

2019-20 SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Video (Zoom) Conferencing

9:30 a.m. October 19, 2020

Members Present:

Nicole Carter, Novi
Candace Cox, Quincy
Dr. John Evans, Ann Arbor
Dr. Monica Goble, East Lansing
Dr. Edwin Kornoelje, Grand Rapids
Dr. Dallas Lintner, Owosso
Jevon Moore, Ann Arbor
Sandra Noto, Wyoming
Kristi Nowka, East Jordan
Meaghan Rourke, Allen Park

Meg Seng, Ann Arbor
Dr. Michael Shingles, East Lansing
Mitch Smelis, Fenton
Patrick Watson, Bloomfield Hills
Dr. Neal Weinberg, Ypsilanti
J.D. Wheeler, Hartland

MHSAA Staff:

Tony Bihn
Cole Malatinsky
Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

GENERAL REVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The MHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) exists to serve the MHSAA membership while emphasizing the health and safety of students in interscholastic sports. The goals of this committee include:

1. To advise and work cooperatively with the Representative Council, Executive Committee, staff and sport committees on medical and safety issues as they relate to interscholastic sport's rules writing, regulations and guidelines.
2. Monitor, evaluate and disseminate current sports medicine information to the MHSAA and its member schools.
3. Evaluate existing resources while developing new educational measures provided through the MHSAA for member schools.
4. Work cooperatively with MHSAA sport committees to address sports medicine issues and the impact on the health and risk management of its participating students.
5. Assist the MHSAA in identifying, prioritizing and researching sport medicine issues.

The Sports Medicine Advisory Committee continues to be cognizant to look at the full picture of what the MHSAA does, as well as to be aware of the culture of what the MHSAA does in connection to schools and students in grades 6 – 12. The process in which the Representative Council considers proposals and how the proposals relate to the educational mission of member schools was reiterated and continues to be a priority. This committee was charged with the review and discussion of several topics. These included: COVID-19 review and updates, MHSAA fall and winter return to play documents, COVID-19 reporting from physicians, review of MHSAA health questionnaire adjustment for COVID-19, mental health initiatives and the Medical Time Out action plan. Additionally, sub-committees were devised for additional review of the return to play documents and pre-participation physical.

INFORMATION PROVIDED

Provided for the committee were prior meeting minutes as well as a sample MHSAA Annual Sports Health Questionnaire which was intended to be used for students who received a valid sports physical during the 2019-20 school year. August, September and October comparisons of COVID were provided, as well as an overview of return to play topics, specific information on various sports for return to play, head injury reporting, and newly devised Medical Time Out procedures.

The general purpose of this meeting was to provide information and seek input from the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee regarding preparedness for COVID-19 as well review of the practices which are currently in place for COVID-19. Staff provided an update regarding the rise in coronavirus cases and the concern from county health leaders about controlling the spread of the virus. It was indicated that not just the daily caseload was on the rise – the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 has increased as well. State health officials believe that colder weather, causing people to spend more time indoors, is at least partly responsible for the upward trend in cases. That coupled with “COVID fatigue” and individuals who are letting down their guard with protections such as masks, social distancing and handwashing.

Anecdotal reports included that there are very few transmissions occurring from student to student in school or athlete to athlete in sports, however the majority of transmissions can be attributed to activities outside of schools and interscholastic athletics – i.e. weekend social activities and after game activities which pose the greatest challenge. Staff also provided data related to COVID daily cases, infection rate, positive rate, cases and deaths and biweekly snapshots of the data throughout the entire fall season to date, which included a comparison with Ohio and Indiana. Michigan is still seeing 96%+ of football schools playing football each week.

The greatest challenge from the committee was the management of the mask requirements and the inconsistency regarding enforcement from school to school. It was indicated that it requires strong leadership from coaches and administrators during this time. Overwhelmingly, it was indicated that mask wearing must continue and we must continue to do everything we can to mitigate risks and continue to provide athletic opportunities. Some of the conversation included that winter sports are going to present some additional challenges, but if there is a delay, students are going to find outside sport opportunities, which will create additional challenges regarding increased contacts and decreased accountability.

