



***REPRESENTATIVE
COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 4-5, 2025***

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MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Gaylord, May 4-5, 2025

Members Present:

Chris Adams, Camden
Eric Albright, Midland
Jay Alexander, Detroit
Mike Bakker, Fenton
Ross Fort, Lansing
Chris Hartman, Kingsford
Sean Jacques, Calumet
Jeff Kline, Mt. Morris
Jason Malloy, Westland
Dr. Monica Merritt, Plymouth
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Chris Miller, Gobles
Anna Novak, Harbor Springs
Fred Smith, Bangor
Adam Stefanski, Boyne City
Dr. Arnetta Thompson, Wyoming
John Thompson, Brighton
Jennifer Thunberg, Freeland

Staff Members Present:

Brad Bush
Sam Davis
Andy Frushour
Dan Hutcheson
Cody Inglis
Geoff Kimmerly
Cole Malatinsky
Will McKoy
Andi Osters
Jon Ross
Mark Uyl (Recorder)
Jamie VanDerMoere
Kathy Westdorp
Paige Winne

Accounts of Meetings – Motion by Chris Miller, supported by Mike Bakker, to approve the minutes of the Representative Council meeting of March 21, 2025; the Executive Committee meeting minutes of March 20 and April 9, 2025; and the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee meeting minutes of April 17, 2025. Adopted.

A brief report was provided on the April 17 UP Athletic Committee meeting in which scenarios of U.P. Finals and statewide tournaments were discussed in cross country and track & field.

REPORTS

The following reports were provided to the Council.

Administration – MHSAA membership during the 2024-25 school year was 754 high schools and 777 junior high/middle schools as of April 1, 2025. This compares with 754 and 770, respectively, as of April 1, 2024. In addition, there were 63 elementary schools with 6th-grader participation.

As of April 11, 2025, there were 409 **cooperative program agreements** for high schools for 750 teams (an increase of 16 programs and 29 teams over the previous year). There were 127 cooperative program agreements for 408 teams for junior high/middle schools (a decrease of 8 programs and 9 teams). The most frequent sports involved in cooperative programs at the high school level are (in order) ice hockey, softball, girls and boys swimming & diving and boys lacrosse. At the junior high/middle school level, the sports most frequently involved in cooperative programs are football, boys and girls track & field, and boys and girls cross country.

There were **4 eligibility advancement** applications received during the 2024-25 school year. This compares with 1 during 2023-24, 3 during 2022-23; 0 during 2021-22, 0 during 2020-21, 3 during 2019-20, 3 during 2018-19, 6 during 2017-18, 5 during 2016-17, 5 during 2015-16, 4

during 2014-15, 14 during 2013-14, 15 during 2012-13, 9 during 2011-12, 15 during 2010-11, 2009-10 and 2008-09, and 7 during 2007-08. The highest number of applications was 94 during the 1991-92 school year.

There were 142 **Educational Transfer Forms** processed for the 2024-25 school year through April 15, 2025. Other than 114 during the 2020-21 school year (which cannot be compared to previous years because of the COVID-19 pandemic), previous years' numbers were 230 for the 2023-24 school year, 132 for the 2022-23 school year, 153 for the 2021-22 school year, 213 for the 2019-20 school year, 215 for the 2018-19 school year, 219 for the 2017-18 school year, 237 for the 2016-17 school year and 266 for the 2015-16 school year. Public-to-public school transfers continue to be the most common (102), and the divorce Exception (#8) is the most frequent reason (52) for the Educational Transfer Form to be used.

There were 43 **Travel Forms for Out-of-State Practice** filed during 2024-25, compared to 49 the year before. The highest number filed was 113 during the 2007-08 school year. The lowest was 40 during the 2003-04 school year. The requirement began in 1994-95. Staff will continue to monitor these numbers in light of the recent change that will allow teams on spring break to hold up to four scrimmages against other MHSAA member school teams.

A listing of **violations** by schools and officials between April 18, 2024 and April 10, 2025 indicated that the total number of violations for the year was lower than the previous year. Staff reported no significant changes in the penalties for schools and coaches in rules meetings and failure to attest to requirements from previous years.

Athletic Director In-Service and Update Meeting programs conducted by the MHSAA attracted more than 750 registrants in 2024-25, which was a decrease from the 832 participants the previous school year. The schedule for the fall of 2025 in-person meetings was presented and possible topics for those meetings were identified throughout this meeting. For the 15th year, two in-service programs for athletic department administrative assistants are being planned for September due to high interest in recent years.

