MHSAA Handbook* on page 82 and the history of adding MHSAA sports over the past 20 years. It was reported that the MHSAA Representative Council has approved girls field hockey and boys volleyball beginning with the 2025-26 school year. Staff and board members continue to consider proposals for girls flag football, girls ice hockey, girls and boys water polo, girls and boys indoor track & field and target trap shooting.

Staff provided the committee with a list of 14 questions that are used internally regarding new and emerging sports. The critical question for the Representative Council and MHSAA membership at large includes whether or not to add additional sports. More importantly, if additional sports are to be added, which sports should be offered and when? All committee members were active participants in discussing the current rule of 64 and considerations for which emerging sports should be considered further along with the challenges that any new sport could create for existing sports and opportunities. Financial considerations at the school level were discussed along with small schools' concerns about adding new opportunities.

A virtual presentation was made by the Clay Target leadership team of John Nelson and Josh Kroells, who shared information on the program in general, along with specifics of the high school program that is offered in Minnesota between the Clay Target organization and the state association office. Four committee members have this program currently offered within their school communities and added insight to this emerging sport and program. The Minnesota model is one of a “presenting sponsor” relationship for the state association office with the clay target organization providing the program with the MHSL providing awards, branding, and promotion.

The input provided by committee members will be shared with the Representative Council in May of 2025 as this topic continues to receive consideration, debate, and discussion.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

None.