

2025-26 MHSAA JUNIOR HIGH / MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday October 22, 2025- 9:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Miysam Bazzi, Dearborn
Jeff Dassance, Dansville
Michael Johnston, Jenison
Jason Kemler, Manistee
Jolinda Lucas, Grand Rapids (MIAAA)

Jason Morris, Chelsea (MIAAA)
Fred Smith, Bangor
Brandon Wheeler, Jonesville

MHSAA STAFF

Brad Bush (Recorder)

The MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee met to review topics identified for discussion by the MHSAA staff, Representative Council, and member schools. The committee reviewed the meeting minutes and recommendations from the 2024-25 school year. A review of changes in regulations over the past 5-7 years related to middle school athletics was discussed. There was very positive feedback related to the 7th and 8th-grade transfer rules for those students that have high school eligibility and the new fall start date. These new regulations were passed by the Representative Council in May.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

MHSAA WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATION TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

There was a recommendation from the committee in 2023-24 to update the website with a section devoted specifically to middle school athletics. This part of the MHSAA website has been live for over a year. The committee encouraged more education for athletic directors to know where it is located and to encourage them to use this section of the website, which includes links to all the areas middle school administrators would use. There was discussion of making the physical form more prominent to make this easier for parents to locate.

LIMITED TEAM MEMBERSHIP RULE

There was discussion of the current state of the limited team membership rule at the middle school level. Students are allowed two outside events during their season in the same sport. There has been some discussion among coaches and administrators of allowing more outside events at the middle school level to encourage students to play middle school sports as well as club/AAU. Much of the committee felt that the current rule is a good one, based on academic and health needs of students, limiting outside activities during a very short middle school season. The committee committed to continuing the conversation in future meetings.

DISCUSSION OF THE FIFTH QUARTER RULE

Middle schools must request with rationale to MHSAA staff for the use of the fifth quarter rule. There was discussion on if the fifth quarter rule should be a permanent part of all middle school sports which are allowed this at the high school level. The committee felt the fifth quarter rule should only be allowed when requested with rationale. The concern is that, if not used properly, it could discourage students from participating. It is the goal of the committee to encourage participation for all students. The rule should be limited to only those schools that cannot field a team otherwise.

ELIGIBILITY ADVANCEMENT FORM

The Eligibility Advancement Form was reviewed and discussed. The potential for more students to qualify exists due to many students that were held back during the pandemic. Many lower elementary students during the pandemic are now at the middle school age group and may be older due to taking a year off from school. The committee recommended that we continue to discuss this issue at the annual fall AD In-Services. The committee also recommended that local schools make decisions on students repeating middle school grades, even in the case if they are for athletic reasons. The committee felt they have seen an increase in parents wishing to repeat a grade for athletic advantages, but those decisions should be made at the local level.

DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE 8TH-GRADE LINKS RULE

The committee requested that MHSAA staff continue to survey athletic directors regarding including 8th-grade students in the current links rule. There was a feeling among the committee that most enrollment decisions are made in the 8th grade, before entering high school. The committee felt that this rule should be examined to possibly include 8th-grade students when a link may be the most relevant to choosing a school.

MHSAA CPR RULES AND STATE LAW

The current regulations and state laws regarding CPR certification were discussed. The current law and lack of appropriations leaves the current MHSAA regulation requiring head coaches to be certified at the high school and middle school levels. The concern of all coaches being required to be certified at the middle school level was emphasized due to the transient nature of middle school athletics. Many schools find it hard to find coaches and rely on volunteers. The committee will be updated if appropriations are included in future budgets that would then require all coaches at the middle school level to be CPR certified.

REGIONAL CROSS COUNTRY AND TRACK & FIELD MEETS

Cody Inglis gave the committee an update on the Regional cross country and track & field meets, which have grown in popularity and are very well attended. A discussion on dividing races by school size was tabled to a final decision at the February meeting. There was discussion of assigning the track & field meets in each zone as well to ensure equal size meets at different locations. The committee also agreed with the fall survey results and were not in favor of adding any type of state championships at the middle school level.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

None.