Dr. Kornoelje provided perspective with a view from the sidelines in a variety of sports. So far, he is seeing normal fall sport injuries. There is some question of what impact the interruptions in sport or difference in typical preparation could have had on injury rates. Additionally, there may have been weight/body changes which may also have attributed to the interruptions in normal training, perhaps leading to increased injury rates as well. Dr. K indicated that from his observations, everyone is doing what they need to do. There are very limited transmissions on the field of play and it will be continued to be watched to see what happens as overall infection numbers go up, and the impact that this might have on potential transmission player to player.

Also noted in the presentation was that in the Southern Hemisphere, which was dealing with its typical flu season during this time, handwashing and masking have led to lower levels of influenza transmission and that these simple practices work with several diseases. As stated throughout the meeting, by physicians, nurses and others – “wear a mask and wash your hands”.

A local health department representative indicated that things were very busy from the local health department perspective. There have been many inquires and assistance with contact tracing. In addition, there were some alterations made in game times due to Triple E. Currently there is less concern with Triple E with the temperatures dropping.

UPDATES ON MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Dr. Evans provided a brief report on student and athlete mental health issues resulting from the isolation of COVID-19. Committee members will continue to pull together resources to assist athletes, parents, coaches and administrators to better deal with the challenges and opportunities. Dr. Evans indicated that mental health issues are on the rise and that we need to continue to educate regarding signs of anxiety and depression. He provided information on what they had seen with athletes and teams with some of the loss of self-image and lose of identify and purpose when connections and normal structure is gone. One of the biggest protective measures are our coaches. It was mentioned that the balance is in keeping safe while focusing on team values and relationships. Staying present and teaching mindfulness skills was one of the strongest predictors for increased positive emotions and the more attentive people said they were, the better they felt overall. Additional discussion included the amount of depression and anxiety due to isolation as well as the continual unknown.

MEDICAL TIME OUT

SMAC was provided a report from the MTO task force work and the document which emerged from this sub-committee. The document selected was more general and not as sport specific and was very well received by the committee. This guidance document will be well utilized and will be posted on mhsaa.com

This group, reviewed the definition and purpose of Medical Time-Outs (MTOs) which included that the Medical Time Out is a purposeful and brief meeting of available and key personnel responsible for the administration of any aspect of an emergency response plan at a predetermined time, but prior to the start of an athletic competition. The purpose is to educate and inform key personnel of emergency preparedness and response in order to maximize the effectiveness of the plan in protecting student safety. The documents will be useful for all individuals, inclusive of school administrators and those without a medical background.

The recommendations made were:

1. *The MTO should take place no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of an athletic event when possible.*
2. *The MTO meeting time and location should be shared between schools prior to the day of the event.*
3. *The MTO should be used and/or modified when necessary for all sports and at all venues.*

PRE-PARTICIPATION PHYSICAL

The “Pre-participation Physical” SMAC sub-committee provided a report from their meeting in which they explored alternative options to the MHSAA annual physical requirement, specifically regarding the April 15th date (i.e., a pre-participation physical is only current and valid if it is performed on or after April 15th of the previous school year).

This SMAC sub-committee’s initial recommendation was to move to a model that requires a pre-participation physical exam to be completed once every 24 months, and in alternating years, students submit an annual questionnaire (developed by the MHSAA), signed by the student and parent/guardian and submitted to the school administration. If the student answers “yes” to any questions, a new physical or physician’s clearance will be required prior to participation. Following the start of winter season, a survey will be done with member schools requesting additional information regarding future use and viability of the Sport Health Questionnaire. The sub-committee will meet again to discuss the current Health Questionnaire and Pre-Participation Physical.

RETURN TO SPORT GUIDANCE/COVID-19

The Sports Medicine Advisory Committee was provided with several Return to Play documents for review and consideration. These included the protocol for positive cases, information on face coverings, regular season and multi-team competitions and spectator limitations. In addition, conditions of practice, games, scrimmages and suggestions for schools were also reviewed. The guidelines proposed will be prepared for school posting during the last week of October.

PLAN OF ACTION

The committee determined that additional discussion would need to occur on several of the noted issues. In some cases, a small task force was created and in other areas, situations will be developed for review by a small group of committee members. The SMAC meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. and the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 19, 2021 – 9:30 a.m.