



2022-23 BOWLING COMMITTEE MINUTES
March 15, 2023

Members Present:

Deb Alexander, Flint (Finals Manager)
Loraine Brinker, Dryden
Rick Dodick, Bay City
Rudy Godefroidt, Hemlock (Finals Manager)
Brian Gordon, Royal Oak
Leroy Hackley, Muskegon
Judy Jaeger, Livonia (Finals Manager)
Dave Kowalski, Bay City
Tracy Long-Arnold, Corunna (Finals Manager)
Andy Radtke, Traverse City
Scott Spahr, Sturgis
Tom Stockton, Sterling Heights (Finals Manager)
Robert Tubbs (MIHSBCA)

Members Absent:

Darren Flowers, Detroit
Karl Grambau, Rogers City
Brandon Malinowski, Detroit

MHSAA Staff:

Cole Malatinsky (Recorder)
Andy Frushour

INTRODUCTION

The 2022-23 MHSAA Bowling Committee met in East Lansing at the MHSAA's John E. "Jack" Roberts building on March, 15 2023. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision making process and charge of the Bowling Committee. Agenda items were compiled from correspondence, staff, committee members and the coaches' association. The committee was reminded that the scope of their work was to focus on growing the sport of bowling, protecting the health & safety of participants and spectators, and maintaining the proper philosophy of educational, school-based athletics.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2022-23 MHSAA TOURNAMENT REVIEW

The committee reviewed three changes implemented during 2022-23 season: (1) competitors limited to five balls in the bowling center during MHSAA tournament play, (2) foul lights disabled during MHSAA tournament play, and (3) the use of the eight Baker

games and two regular games total pinfall format for the Regional team competition. Consensus was all three worked as intended and were positive changes.

Finals managers from each of the 4 Divisions were in attendance and provided reports:

Division 1 – Thunderbowl Lanes – Allen Park

Division 2 – Century Lanes – Waterford

Division 3 – JAX 60 – Jackson

Division 4 – M-66 Bowl – Battle Creek

Reports were overwhelmingly positive and the MHSAA in conjunction with the Finals managers will continue to work with our host sites to improve the Finals experience for all involved. Overcrowding, the length of the Friday Team Finals event, and pace-of-play continue to be concerns. It was also noted a rotation of suitable bowling Final sites was important for the committee and other venues will also be considered for the 2024 Finals and beyond.

MHSAA TOURNAMENT LANE ROTATIONS

The committee discussed lane rotations during MHSAA tournament team competitions. Current MHSAA tournament rules state that lane movement will be determined by local tournament managers with the intention of teams rotating through all pairs in the available lane block. While alternative rotation approaches, like rotations in team blocks or limiting the number of rotations, could save time lost during transitions, it creates concerns related to competitive balance. The committee agrees that lane rotation should be made a point of emphasis during the pre-Regional managers meeting to ensure lane rotations are fair and as consistent as possible across all Regions and Finals events.

SEASON CALENDAR – COMMON UP/LP START DATE

The committee reviewed the 2023-24 season calendar and the current rationale for Upper Peninsula schools and Lower Peninsula schools starting on different dates. Because of limited number teams, travel, and winter weather issues, UP schools are forced to schedule matches almost exclusively on weekends. The earlier start date for both practice and competition helps ensure those UP teams are able to complete their regular season schedules, and in some cases, ensure teams have the requisite number regular season competitions to be eligible for the MHSAA tournament. Committee members contend many northern LP leagues face the same issues as UP schools, and with the recent closures of many bowling centers across the state, LP schools are now facing their own scheduling challenges. As more schools now bowl out of the same centers, it has become increasingly difficult for LP school teams to conduct tryouts and early season practices around the November 15 start of hunting season and the Thanksgiving holiday. An earlier start date would help schools address some of these

scheduling and subsequent logistical issues, like ordering uniforms, which many teams struggle to receive prior to the first competition. The committee was cognizant that a request for an additional week of competition may face challenges in being approved by the Representative Council, and as the earlier practice date is the top priority, the committee proposes the following changes separately: (1) move the LP practice start date to match the earlier UP practice start date, and (2) move the LP competition start date to match the earlier UP date. Both changes are put forth with the intent to address the scheduling and logistical issues as well as eliminate the confusion about the different dates.

