

2024-25 MHSAA FOOTBALL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 29, 2025, 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eric Albright, Midland
Jay Alexander, Detroit
Chris Bell, Lake Orion
Mike Burger, Pittsford
Jeff Dassance, Dansville
Greg Eichler, Gobles
Darin Ferguson, Gobles
Ricky Gonzalez, Detroit
AJ Haduch, Ypsilanti
Chris Hartman, Kingsford
August Kapolka, Cedar Springs
Bill Kennedy, West Ottawa
Nichole Martin, St. Ignace
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Jason McIntyre, Mt Pleasant

Allison Sartorius, Waterford
Eric Schugars, Traverse City
Fred Smith, Bangor
Jim Sparks, Clawson
Shadwin Spilski, Lapeer
Chance Stewart, Sturgis
Chris Westfall, Ypsilanti

GUEST

Andrew Pratley, St. Joseph (MHSFCA)
Mitch Smelis, Fenton (MATS)

MHSAA STAFF

Brad Bush (Recorder)
Geoff Kimmerly
Tricia Wieferich

The MHSAA Football Committee met to review NFHS playing rules, MHSAA regulations, 8-player and 11-player tournament procedures/policies, and concerns involving high school football. The following items were discussed following committee member introductions:

1. 2024 Football Committee Meeting Minutes
2. Football Participation Numbers
3. Football Officials Registrations
4. Sportsmanship & Ejection Data

The committee reviewed concussion data and discussed the upward trend over the past two football seasons. The committee did not believe that the current concussion requirements and return-to-play protocols warranted any modifications.

MHSAA staff reported the progress made during the 2023 and 2024 spring football recruiting evaluation camps conducted throughout the state. Staff will continue monitoring the NCAA recruiting calendar while balancing conflicts with other spring sports.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

8-PLAYER FOOTBALL

The committee discussed the possibility of awarding different playoff point values for games against Division 1 and Division 2 teams, similar to how points are allocated in the 11-player format. They also considered the geographic impact on Upper and Lower Peninsula schools if such a change were implemented.

Additionally, the committee explored awarding bonus playoff points to teams that play 8-player opponents with enrollments above the 215-student playoff limit. The committee also addressed the potential need to select neutral semifinal sites with synthetic turf for 8-player games, aligning with the 11-player tournament standards. The feasibility of hosting the 8-player finals at Ford Field was also discussed.

FIRST SCRIMMAGE DATE

The committee discussed moving the date of the first allowed scrimmage to the Tuesday of the second week of practice. After discussion, the committee decided that the first scrimmage date should remain the Wednesday of the second week of practice.

SUSPENDED GAME CRITERIA

The committee discussed whether there is a need to establish criteria for when a game is considered complete in the event of weather-related suspensions (similar to the policy used in baseball). After review, the committee decided not to change the current policy, which states that varsity games must be played to completion. However, schools retain the discretion to mutually agree to end a game at any point if play is stopped or delayed.

FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

The committee discussed implementing 7-person officiating crews throughout the football tournament, with input from local assigners. They also reviewed the allocation of Zone 7 officials for the Semifinals and Finals. Additionally, the committee discussed the proposed 48-team Expanded Playoff format for committee consideration, as well. Staff will gather more information on the current SOS format in discussing possible expansion of the playoffs in the future.

MHSFCA PROPOSALS

1. To adjust the five-quarter rule to allow players to play 5-quarters in a day.
2. MHSFCA provided the committee with Regional seeding data with the hopes of garnering support for moving away from a District playoff process towards seeding the entire region. The committee discussed if Regional seeding, as proposed, would make for more equitable pairings during the first two rounds of the playoffs, with higher seeded teams getting more home games without significant travel increases. The MHSFCA data shows increased travel, but not substantial enough to discourage moving to a Regional seeding model. The committee agreed and proposed a change to the playoff seeding process to the Representative Council.
3. To eliminate awarding playoff points to teams that forfeit a game. The committee believes that a team forfeiting a football game should not be awarded playoff points.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Play all 8-player Semifinals at neutral sites with synthetic turf. (22-0)
2. Allow students to participate in five quarters in either a football week or on one day of competition for JV/Varsity doubleheaders. (21-1)
3. Create four Regions per Division in the football playoffs and create opening-round pairings using Regional seeding with 1 vs. 8, 2 vs. 7, 3 vs. 6, and 4 vs. 5. (22-0)
4. Eliminate awarding playoff points to teams who forfeit a football game. (21-1)