

GIRLS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING

East Lansing, October 12, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Cole Andrews, Rockford
Ericka Kurili, Spring Lake
Pat Marsman, Northview
Reo Rodriguez, Grand Ledge
Joe Wallace, MIAAA
Mike Watson, Ovid-Elsie
Kaitlyn West-Cardenas, Novi
Rich Kieft (MATS – Advisory)

Member Absent:

Catherine Holmes, Ann Arbor
Shane Hynes, Troy
Allison Rosenau, Rochester

Staff Member:

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

GENERAL REVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The 2022-23 Girls Lacrosse Committee met to review its responsibilities as a standing sports committee; review prior Representative Council action; recommend to the Representative Council changes regarding NFHS or MHSAA rules/regulations relative to girls lacrosse; suggest points of emphasis for rules meetings; and evaluate current practices and procedures with MHSAA staff. Several members of the Girls Lacrosse Committee will also assist in the assignment of officials to all levels of the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament. Members of this committee were provided with a history of the teams/schools participating in girls lacrosse and how the sport has grown in numbers of teams and schools. Also provided were the approved cooperative programs, important dates and times, rules changes, participating school tournament information and the manager's manual. From recent NFHS data, lacrosse continues to be one of the fastest growing sports in the past five years with a 13.1% rate of growth. Additionally, there are currently 96 officials registered in girls lacrosse and additional training for new officials has been provided at the MHSAA on October 8, 2022, as well as in conjunction with official's associations.

Updated information was received regarding the progress and process of the NFHS/USAL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee, which is now comprised of ten members representative of the states who offer girls lacrosse, with advisory individuals from USAL. Following the annual meeting of the NFHS/USAL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee, the NFHS now writes the rules, publishes and distributes the rules book.

The minutes of the October 2021 Girls Lacrosse Committee were reviewed for the purpose of providing background of prior discussion and actions of the committee. Committee members also reviewed information regarding coaching requirements deadlines for 2022-23.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Additional health and safety issues were discussed including MHSAA protocol for implementation of National Federation sports playing rules for concussion. Epidemiology summary reports were provided from the MHSAA Head Injury Reporting System for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years relative to sport specific injuries in girls lacrosse. MHSAA information showed girls participation in lacrosse at 2,777 athletes and a head injury prevalence rate of 1.48% in 2020-21. Comparison data indicated 3,053 participants in 2021-22 and an injury prevalence rate of 2.12%

Girls lacrosse equipment compliance was reviewed. Beginning January 1, 2021, goalkeepers were required to wear chest protectors designed for lacrosse that meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. There were also discussion points provided regarding the use of headgear in girls lacrosse. The use of headgear is presently optional, and any headgear must meet the ASTM performance standard F3137 and must be permanently labeled with the SEI certification mark. A field player choosing to wear headgear shall wear it as the manufacturer intended and securely affixed with the chinstrap in place as intended for use. USA Lacrosse and the NFHS will continue to work with various sport science/safety groups, rulemaking bodies, and other leaders to best understand how data should impact policy moving forward. It was reiterated that headgear for both men's and women's players is one component of an integrated approach to game safety and head injuries. Education, the use of age-appropriate rules, sport-specific training for coaches, and the use of certified game officials are also critical factors.

Girls lacrosse eyewear must be SEI certified and listed on the SEI website. All eyewear must bear the SEI mark for certification by January 1, 2025. In addition, users have the responsibility to maintain the integrity of protective equipment for risk minimization purposes by establishing that equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn.

Additional equipment compliance includes the allowance for goalkeepers to wear a clear, molded and non-rigid helmet eye shield in combination with tinted or clear eyeglasses and that face masks that are soft and non-abrasive be allowed to be worn for health and/or religious reasons. Also, players may wear hair ties and other soft, non-rigid items on the arm. Clarification that hair adornments such as beads can be worn in the hair as long as they were secured and do not endanger other players was also reiterated.

The committee also spoke about how to increase participation in girls lacrosse and also the health and safety of the participants. The opinions included that officials should consistently enforce the rules and coaches should also emphasize the health and safety rules for players. In terms of participation, there was some thought that the cost of lacrosse could be a barrier to entry to some families and school parks and recreation programs should offer more lacrosse opportunities. In addition, school youth clinics and camps should be encouraged and to relay the message that lacrosse is a sport that could be considered by all – especially any student that is not already involved in a spring sport.

2022-23 NFHS RULES BOOK POINTS OF EMPHASIS

This year, the 2023 girls lacrosse rules changes were minimal and continue to align rules to match the flow of the game established by free movement. This was the major theme within the girls high school girls lacrosse rules changes which also featured notable clarifications to player position and self-starts from out-of-bounds as well as alterations to substitution frequency, field fouls, equipment and goalkeeper placement. These include the allowance for a player that is fouled outside the critical scoring area to take the free position and self-start within 4 meters of the spot of the foul.