MHSAA BOWLING RULES ADOPTIONS

The committee discussed an incident during a regular season tournament where a player bowled out of turn in the 2nd half of a Baker game, with that bowler only throwing one delivery. As currently stated in MHSAA Bowling Coaches Manual, Participating Schools Tournament Information (PSTI), and Tournament Managers Manual, MHSAA regular season and tournament playing rules will be those of the United States Bowling Congress (USBC) unless otherwise modified by the MHSAA. In accordance with USBC Rules 8 and 9, this is a dead ball situation – the initial delivery is voided, and the correct player is to bowl the complete frame. In the incident discussed, this was not the corrective action taken as there was confusion and disagreement among the coaches at the event caused by a recent change to the NCAA Women’s Bowling Rules. Under the new NCAA rule, the delivery would be scored as a zero. The committee affirmed no MHSAA rules adoption or modification for this situation is necessary – the penalty should not be a zero for the delivery or a game forfeit for an illegal roster change as it would be other rule codes – but did recommend adding language to MHSAA rules documents to clarify the correct course of action under USBC rules for a player bowling out of turn, and suggested other common situations could also be added to provide clarity for coaches.

MHSAA DRESS CODE

The committee discussed the MHSAA Dress Code as it relates to bowling uniform tops, which currently requires bowlers to wear a collared shirt, or a custom mock-turtleneck style shirt designed for use as a bowling uniform. As crew neck and V-neck bowling jerseys are cheaper options, and allowable at other levels (PBA, NCAA), the committee felt a relaxation of the MHSAA dress code requiring collared uniform tops would be appropriate. The committee recommended that the MHSAA Dress Code should be updated to include sublimated crew neck and V-neck shirts, designed and sold as bowling jerseys, as legal uniform tops. T-shirts, and sweatshirts will remain expressly prohibited.

MHSAA TOURNAMENT EXPANSION

Work from the MIHSBCA subcommittee on potential tournament expansion was presented. While the addition of a District round would allow for smaller field sizes, losing a week of regular season competition, and the feasibility of finding as many as 48 additional bowling centers to host made the District-Regional-Final format an unfavorable and potentially unrealistic option. Following the recommendation from the MIHSBA subcommittee, the Bowling committee was presented an expanded Regional format: 8 Regions in each Division, with the top 2 teams and top 7 individuals per gender advancing to the Finals. Under the 8 Region format, there is no change to the season calendar. By expanding from 6 to 8 Regions in each Division, the field size at the Regional level would be decreased by anywhere from 15-30% based on the number of teams that can be assigned. The smaller field sizes allow smaller bowling centers to be used for Regional tournament sites, and only 8 total additional sites would be needed. Furthermore, by only advancing the top 2 teams and top 7 individuals for each gender from each Regional to the Finals, the Finals field will be reduced from 36 total teams and 120 total individuals to 32 total teams and 112 total individuals. The committee was unanimously in favor of expansion to the proposed 8 Region format. The 8 Region format achieves the principal goal of working to address overcrowding issues at both the Regional and Final level, avoids the challenges created by adding a District round, and creates more opportunities for teams to win Regional championships, which helps promote those programs and the sport.

FINALS MATCH PLAY FORMAT

The committee discussed the team Finals match play format. While the committee was satisfied with the 8 Baker games and 2 regular games format for both the Team Regional and Team Finals qualifying, there was a desire to change the Team Finals head-to-head match play from the current 2 Baker games and 1 Regular game, total pinfall format to a best-of-five Baker game format. According to members of the committee, the Baker format is more team oriented, and outside of a handful of events purposefully using the combination Baker and regular game head-to-head format as tune up for the MHSAA post-season, most all team events exclusively use some form of head-to-head Baker format after qualifying. The Baker format is also faster paced. Under the 2 Baker games and 1 Regular game format, a team match currently takes about 75 minutes. A best-of-five Baker match would take 40-70 minutes. Under a best-of-five Baker match format for the quarterfinals, semifinals, and final bracket play rounds, even if all rounds go to five games, this change would save at minimum 15 minutes, but on average the savings would be significantly more. With the current format putting bowlers in the bowling for as long as 12 hours during the Finals team event, and with some of those players bowling again the next day, the committee felt anything done to speed up the team event and lessen the load would be a benefit and should be considered. Members of the committee

also suggested the total pinfall format can be difficult for spectators to track – a “best of” is easier to follow and more exciting as each game is a competition unto itself.

