

2024 MHSAA VOLLEYBALL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, January 16, 2025, 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eric Alright, Midland (MIAAA)
Stephanie Caruso, Detroit
Allison Cironi, Okemos
Jordan Drake, Lowell
Gabe Frisbie, Bay City
Jean LaClair, Bronson (MIVCA)
Rick Noorman, Jenison
Shari Oole, Grand Rapids (MATS)
Luke Reynolds, Marlette

Aaron Smaka, Grand Haven
Joy Sprang, Sterling Heights
Brett Steele, Battle Creek
Jason Vogel, Kent City
Kristine Walker, Adrian
Chris Westfall, Ypsilanti

MHSAA STAFF

Andi Osters (Recorder)

The 2024-25 MHSAA Volleyball Committee met in the John E. “Jack” Roberts MHSAA building to review volleyball topics and the tournament series for both girls and boys. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision-making process and the charge of the Volleyball Committee. Agenda items from correspondence, staff, committee members, and the volleyball coaches association were compiled.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

REGULAR-SEASON MATCH FORMAT

Citing minutes from the 2023 committee meeting, a lengthy conversation took place surrounding regular-season match formats for varsity dual, tri, quad, and multi-team tournaments. Committee members expressed concern over the length of traditional weekend tournaments while acknowledging that some schools can attend many of these sometimes-costly events, while others lack the funding to do so. There was also concern surrounding the length of time being worked by officials at large weekend tournaments.

The committee advanced one proposal to address match formats. The proposal reduces the number of sets allowed per day from 21 to 18, which will force the largest multi-team tournaments to either (a) reduce the number of invited teams or (b) alter their tournament format to stay within 18 sets per day for each team.

MPR AND TOURNAMENT SEEDING

The 2024 girls volleyball season was the first to feature MPR seeding, wherein the top two teams of each MHSAA District were placed on opposite sides of the tournament bracket. Staff provided a two-year overview of schedule data from MHSAA.com contrasted with survey data, demonstrating significant improvement from 2023 to 2024 in compliance between games entered online and actual games played. At the conclusion of the 2024 season, approximately 70% of teams had 90% of their regular-season schedule recorded on MHSAA.com. Data will be collected and shared again in 2025.

BOYS VOLLEYBALL ON-BOARDING & TRANSITION

Representatives from the MI Boys Volleyball group (which has been conducting the sport for the past six years) were present to share their experience(s). As the MHSAA prepares to on-board the sport to full sponsorship in 2025-26, items related to school communication were discussed. Schools will receive an email early in 2025 soliciting their desire to sponsor the sport, but division lines for the inaugural season in spring 2026 will occur in September 2025. This six-month delay from the traditional classification date in March will afford schools additional time to gauge interest

and form cooperative agreements where necessary. The committee expressed unanimous support for including boys volleyball in the small group of sports permitted to enter into cooperative agreements when involved schools have a combined enrollment under 3,500 students.

The venue for the boys volleyball culminating event (June 5-6, 2026) was discussed. Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek has the dates open and will serve as host, using much of the same protocols used during the girls tournament. It is anticipated that two divisions of boys volleyball will result in four semifinal matches played on Friday, June 5, with two championships played on Saturday, June 6.

GAME BALLS

The addition of boys volleyball has highlighted the differences between smooth and textured volleyballs. Currently, volleyballs used during the MHSAA volleyball season must be gray, white, and royal blue and adhere to NFHS game equipment standards, which require a smooth ball. Many boys programs prefer a textured ball, stating that it is more durable, flies more true when hit hard and generally feels better. For at least the first year of boys volleyball, committee members agreed that the same volleyball should be used by both girls and boys. On-boarding new programs with existing equipment will help stimulate growth. Schools sponsoring boys volleyball will be monitored to see if a future change to the competition ball is warranted.

OFFICIATING

Minutes from the Officials Review Committee meeting were reviewed, reflecting the mandate that volleyball officials wear pants after September 15 during the girls volleyball season. Registration numbers have improved for volleyball, and a focus on the assignment of younger officials to later rounds of the tournament has been met with enthusiasm. The use of electronic headsets, now permitted for use during all volleyball competitions, has also been well-received by volleyball officials.

Discussion also occurred on emergency action planning, AED requirements, the 2024 MHSAA Update Meeting Survey results, CAP requirements for new head coaches, and various seeding ideas.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. 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. (13-0)
2. 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. (13-0)
3. 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. (13-0)