The MHSAA **Coaches Advancement Program (CAP)** has already involved more than 2,000 participants once again in 2024-25, with 1,531 registrations in CAP 1. CAP programs continue to be developed and held throughout the year, and include the added value benefits of insurance, *GamePlans* and SCECHs. This has been a successful year with many CAP programs held in many area high schools and at the MHSAA, as well as in Michigan colleges and universities. By the end of this year, individuals will have completed 43,580 Coaches Advancement Program levels since the start of the 2004-05 school year.

A brief update was given on concussion insurance claims, coaching compliance reports and concussion report data. Staff highlighted the benefits of the MHSAA-provided concussion insurance program, along with the data and challenges of getting 100% compliance from schools in reporting coaching requirement completion and concussions.

For the fourth consecutive year, **officials' registrations** increased. This year's increase was 159 officials from last year, continuing the rebound from the low of 7,907 in 2020-21, caused by the lingering pandemic challenges in recruiting and retaining officials. A report on the partnership with RefReps was provided which will give schools a turnkey curriculum program for officials' education. One of the reasons for registered officials leaving the game is the lack of sportsmanship from adults, coaches and spectators. This environment and culture within school sports must continue to be addressed.

Officials Reports for the spring 2024, fall 2024 and winter 2024-25 seasons were provided. The reports were broken down not only by sport but also by level: varsity, junior varsity, and sometimes also 9th-, 8th- and 7th-grade levels. The frequency of sportsmanship problems is statistically rare in sports conducted by MHSAA member schools when compared to other levels of non-school sports, but data was provided that shows trends and situations that must be addressed now. One positive data point again was that the number of “repeat offenders” of ejected coaches and players, who now must complete an online sportsmanship course before being eligible to return to competition, was extremely low, which shows that this requirement is achieving the desired results. Data was also provided on the review process for ejections and the subsequent suspension for individuals who are ejected for flagrant physical contact, misidentification, and misapplication of playing rules.

Brief updates were given on the AD Connection program and student services from the 2024-25 school year, along with plans and goals for next year and beyond. It was noted that the AD Connection program was approved as the permanent program offering by the Representative Council in March of 2025.

National Federation of State High School Associations – Staff provided an update on the NFHS Network and MHSAA plans for television/streaming options for football (Selection Sunday and Finals) and basketball in 2025-26. The current plan is to stream these events exclusively on the NFHS Network next school year, with a contract being completed by MHSAA staff during the spring of 2025.

Staff presented on a number of current national issues and challenges regarding the NFHS and high school sports in general in terms of personnel, policy, litigation, and governance. A list of issues and concerns was provided, and staff shared responses and approaches for many of these challenges. This process will be ongoing, especially with the communications team staff. Making the case for school sports will continue to be the focus for the Council and staff moving forward.

Legislation – A report was provided, which included that the current focus in the State Legislature is devoted to the budget process.

Litigation – An update was provided on current legal items that involve the association.

ONGOING BUSINESS

Transfer Tracker Update – A status report was provided on the progress of the Transfer Tracker system, which is being developed by the MHSAA and FinalForms. Staff provided handouts and a demonstration of the system. Staff also shared information on how AI is being used in selected operational areas at the MHSAA.

Host Sites and the NFHS Network – Staff led a discussion on current approaches to site selection procedures for basketball, volleyball, and soccer regarding NFHS Network availability. While we are not yet able to require host sites to be able to stream to the NFHS Network, an increased priority will be given to hosts with that ability.

Basketball Tournament Officials Selection (District Draft) – Council members provided good thoughts and feedback on the current approach of using a “draft” to assign District boys and girls basketball officials. This process currently involves MHSAA staff, District host managers, and registered assigners in some cases. The pros and cons of the current system were discussed, with suggestions for improvement being provided with staff providing an updated assignment plan by August 1.

Divisions Study Group – Staff provided an update of the two meetings previously held with this study group that is looking at data and the number of current divisions in basketball, baseball, softball, girls volleyball, track & field and cross country. The consensus from the study group is that the basketball and girls volleyball communities will further discuss the pros and cons when each sport committee meets next time. While there is intrigue at certain aspects of adding an additional division, there were a number of concerns and roadblocks identified that redirected the conversation to continue in basketball and girls volleyball only at this time.

Fifth Quarter Allowance Discussion and Concerns – Extensive conversation and feedback was received on the fifth quarter usage with examples of positive and negative approaches being shared. In many cases, the rule is being used as intended in allowing small schools or schools with small roster sizes to keep a varsity and subvarsity team going. There are many instances, however, of the fifth quarter being used to give the most talented under-classmen additional playing time, often at the expense of older but less talented athletes. This topic will be a discussion item for all MHSAA sport committees that currently utilize some variation of a fifth quarter during 2025-26, with a follow up report being provided to the Representative Council in May of 2026.

