

JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES #2

Virtual meeting, February 17, 2022, 9:30 a.m.

Members:

Justin Ansel, Comstock
Karyn Furlong, Gull Lake
Jason Kemler, Brethren
Jolinda Lucas, Grand Rapids
Carlos McGee, Midland

Jay Mulder, Montague
Avis Najor, Bloomfield Hills
Shane Riley, Blanchard
Dave Smith, Gaylord
Adam Stefanski, Boyne City
Robert Wright, Sand Creek

MHSAA Staff

Cody Inglis

The MHSAA Junior High/Middle School Committee met to review topics identified for discussion by the MHSAA staff, Representative Council and member schools.

The committee began by reviewing responsibilities and purpose including a thorough review of the JH/MS committee meeting minutes from the first JH/MS Committee meeting in October 2021. Staff updated the committee on the responsibilities, purpose and topics on the agenda.

Sport Committee discussions

Wrestling

The committee addressed topics raised by sport committees that applied to JH/MS. This included addressing the challenges of the heavier Wrestling weight classes at the JH/MS level. The committee recommended to add two wt. classes at 215 lbs. and 245 lbs. and when determining pairings, that no wrestler shall be paired where the difference of weight is more than one wt. class. These potential changes will allow more participation for more JH/MS student-athletes. In addition, the committee addressed strengthening of language related to time between matches and leagues establishing their own weight classification procedures.

Track and Field

The committee continued discussion on additional MHSAA sponsored JH/MS Track & Field competition and recommended like Cross Country that the MHSAA establish a JH/MS Track & Field Regional competition. Committee members shared positive sentiments and strong support from about the JH/MS Cross Country races and believe that continuing this in Track and Field is a natural next step. The continued emphasis on the philosophy behind these Regional MHSAA JH/MS events is to provide an experience for student-athletes to compete so that the inevitable transition to the high school athletics world may be a little easier on all.

Further details and logistics related to MHSAA sponsored Regional events in Track & Field that the committee discussed include:

- **Dates and Times** – Month of May was recommended in order to secure race officials and timers and not conflict with HS track meets and invitationals. Weekday events are desired. If approved these JH/MS meets would start in the spring of 2023.
- **Qualification standards** – MHSAA staff will work with existing JH/MS track and field events like MegaStar to see how they have established event standards at the JH/MS level and if these may fit with future standards used by the MHSAA.
- **Travel** – travel to and from the events should be limited if possible. Using MHSAA zones as has been used in Regional Cross Country may be the best starting place while placing two meets in each zone.
- **School size** – within the Zones there would be a big school race and a small school race as defined by the high school that the JH/MS feeds.
- **Entries** – both team entries and number of entries per event would be limited.

Basketball

Continued JH/MS 5th Quarter rule discussion and consideration was given by the committee. In the October meeting, the committee discussed the 5th quarter without sentiment to change to an allowance. At that time, there was sentiment on the committee to NOT have this rule apply to 6th-8th grade competition as it would not encourage involvement by all at this level. The worry was that this would encourage participation by few elite and early developed athletes instead of involving more kids in programs and working on the skills needed for future participation.

The committee received additional information from schools desiring to be allowed to use the 5th quarter rule which is done at the HS level to encourage participation. Some sentiments expressed included that the 5th quarter rule allows many schools to have two levels of teams, at the 7th and 8th grade levels. This allows them to play two games instead of one, allowing more participation by more student-athletes. Schools are struggling with enrollment and this allowance encourages participation by more.

The committee remains guarded on potential violations and misuses of the 5th quarter rule at the JH/MS level but sees the potential gains that allowing schools, leagues and conferences to use this rule will help member schools have teams at the JH/MS level.

The recommendation is to allow JH/MS leagues and conferences to request to the MHSAA Executive Committee to use the 5th quarter rule. If approved, then the JH/MS league or conference would be able to use this in competition for basketball during its' defined season. The EC request would stipulate the reasons why the league and conference desired to use the 5th quarter rule. Violations of the 5th quarter rule would be to the school and the coach at the JH/MS level.

General Junior High/Middle School topics

The committee discussed some general JH/MS topics including Sportsmanship and working on behavior of parents, adult spectators and student-athletes. Trying to reach adults and student-athletes through social media messages, signage, videos, PSA's and other means in an effort to stem the poor sportsmanship that is occurring at all levels of sport needs to be a priority. MHSAA staff will work to help in this area with support from the MIAAA sportsmanship committee.

The committee also spoke about the possibility of additional coaching requirements for JH/MS coaches, including a JH/MS rules meeting and CPR requirements. MHSAA staff will monitor how the new requirements for HS coaches go and look at future requirements for JH/MS coaches.

An MHSAA JH/MS Conditioning workout interpretation was shared with the committee. This interpretation is to provide more clarity for member schools as to what can and can't occur. MHSAA staff will continue to refine and clarify what 6th, 7th and 8th grade student-athletes can do with HS workouts and HS staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

- **Add 215 lb. and 245 lb. wt. classes to JH/MS wrestling classes. (11-0)**
- **Starting in the Spring of the 2022-23 school year, the MHSAA will conduct Regional JH/MS Track and Field meets across the state. (11-0)**
- **Allow JH/MS schools, leagues and conferences to request to the MHSAA Executive Committee to use the 5th quarter rule for basketball. (11-0)**

