

## **2025-26 MHSAA SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 9:00 a.m. – Virtual

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dr. Camy Chapin, Lansing  
Dr. Corey Dean, Ypsilanti  
Julie Felten, Frankenmuth  
Dr. Edwin Kornoelje, Grand Rapids  
Dr. Dallas Lintner, Owosso  
Dr. Matthew Lorincz, Brighton  
Jason Malloy, Westland  
Derrick Nelson, Detroit  
Kelly Salter, Birmingham  
Mitch Smelis, Fenton

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Eric Talsma, Hamilton  
Dr. Arnetta Thompson, Wyoming  
Cindy Tyzo, West Bloomfield  
Dr. Alyssa Vermeulen, Lansing

### **MHSAA STAFF**

Cole Malatinsky  
Kathy Vrugink Westdorp (Recorder)

The MHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) serves the membership by focusing on one central mission — supporting the health, safety, and well-being of students who participate in interscholastic athletics. SMAC provides guidance and expertise on medical and safety issues that impact school sports across Michigan. The committee works closely with the Representative Council, MHSAA staff, and sport committees to ensure that policies, rules, and recommendations reflect current best practices in sports medicine.

The Committee goals include:

1. Offer advice and collaboration on medical and safety concerns related to interscholastic sport rules, regulations, and guidelines.
2. Monitor, evaluate, and distribute up-to-date information on sports medicine and student health to member schools.
3. Review and create resources that help schools promote safe participation and informed decision-making.
4. Partner with MHSAA sport committees to identify and address issues that affect athlete health and safety.
5. Help prioritize and research new areas in sports medicine that may influence school athletics.

SMAC's work reflects the educational mission of the MHSAA and the unique needs of students in grades 6-12. Every recommendation aims to enhance the safety, learning, and overall experience of student-athletes across the state.

The minutes from the October 23, 2025 meeting were reviewed and approved.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **REPORTS/UPDATES FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

Committee members shared updates from their respective professional and school communities regarding current sports medicine topics, trends, and concerns affecting student-athletes. Jason Malloy reported that the Westland John Glenn High School and the Wayne-Westland Community School District were awarded an Improving Needed Nationwide Opportunities and Value of Athletic Trainer Employment (innovATe) Grant through the Corey Stringer Institute to support athletic training services. The goal of the Corey Stringer Institute is to dramatically increase access to athletic training services for secondary school athletes in traditionally under-

resourced communities through these grants. This marks the second school in Michigan to receive the grant, following Marshall High School the previous year.

Dr. Edwin Kornoelje and Dr. Camy Chapin both indicated that injury trends within their respective systems have remained consistent, with no significant changes noted. Dr. Chapin noted an increase in seasonal illnesses, including flu cases.

Dr. Matthew Lorincz raised a question regarding girls lacrosse headgear. The rule is: Any field player choosing to wear headgear will only be permitted to wear headgear that meets the current ASTM standard (F3137) for women's lacrosse and is labeled accordingly. All headgear must be properly worn and secured with the chinstrap in place as intended for use. All headgear must be permanently labeled with the SEI certification mark. All ASTM women's lacrosse headgear that is legal for play will be listed on the SEI website.

Dr. Corey Dean shared feedback from coaches regarding the condition and lifespan of artificial turf surfaces, noting concerns about how aging fields and maintenance cycles may impact injury rates. The group discussed the potential for future data collection related to field conditions.

### **SSATC COMMITTEE UPDATE**

An update was provided from the Secondary School Athletic Trainers Committee (SSATC), including information on the upcoming student symposium and ongoing student engagement efforts. There are opportunities for students to visit Wayne State University, participate in hands-on learning across key domains of athletic training, and interact with college and university representatives. The goal is to increase awareness and interest in health science and athletic training career pathways.

### **NFHS COACHES ASSOCIATION CONSTITUENT REPORT**

The NFHS Coaches Association report was reviewed and included the following key points:

- Continued concern regarding the lack of athletic trainers in high schools.
- Increased awareness of student-athlete mental health, with some coaches expressing a need for additional training.
- Improved preparedness for emergency situations among coaches and athletic administrators.
- The importance of practicing Emergency Action Plans in all venues.
- Concerns related to the quantity and quality of officials and the potential impact on player safety.