MHSAA Guidelines for Spectators and Teams – Staff presented a handout created for member school administrators, as questions are often asked about these items. The Council was pleased with the creation of this document by staff.

REGULATIONS

Regulations I through V of the *MHSAA Handbook* and their interpretations were submitted for review by the Representative Council.

Motion by Vic Michaels, supported by Fred Smith, to approve the consent package of miscellaneous changes for the purpose of organization, clarity or updating and to incorporate changes or interpretations previously adopted by the Representative Council. Adopted.

Regulation I, Section 9 – Sport-Specific Transfer Regulation – Motion by Jennifer Thunberg, supported by Arnetta Thompson, to approve the following:

Interpretation #75 and #77b. – Increase from 90 days to 180 days and 12 months.

75. If a transfer student and the person(s) with whom the student has been living move (change residence) to a residence in a different school district and the student participates in an interscholastic scrimmage or contest in that district, and then the student and/or the person(s) with whom the student has been living move (change residence) back to the former district before the completion of **180** school days for students, the student is ineligible for any interscholastic athletic competition in any sport at any school until approved by the two school districts and the MHSAA (see Interpretation 2d).

77. A change of residence for eligibility purposes must be full and complete. A full residential change, as described within these regulations and interpretations, must be completed prior to a student's participation in any contest or scrimmage. a. Before being deemed eligible, the student and his or her parents must attest to the facts and/or produce documentation of the following: (1) The student and family unit are actually residing in the new dwelling as the sole place of residency. (2) That all personal belongings have been moved from the prior residence, (3) That mail is received at the new residence; utility bills and driver's license have been changed to the new address. Additional proofs, including but not limited to proof of rental or completed sale of the former residence and long-term rental or lease agreement (**minimum of 12 months**) and completed purchase of the new

residence, may also be required. The former residence must be either vacant of people and possessions or sold/rented to persons other than family members. A former residence may not be occupied for any residential purposes at any time by the student or his or her parents or minor siblings.

Adopted.

Regulation II, Section 11, Interpretation #222 – Scrimmage Definition – Motion by Fred Smith, supported by Mike Bakker, to approve the following:

222. Scrimmages are for instruction more than competition. Schools may not charge admission (or accept cash donations), charge for parking or conduct raffles in lieu of admission, or publicize results of interscholastic scrimmages in any sport (voluntary donations for third parties without any benefit to any school are allowed). Awards cannot be given, and results and statistics may not count for the school **(e.g., win-loss records, team and individual statistics and records)**. If a timing device is used, normal time shall be altered. **If a timing device is NOT used in the sport at least one rule must be altered to indicate it is a scrimmage. (e.g., baseball and softball use unlimited substitutions)**. The same competition may not be a game for one team and a scrimmage for another; if it is a game for one team, it is a game for both teams. Schools may share in the payment of expenses associated with conducting a scrimmage. Games or meets may not be converted to scrimmages or counted as scrimmages after the contest has begun.

Adopted.

Regulation IV, Section 10B – Junior High/Middle School Start Dates – Motion by Chris Miller, supported by Chris Adams, to approve the following:

SECTION 10 (B) – Fall sports practices for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades may begin on the 14th Monday before Thanksgiving, one week (7 days) after the start of high school practice, regardless of the date of the first day of school. When school begins before the first allowable practice date, fall sports for a school may begin on the first day of classes for that school. Ninth-grade football teams of junior high/middle schools may begin practice on the same date as the grade 10-12 football teams of that school district if the 9th-grade team is comprised only of 9th-graders or students who have been approved for eligibility advancement. Other seasons and starting dates will be established by the local district, league, or conference.

Adopted.

The Council also discussed amateur status regulations and national issues at both the college and high school in this space of student compensation, student work and student employment. This will be a topic that is discussed with the full membership on the fall Update tour in 2025.

CLASSIFICATION

The Summary of MHSAA Tournament Classification for 2024-25 was provided to Council members.

JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Motion by Fred Smith, supported by Jennifer Thunberg, to approve the Junior High/Middle School Committee recommendation to subject students in 7th or 8th grade who are eligible for high school competition to the high school transfer rules while in middle school and competing at the high school level. Adopted.

ATHLETIC EQUITY COMMITTEE

The Equity Committee discussed at length the work that had been previously done regarding the use of Native American mascots and imagery. In May of 2021, the Representative Council approved the following language.

The MHSAA recognizes the importance of equity in high school sports. Schools and mascots are rich in tradition and unique to each community. Although we understand the traditions of those individual communities, we also wish to support and foster an environment of inclusion. It is in this spirit that the MHSAA encourages member schools and communities to evaluate and reconsider names and mascots that may be offensive to groups of individuals.

