

BOYS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING

Zoom Meeting

Thursday, October 6, 2022, 9:30 a.m. – held via Zoom

Members Present:

Jim Carl, Brighton
Kris Daiek, Riverview Gabriel Richard
Rick DeBlasio, East Grand Rapids (Advisory)
Mike Jolly, Warren (Advisory)
Bill Kennedy, Holland West Ottawa
Nick Levanti, Hartland
Nikki Norris, East Lansing (MIAAA)

Meg Seng, Ann Arbor Greenhills (Rep Council)
Andy Shira, Forest Hills Central
Mitch Smelis, Fenton (MATS-Advisory)
Nick Stenson, Birmingham
Jeremy Strunk, Grandville
Adam Zarotney, Haslett (MHSLCA)

Staff Members

Cole Malatinsky (Recorder)

INTRODUCTION

The week prior to the meeting, the committee was emailed links to the published minutes of the two previous committee meetings along with several reports for their review, including the 2023 classification of teams and enrollment breaks set in March 2022 as well as a list of current cooperative programs. As of Oct. 6, 2022, there are 128 teams (63 Division 1, 65 Division 2) representing 178 schools among 34 cooperative programs, with some cooperative program agreements pending. Also included in this information packet was a report of boys lacrosse participation over the past seven years, MHSAA Head injury report data from 2021-22, a revised recommendation regarding a five-quarter allowance for boys lacrosse, and preparation materials for preseason season seeding.

The committee's multiple functions over two meetings (recommendations to the Representative Council, sport oversight, seeding, Regional alignment and officials' selection) were reviewed.

2022-23 REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS & TOURNAMENT

Members received in advance preliminary Regional alignments, maps of each region by division, the stated criteria for seeding the tournament, and summary data/results for teams from the 2022 and 2021 seasons. No changes were made to the seeding criteria for the preseason or late season seeding in May 2023. It should be noted one year performance (2022) was the focus during the preseason seeding, with the committee's preference that two-year performance (2021) only be used to break very close ties in determining the top 8 teams. The committee ranked the top eight teams 1-8 in each division based on the criteria and placed one seeded team in each Region. The Regions were finalized pending MHSAA staff securing host sites. Regions, without hosts designated, were posted on MHSAA.com on Friday, Oct. 10, 2022. On Wednesday, May 10, 2023 the committee will reconvene and place each team on the bracket based on the written criteria and current season competition played on or before Monday, May 8, 2023.

FIVE-QUARTER RULE

In October 2022, the committee recommend to the Representative Council a five-quarter limit on competition be adopted similar to the allowance currently permitted in the sports of football and basketball. That agenda item was tabled during the May 2022 Representative Council meeting following concerns regarding the addition of a five-quarter allowance in boys lacrosse given the reports of carelessness by schools and continued violations of the regulation in both football and basketball. In response to the abuses of this allowance in sports it is currently allowed, the Representative Council adopted stricter penalties for violation of the regulation. Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, teams in violation of the "fifth quarter" regulation will forfeit the contest during which the violation took place (varsity or subvarsity contest). The head coach of record during the contest where a violation of the "fifth quarter" regulation occurs will also be ineligible for the next day of competition at that level.

The committee discussed submission of a revised recommendation of a five-quarter allowance for boys lacrosse. While concerns about the physical stress and time constraints placed on athletes potentially participating in as many as six games in a week under this potential allowance, tracking participation given the nature of substitutions in boys lacrosse, and the severity of the new penalty for violations of the five-quarter regulation were discussed, the committee ultimately felt the allowance should be an option for coaches and programs that believe it would help preserve junior varsity teams, and provide more opportunities for students to get playing times in contests that match their skill level. (Approved 10-0).

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS

Following from the discussion regarding the five-quarter allowance and the positive impact this regulation could potentially have on participation numbers, the committee discussed a number of additional topics related to the recent decline in boys lacrosse participation numbers. While the decline in participation may simply be related to interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, issues like increases in non-school sport opportunities and sport specialization may be contributing factors. Continued efforts to make school-based programs more attractive to students, along with increased efforts to promote multi-sport participation were offered as potential ways to address some of these issues.

FINALS VENUE

The desire to have a more prominent venue for the MHSAA Boys Lacrosse Finals was also discussed. MHSAA Staff has been in contact since 2019 with the University of Michigan staff regarding use of the U of M Lacrosse Stadium for the MHSAA Boys Lacrosse Finals, possibly in tandem with the Girls Lacrosse Finals. The MHSAA continues to explore a variety of other options as Finals venues.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Similar to the Football and Basketball five-quarter rule, allow students to participate in no more than five quarters in a day. For multi-team tournaments, if two school teams are at the same event, allow participation in no more halves or quarters than what is being played by the school's highest team level that day. (Multi-team tournament example: if the varsity team is playing three 30-minute half games for a total of six halves, a player playing both JV and Varsity on the same day can play in six TOTAL halves that day.) (Approved 10-0). The recommendation will be placed on the December Representative Council agenda for potential action for the 2022-23 boys lacrosse season.