### **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

An update was provided on Emergency Action Plan (EAP) requirements under Regulation II, Section 3(D). Emphasis was placed on the requirement for schools to develop, post, document, and rehearse plans for all practice and contest locations, along with associated compliance expectations. Dr. Lintner indicated that schools are digitizing Emergency Action Plans and expanding access so that not only athletic trainers, coaches, and administrators, but also all relevant personnel are familiar with emergency procedures. Eric Talsma emphasized the importance of ensuring that students are also aware of emergency protocols, noting that in some situations, a coach or adult may be the individual experiencing a medical emergency. Jason Malloy highlighted the value of conducting rehearsals consistently and regularly in a continuous effort to improve preparedness.

### **GAME SUSPENSION GUIDANCE**

Brad Bush joined the meeting to provide information on game suspension guidelines. Discussion included a potential update to MHSAA game-suspension protocols regarding lightning detection,

aligning more closely with current NFHS guidance. The proposed update is expected to be included on the agenda for the May Representative Council meeting. The revised guidance emphasizes the use of independently validated lightning detection systems or mobile applications. It also clarifies situations in which distant lightning may be visible without posing an immediate threat, particularly at night.

### **PERSONAL BRANDING ACTIVITIES**

The group reviewed the impact of personal branding activities on student-athlete mental health and the importance of maintaining an education-based athletics focus. MHSAA staff noted that personal branding activity within the membership remains limited, with approximately 110 PBA deals currently reported, most of which involve small or in-kind arrangements. While not currently a widespread concern, the group acknowledged the need to continue monitoring the potential impact.

### **HEADSTRONG CONCUSSION INSURANCE**

An update was provided on the HeadStrong concussion insurance program and its ongoing role in providing concussion-related medical coverage to student-athletes. The committee also discussed HeadQuarters, a supplemental telehealth resource designed to support concussion management, particularly in rural or underserved areas.

### **CONCUSSION DATA, RESEARCH, AND HELMET ADD-ONS**

MHSAA staff provided an update on 2025-26 head injury reporting data, noting that overall trends remain consistent with recent years, although spring sport data is still incomplete.

A proposed enhancement to the Head Injury Reporting System related to helmet add-ons, such as Guardian Caps, was then presented. Staff indicated that both interest in and use of these products have increased among member schools, along with growing interest from research partners in studying their usage and effectiveness in reducing concussions among high school athletes. To better understand usage and potential impact within MHSAA schools, the proposed modification would add a follow-up question if head protection was worn at the time of injury, asking whether a helmet add-on was also in use. In addition, the committee discussed the possibility of implementing a brief, once-per-season questionnaire to provide further context on usage patterns.

As part of the discussion, additional information was shared regarding helmet add-on products, including their intended design to reduce impact forces and provide supplemental protection. The committee acknowledged that while these products may demonstrate benefits in controlled settings, there is not yet conclusive evidence showing a direct reduction in concussion rates. The overall goal of these proposed enhancements is to support more informed evaluation of trends over time and to better understand equipment usage across the membership. Feedback from the committee was encouraged regarding feasibility and potential implementation.

The discussion also included broader considerations of contact exposure in football, particularly whether practice limitations could help reduce head injury risk. It was noted that contact practices are limited at the professional level, prompting consideration of whether similar approaches may warrant further review at the high school level alongside the proposed helmet add-on data collection.

### **PREPARTICIPATION PHYSICAL EVALUATION (PPE) UPDATE**

An update was provided on the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the PPE, including anticipated release timelines and expectations regarding content. Discussion included considerations related to Preparticipation Physical Evaluation (PPE) requirements across states, including frequency, applicability, and variations in implementation. The committee also discussed which medical professionals are

approved to perform physical examinations and provide clearance for athletic participation. While it was noted that some states allow additional providers, such as physical therapists or chiropractors, the committee reaffirmed that physicians (MD, DO), nurse practitioners (NP), and physician assistants (PA) remain the appropriate medical professionals with the training necessary to conduct PPEs and determine student-athlete eligibility.

#### **HIGH SCHOOL RULES CHANGES – EQUIPMENT ITEMS**

Recent NFHS rules changes were reviewed, including updates in boys lacrosse and football related to equipment and player safety.

#### **2026-27 MEETING DATES**

The next meeting dates are scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on October 22, 2026, and April 15, 2027.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.