The principal drawback to a “best of” format is the timing. Under the current format, all bracket rounds end around approximately the same time. Under the best-of-five Baker format, if a team wins the first three Bakers, the team could potentially be sitting for 20-30 minutes or more if their other match goes to five games. This issue could easily be addressed to allow that team to roll another game or otherwise bowl to stay loose while they wait.

The committee acknowledged some coaches may oppose a change, feeling as qualifying involves a combination of Baker and regular games total pinfall format, the head-to-head match play format should match, as it does currently. There could also be opposition from some coaches who feel the combination 2 Baker-1 regular total pinfall format plays into the strengths of their bowlers, and a change would disadvantage their team. Coaches’ preferences really depend on the makeup of their team. Members of the committee provided anecdotal evidence suggesting the best teams with the best bowlers typically win, regardless of format. Furthermore, the 2 Baker-1 regular format potentially limits substitution. If a bowler was subbed out during the regular game in match play, that bowler could potentially be done for the rest of the day, where in the best-of all-Baker format, there is the chance that bowler can return in a later game. A change to a “best of” all-Baker format during Finals match play would simply force coaches to employ different tactics and substitution strategies.

The committee was unanimously in favor of changing the team Finals head-to-head match play format to a best-of-five Baker set for each round. Again, teams would still be seeded for bracket play based on their 8 Baker game-2 Regular games qualifying block pinfall total. The committee also discussed details of starting lanes and tie breaking procedures if the 5 head-to-head Baker game format, first team to win 3 format is passed by the Representatives Council.

MHSAA TOURNAMENT OIL PATTERN

The committee discussed MHSAA tournament oil patterns and was again reminded that many factors come into play when using ANY oil or shot pattern. Bowling conditions can vary as to approaches (wood/synthetic), lanes (wood/new synthetic/old synthetic), pins (old/new & wood/plastic), bowling centers (new, old,) lanes topology and lane oil machines (old/new & manual/automatic & Kegel/Qubica/AMF/Brunswick). The committee considered feedback regarding the Phantom pattern after two years of use during the MHSAA tournament, including one committee member, who is not only a coaches and league secretary, but owns and operates a bowling center, and used the Phantom pattern for league competition. Citing data from his league suggesting overall scoring was down and varied widely, especially in later games, the committee member experimented with the Phantom pattern, looking for way to make the pattern more

durable. The committee member found that by taking the existing Phantom pattern, adding two units of oil, and stretching the pattern further down the lane, the pattern held up much better, and scoring improved when used during several regular season events. It was noted the increase of 2 units is of very minimal cost increase. The full committee believed this adjustment to extend the Phantom oil pattern further down the lane would be a positive change for the MHSAA tournament and recommended the so-called Phantom II pattern be adopted for the 2023-24 bowling season.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Update the MHSAA Bowling Dress Code to include sublimated crew neck and V-neck shirts, designed and sold as bowling jerseys, as legal uniform tops.
2. Add language in MHSAA Bowling Coaches Manual, Participating Schools Tournament Information (PSTI), and Tournament Managers Manual to clarify the correct course of action under USBC rules for a player bowling out of order.
3. Lane rotations should be a point of emphasis during the pre-Regional managers meeting to ensure lane rotations are fair and as consistent as possible across all Regions and teams are rotating through all pairs in the available lane block.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Adjust the MHSAA calendar to allow for common UP and LP start date for the bowling season: (1) move the LP practice start date to match the earlier UP practice start date, and (2) move the LP competition start date to match the earlier UP date. (13-0)
2. Expand the MHSAA bowling tournament format to 8 Regions in each of the 4 Division, with the top 2 teams and top 7 individuals per gender advancing to the Finals. (13-0)
3. Change the MHSAA Team Finals match-play to a head-to-head, best-of-five Baker game format. (13-0)
4. Adopt the Phantom II oil pattern for MHSAA tournament competition. (13-0)