Since this was passed in May 2021, a number of member school communities have changed mascots and imagery that no longer reference or reflect Native Americans. The Equity Committee proposed that the next step should include removing those existing names from the MHSAA website and omitting those offensive mascots at MHSAA tournament events.

While this would be an ideal outcome, the Council believed that other approaches would be more successful at this time.

Motion by Vic Michaels, supported by John Thompson, to not approve this additional step. Adopted (no change).

OFFICIALS

MHSAA staff discussed the use of RefReps training for all new officials. The Officials Review Committee was in favor of this program becoming an MHSAA requirement. Staff support this concept, and a formal proposal with details will be provided to the Council for consideration and action at the December 2025 meeting given that any new requirement would not be in place until 2026-27 at the earliest.

SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A general overview of the purpose and work of the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) was provided. Highlights included three recent instances in which Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) were effectively implemented and directly contributed to saving lives. It was also shared that progress was made on integrating an EAP template into the MHSAA Golf app's scoring platform. An update on Michigan's new state law requiring Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) at all youth sporting events was provided, along with information on potential funding opportunities for implementation. However, funding details are not expected until the conclusion of the state's budget cycle later this summer.

Staff gave a brief presentation on three weather apps that are currently in the marketplace, with more study and conversation taking place on the future use of these products in light of current lightning and thunder policies for suspending play in outdoor sports.

COMMITTEES

In late April, the Council was supplied with a description of MHSAA committees, a review of the committee appointment procedures adopted by the Representative Council, a list of those who had identified themselves as candidates for committees in 2025-26, and a list of schools not represented on any committees for the past five years. Council members were encouraged to submit nominations for committees, making special efforts to provide nominations from superintendents, principals, small schools, females and minorities, and any school that has not been represented in recent years. The staff will compile the suggestions and submit them to the Executive Committee for review and appointment.

SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Baseball – Motion by Sean Jacques, supported by Jason Malloy, to approve the Baseball Committee recommendation that baseball players be allowed to play on multiple levels on the same day. The 38-game season and daily limits would still apply to all students. Adopted.

Staff also provided a brief update on pitch count tracking options and issues.

Bowling – Motion by Monica Merritt, supported by Jason Malloy, to approve the Bowling Committee recommendation to establish the official start of bowling practice as the third Monday before Thanksgiving. Adopted.

Motion by Jennifer Thunberg, supported by Chris Adams, to approve the Bowling Committee recommendation to allow students to participate in no more than eight games on a school day (Monday-Thursday). Adopted.

Competitive Cheer – Motion by Vic Michaels, supported by Fred Smith, to approve the Competitive Cheer Committee recommendations:

- Incorporate the proposed technical high school and middle school rules recommendations to MHSAA staff for insertion into the 2024-26 Girls Competitive Cheer Manual.
- High School Only - Page 59 - Allow non-release inversions as part of a single-braced pyramid.
 - Addition: A static inversion may be part of a single-braced pyramid when all the following occurs: The inverted flyer shall have at least two bases and a spotter. • Each bracer is at elevator level or below. If in an elevator, the bracer(s) shall have two bases and a spotter. • The flyer and one bracer maintain hand-to-hand/arm contact. • Constant contact is maintained between the flyer, the original bases, and the spotter. • The bracer must maintain constant contact with the flyer until no longer inverted. • The inversion may only transition to a stunt at shoulder level or below. Allow in an inversion, a temporary loss of contact with the flyer when transitioning to a double-based sponge with both feet of the flyer in the hands of the bases or to a cradle or to a shoulder-level or below stunt.
- Page 64 of Girls Competitive Cheer Manual: Allow in a braced release pyramid, a flyer to transition to a face down or face up horizontal position or be lowered to a split position with three catchers (while maintaining contact with the bracers).
- Middle School - Page 81 - of Girls Competitive Cheer Manual: Allow middle schools to perform non-pyramid forward suspended rolls. Middle school teams may only end a forward suspended roll in a cradle position. No twisting is allowed.
- Page 14 of the Girls Competitive Cheer Manual: If bows are worn, the bow must be of a solid color and non-metallic. It may include heat transfer items of school-approved logos and lettering. Adornments may not include glitter, mesh, overlays, rhinestones, sequins, and/or studs.

Adopted.

Cross Country / Track & Field – Motion by Chris Miller, supported by Arnetta Thompson, to not approve the Track & Field Committee recommendation to establish an 8-week indoor track & field season that starts in January and concludes in an MHSAA Finals in late February or early March, starting in 2026-27. Adopted (no change).

