

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Competitive Cheer Committee Meeting
East Lansing, January 24, 2018
9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

David Chrisinske, Middleville
Greg Lattig, Mason
Sonya Latz, MIAAA
Ken Mohny, Mattawan
Eric Pierce, West Bloomfield
Danyel Prielipp, Marion

Anna Ramirez, CCCAM
Stacy Smith Caledonia
Megan Tourda-Nelson, Bay City
Jessica Trefry, Michigan Center
Christina Wilson, Brighton

Staff:

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The MHSAA Competitive Cheer Committee reviewed its responsibilities as a standing sport committee and the process of making recommendations to MHSAA staff and the MHSAA Representative Council. In addition, the Competitive Cheer Committee reviewed the charge of the Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee which met on January 17, 2018. This Sub-Committee studied the technical aspects of girls competitive cheer and made recommendations which were submitted to the Competitive Cheer Committee for additional review.

A draw for the order of competition at the MHSAA Competitive Cheer Finals was done by committee members, and the Girls Competitive Cheer Tournament Manager's Materials and Participating School Information were also reviewed. In addition, the minutes from last year's Competitive Cheer Committee and the 2018 Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee were perused. District and Regional sites were reviewed and members of the Committee also received 2017-18 Competitive Cheer clarifications and interpretations.

COACHING REQUIREMENTS

Committee members reviewed information regarding coaching requirements and deadlines for 2017-18. Coaching requirements include that the athletic director or principal of each school shall attest that all high school coaches (sub varsity or assistant coaches, paid or volunteer) complete an MHSAA rules meeting in their sport. High school administrators are also required to attest that all varsity head coaches have a valid current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification and each head coach of a varsity high school team, hired for the first time at any MHSAA member high school after July 31, 2016 shall have completed either Level 1 or Level 2 of the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program (CAP). Committee members heard the high percentage of compliance that occurred with MHSAA member schools for all of these initiatives.

HISTORY OF GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER

Information regarding the history of girls competitive cheer was shared with the Competitive Cheer Committee including how the MHSAA first was committed to have girls competitive cheer meet the definition of a sport. To that end, a format was created by Michigan cheer coaches and athletic administrators with the purpose of providing consistent rules, while allowing teams to perform all aspects of cheer techniques and styles designed to promote athleticism. Additionally, meeting the criteria of a sport provided by the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education, was imperative. Girls competitive cheer has provided a great opportunity for girls to participate in a sport in which participation and spectatorship has soared.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL ACTION

A summary of Representative Council action which included Handbook changes and sports changes was provided. Included within the information were the Representative Council changes for 2016-17 additional information regarding MHSAA rules/risk management meeting attendance last year, which was up 1.5 percent compared to the previous year, with more than 90 percent of coaches and nearly 93 percent of officials completing the requirement online. The health and safety focus for 2017-18 (and every other year) is concussion education, detection and after-care.

GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER COMPARATIVE CONCUSSION INFORMATION

Committee members reviewed comparative information from the MHSAA Head Injury Reporting System by sport and year. Comparative data indicates that in 2016, 17.28 per 1000 participants received a concussion in girls competitive cheer. In 2017, that number was 22.32 per 1000 participants. Further information shared included that most of the injuries occurred during practice (either at the middle of end of practice) at the varsity level.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMPETITIVE CHEER SUB-COMMITTEE

The MHSAA Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee meets for the purpose of annually reviewing current competition and safety rules and to propose changes and additions to the Competitive Cheer Manual. The committee focuses on the technical aspects of competitive cheer and advises the full committee and ultimately the Representative Council of the rules that may need review, revision or update. Review of the recommendations that come from the Competitive Cheer Coaches Association of Michigan also occurs. The recommendations from the MHSAA Sub-Committee are as follows.

- Allow 4 difficulty points for a ground-up to an elevator at all levels.
- Allow middle school athletes to do an inverted exit, cradle, back walkover out only.
- Allow any catch that originates from a shoulder level or below and transitions from a vertical body position to a horizontal body position to require only three catchers. Any catch that exceeds shoulder level will require 4 catchers, as stated in the current rule (p. 48) of the Girls Competitive Cheer Manual. In this release from a vertical body position to a horizontal body position, the flyer may pass through a heightened prep position, but must not begin, end or stop in an extended position. This may transition only to a dismount, and not back up to a stunt or load. All other rules regarding a transition from a vertical to a horizontal position must be followed.
- For the high school level, allow a Mt. Climber to an unbraced OLE to receive OLE choreography bonus.
- Allow non-braced, static inversions to originate at shoulder level or below, and transition to a stunt at shoulder level or below using two bases and a backspot.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMPETITIVE CHEER COMMITTEE