The 2023 points of emphasis again includes sportsmanship and the commitment to fair and ethical play as well as respect for one's opponent and an attitude of goodwill toward all participants. Additional points of emphasis include a knowledge of the rules by both coaches and officials as well as effective management of the game. Any disruptive actions that could jeopardize the safety of players, impede the flow of the game, and negatively affect the integrity of the sport, should not be tolerated.

TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

A review of the current tournament structure included the discussion of the utilization of the Michigan Power Ranking (MPR) system that is currently being used in some other MHSAA sports. Numbers of school teams were also reviewed to examine expansion of the divisional structure. Information regarding the MPR rating formula included the provision of measuring a team's strength relative to other teams, based on games played against other MHSAA team's strengths, while separating the top two on opposite sides of the bracket in a regional tournament. The committee developed a proposal to move to the MPR system where the top two in each regional will be separated on opposite sides of the bracket. The rest of the bracket will be configured randomly. It will be especially important that scores are reported early and often for this formula to be effective. (See proposal following).

Conversation also included the 5th quarter regulation which some sports are currently utilizing. The committee indicated that this would be challenging in this sport as oftentimes the JV and Varsity are participating on separate days with different opponents and that girls lacrosse does not play quarters, rather two halves. There was conversation regarding the charting of this, the time constraints involved, altering schedules and whether it resulted in too much play per week for athletes.

REVIEW OF GIRLS LACROSSE RULES CHANGES PROPOSED

Several years ago, the rule of "sudden victory" overtime was not adopted by the MHSAA Committee. The 2022-23 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Committee affirmed that the previous overtime rule will continue to be retained with the conditions of no stop clock for whistles except in the critical scoring area or whistled stop play. This includes that when the score is tied at the end of regular playing time and overtime is to be played, both teams will have a 5-minute rest and toss a coin (visiting captain calls) for choice of ends. Two 3-minute halves of overtime will be played. The clock will be stopped after 3 minutes of play in order for teams to change ends with no delay for coaching. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team which is ahead at the end

of six minutes wins the game. If the teams are still tied after six minutes have elapsed, the teams will have a 3-minute rest and change ends. The winner will then be decided on a “sudden victory” stop-clock overtime of no more than six minutes in length with the teams changing ends after 3 minutes. The team scoring the first goal wins the game. Play will continue with “sudden victory” overtime periods of six minutes in length (two 3-minute halves) with 3 minutes in between and change of ends until a winning goal is scored. The committee elected to retain the rule citing there was equal opportunity for play in the established six minutes.

2023 MHSAA GIRLS LACROSSE TOURNAMENT

The teams and schools participating in the 2022 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament were shared with the committee. There may be additional schools that will still offer girls lacrosse in the 2022-23 season. Division 1 and Division 2 enrollment numbers were also studied, and 47 teams are presently in Division 1 (enrollment 1786 and above) and 47 teams are in Division 2 (enrollment 1785 and below). There are 26 cooperative programs in girls lacrosse with 94 teams involving 126 schools. Schools participating in the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament have continued to increase in numbers throughout the years with the initial tournament in 2004-05 consisting of 39 teams (50 schools) to now more than double the current status.

Girls lacrosse tournament dates and Participating School Tournament Information were reviewed, as well as the dates regarding online rules meetings. The online rules meeting for girls lacrosse will be available on February 13, 2023 and ends on April 20, 2023. Practice for girls lacrosse begins Monday, March 13, 2023, and the first available contest date is Wednesday, March 22, 2023. The 2022 Girls Lacrosse Tournament was also reviewed for additional points of information.

The tournament format and expected regional/semi-final sites were evaluated and there will be four regionals in Division 1 and four regionals in Division 2. Currently there are several games that will be played as “pre-regional” games. The Division 1 structure is currently at 12-12-11-12 and the Division 2 structure is currently at 11-12-12-12. Additionally, in the Division 1 semi-finals, Region 4 will play Region 1 and Region 2 will play Region 3. In Division 2, Region 8 plays Region 5 and Region 6 plays Region 7. There will be three field officials for the Regional final’s game, the Semi-finals and the Finals. The committee also reviewed the intended regional sites and several sites for the semi-final games. Host managers may host all levels of the Regional Tournament if desired. The Committee also indicated that it would be appropriate to host games on either a regulation girls lined field or on a unified field.

The alternate site travel accommodation rule for lacrosse was reviewed which indicates that MHSAA staff may change the date, time and location of a previously scheduled tournament game if the originally scheduled game involves extensive travel for both teams and an acceptable site can be secured. The determination includes consultation with both teams and the Tournament Manager and may require that the competing teams secure an acceptable field.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. At the Regional level, separate the top two teams (determined by MHSAA’s MPR computer formula) and place them on opposite sides of the Regional bracket, 14 days before the start of Regionals. After this placement, a random draw to complete the bracket will be conducted and published by the MHSAA. (7-0)