Field Hockey – Staff member Paige Winne provided a progress report on this new sport ahead of its first fall season in 2025.

Football – Motion by Fred Smith, supported by John Thompson, to approve the Football Committee recommendations to conduct the 11-player football playoffs in four regions of eight teams in each division (1 vs. 8, 4 vs. 5, 3 vs. 6, 2 vs. 7) with two Districts being maintained after the 8-team pairings were set. Not adopted (no change).

Motion by Fred Smith, supported by Arnetta Thompson, to approve the Football Committee recommendation to not award playoff points to the team that forfeits a football game. Adopted.

Motion by Chris Miller, supported by Chris Adams, to approve the Football Committee recommendation to assign neutral sites with artificial turf for 8-player Semifinal games. Adopted.

The Council took no action on the Football Committee recommendation to expand the use of the “fifth quarter rule” to allow students to play 5 quarters in one day. No change.

Golf – Motion by Sean Jacques, supported by Anna Novak, to approve the Golf Committee recommendation to allow Regional tournament host schools to receive reimbursement for the expense of two rules referees. Adopted.

Swimming & Diving – Staff member Andi Osters led a discussion on Interpretation 240 applications and waiver requests for swimming and diving coaches.

Tennis – Motion by Vic Michaels, supported by Jennifer Thunberg, to approve the Tennis Committee recommendation to allow all 3rd place ties at the Regional to advance to the Finals when the MHSAA determines that 6 Regionals in that division are required. Adopted.

Motion by John Thompson, supported by Mike Bakker, to approve the Tennis Committee recommendation to allow continuous coaching between points and between non-changeover games (25 seconds) if it does not hinder the current pace of play at all levels (varsity, subvarsity, middle school). Adopted.

Motion by Fred Smith, supported by Jennifer Thunberg, to approve the Tennis Committee recommendation to conduct all divisions of the Boys and Girls L.P. Tennis Finals at the Midland Tennis Center. This will place all four Division Finals at the same location, with each Division Finals taking place over two days over a 2-week period. This pilot program will be used for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years. Adopted.

Volleyball – Motion by John Thompson, supported by Sean Jacques, to approve the Volleyball Committee recommendation to amend *MHSAA Handbook* Regulation II, Section 10 (A) to state that a student or team shall participate in no more than 18 sets (games) per day. Adopted.

Motion by Vic Michaels, supported by Arnetta Thompson, to approve the Volleyball Committee recommendation to conduct the inaugural MHSAA boys volleyball season in 2025-26 in two divisions, delaying the classification of sponsoring schools until September 15, 2025. The Semifinals and Finals will be played at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek on June 5-6, 2026. Adopted.

Motion by Jeff Kline, supported by Monica Merritt, to approve the Volleyball Committee recommendation to amend *MHSAA Handbook* Regulation I, Section 1 (F) to include boys volleyball in the group of sports permitted to conduct cooperative agreements when the combined enrollment of schools involved is less than 3,500 students. Adopted.

Wrestling – Motion by Jason Malloy, supported by Jay Alexander, to approve the Wrestling Committee recommendation to recognize MHSAA girls wrestling team champions in Districts and Regionals with trophies. Adopted.

OPERATIONS

Calendar – Motion by Mike Bakker, supported by Jeff Kline, to approve the Quick Reference Calendars for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years, as well as the seven-year calendar of MHSAA events, reflecting changes required by other Representative Council action. Adopted.

Meeting Expenses – Motion by Chris Adams, supported to Jennifer Thunberg, to approve the meeting expenses for the specified hotel rate, the IRS-stipulated amounts for meals, and a 40¢ per mile mileage allowance, round trip. Adopted.

Future Meetings – The next meeting of the Representative Council is Dec. 5, 2025, at the Jack Roberts Building in East Lansing. The March meeting of the Representative Council will be the morning of Friday, March 20, 2026, in East Lansing. The May meeting of the Council will be Sunday and Monday, May 3 and 4, 2026 and will be held at Treetops Resort in Gaylord.

Budget – Looking at MHSAA finances over the past four years, the association has done an excellent job managing and rebuilding its financial position. The MHSAA experienced good budget performance in 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24, and has a positive yet modest financial forecast for 2024-25, with reserves being returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The 2025-26 budget does not include any ticket price increases and includes modest budget additions for an increase in mileage reimbursement for committee members to \$.55 per mile. The presented budget included revenue of \$15,716,500 and expenses of \$15,708,816 for an anticipated budget surplus of \$7,684.

Motion by Fred Smith, supported by Jennifer Thunberg, to approve the 2025-26 budget. Adopted.