The MHSAA Competitive Cheer Committee continues to discuss several topics regarding the evolution of girls competitive cheer as a sport. This includes whether girls competitive cheer should have a requirement of the same number of athletes in each Division and round of competition. Additional conversation included whether the changes for the middle school and sub-varsity (who now follow the same rules as the varsity teams in terms of mandated numbers) resulted in any changes in competitive cheer opportunities. Conversation included that in several sports, there are teams that are not able to participate at all without the required numbers, while competitive cheer teams may still participate in all rounds of competitive cheer (with penalty) without the required numbers. This committee encourages that all coaches make a commitment to participation for all athletes on their teams and make ethical choices to increase participation in all rounds of competitive cheer.

The Girls Competitive Cheer Committee also explored options and ideas to enhance middle school girls competitive cheer in the hopes of increasing participation numbers at the middle school level. Discussion included a Round 1 and 2 combination, an adjustment of time for each round of competition, adding a Round 1 or, adding up to 20 competitors in Round 1 with a 4 person differential. Further discussion included that the addition of Round 1 could also allow for the greatest amount of participation without regard to specific gymnastics skills. Several of the committee members indicated that they currently have only 6 – 8 weeks in a season, and providing instruction for all three rounds would be very difficult in that span of time. Also discussed was a possible reduction in time and skill in each round. The Girls Competitive Cheer Committee requested that this subject be further reviewed in Middle School Committee and be discussed further at the Summer Task Force.

Additional discussion included other proposals that came from CCCAM and the sub-committee which included eliminating Round 2 mandated numbers for sub-varsity programs, removing the mandated number, reducing the penalty in Round 2 for not meeting the mandated numbers and removing Round 2 from competition. Further discussion included adding a difficulty bonus to the Round 3 scoresheet based on the number of competitors, modifying the “bow rule”, adding an additional category to jump and tumbling skills, and

adopting a graduated choreography bonus chart. Also received and reviewed by the Girls Competitive Cheer Committee were any additional proposals that came from the Competitive Cheer Coaches Association of Michigan.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

A continuance of the practice of having a spring/summer editing group of coaches and judges review the Competitive Cheer Manual and further update the Manual was recommended. This practice would include a review of non-safety and safety related violations, and lend further clarity and parameters to existing rules. The inclusion of girls competitive cheer recommendations approved by the MHSAA Representative Council and discussion of ways to provide a format for greater middle school participation and exploring options, ideas or thoughts to enhance middle school girls competitive cheer in the hopes of increasing participation number at the middle school level would also be a responsibility of this editing group.

Additionally, this group would be charged with adapting the Round 1 score sheet and removing jumps which are no longer relevant and adding photos and glossary description of jumps listed as available options on the Round 1 scoresheet to the Girls Competitive Cheer Manual. The Task force would also review the procedure for teams to enter and exit the competition floor (pg. 13) and provide information as to how to organize a Competitive Cheer Meet.

2017-18 GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

The 2017-18 Competitive Cheer Tournament will hold Districts on Friday and Saturday, February 16 and 17, 2018. There will be six Districts in four Divisions which will each have four teams progress to eight Regionals the following week on Saturday, February 23, 2018. Four teams from each of the eight Regionals will move to the Finals at the DeltaPlex in Grand Rapids on Friday, March 2 and Saturday, March 3, 2018. This will include four separate sessions of competitive cheer. The Competitive Cheer Committee also reviewed the 2018 plan for assigned seating at the DeltaPlex which includes tickets specified for school seating and spectator seating and embraces the concept for assigned school and spectator seating to assist with the large crowds at the DeltaPlex.

RECOMMENDATION TO REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

The Girls Competitive Cheer Committee makes the following technical recommendations to the Representative Council:

- a. For the junior high/middle school level, allow junior high/middle school athletes to perform an inverted exit – cradle to back walkover inverted exit only. (11-0)
- b. For the high school level, allow any catch that originates from shoulder level or below and transitions from a vertical body position to a horizontal body position to require only three catchers. Any catch that exceeds shoulder level will require four catchers, as stated in the current rule (p. 48) of the Girls Competitive cheer Manual. In this release from a vertical body position to a horizontal body position, the flyer may pass through a heightened prep position, but must not begin, end or stop in an extended position. This may transition only to a dismount, and not back up to a stunt or load. All other rules regarding a transition from a vertical to a horizontal position must be followed. (11-0)
- c. For the high school level, allow a Mt. Climber to an unbraced OLE to receive OLE choreograph bonus. (11-0)
- d. For all levels (grades 7-12) award four difficulty points for a ground-up to an elevator at all levels. (11-0)