

Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.  
**FOOTBALL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
 January 24, 2019, 9:30 a.m.

**Members Present:**

Craig Anderson, Adrian  
 Steven Baker, Grand Ledge  
 Brad Bush, Chelsea  
 Jerrod Dohm, Grand Blanc  
 Mike Evoy, Detroit  
 Jason Germain, Millington  
 Ed Greenman, Battle Creek  
 Vicky Groat, Battle Creek  
 Don Gustafson, St Ignace  
 Nikki Johnston, Morrice  
 Wayne Karsten, Posen  
 Kevin Langs, Climax  
 Karen Leinaar, Bear Lake  
 William McKoy, Romulus  
 Nick Nolde, Excanaba  
 Dave Price, Plainwell  
 Eric Pierce, West Bloomfield  
 Renee Sadler, Holt  
 Drew Severn, New Lothrop

Jim Sparks, Clawson  
 Tony Whiren, Ann Arbor  
 Kevin Fleming, MATS SSATC  
 Larry Merx, Milan  
 Andrew Pratley, Holland

**Members Absent:**

Vernon Crump, Canton  
 Courtney Hawkins, Mt Morris  
 Jack Nummerdor, Holton  
 Joe Pontbriand, Iron Mountain

**MHSAA Staff:**

Nate Hampton (Recorder)  
 Mark Uyl  
 Brent Rice  
 Geoff Kimmerly  
 Andrew Frushour

The committee met for the purpose of reviewing NFHS playing rules, MHSAA Regulations and 8-Player and 11-Player tournament procedures/policies and concerns involving high school football.

**Calendar**

MHSAA staff provided the committee a six-year calendar demonstrating the earliest practice date, the earliest game date and the number of contests prior to Labor Day. For the 2019 season, the earliest practice date is August 12, and the earliest game date is August 29 allowing for two scheduled contests prior to Labor Day.

**2019-2024 FOOTBALL DATES**

Year	Earliest Practice	Earliest Game	Labor Day (Games Before)
2019	Aug. 12	Aug. 29	Sept. 2 (1)
2020	Aug. 10	Aug. 27	Sept. 7 (2)
2021	Aug. 9	Aug. 26	Sept. 6 (2)
2022	Aug. 8	Aug. 25	Sept. 5 (2)
2023	Aug. 7	Aug. 24	Sept. 4 (2)
2024	Aug. 12	Aug. 29	Sept. 2 (1)

↳ whether or not play 1st week  
 ↳ 1st 2 days without pads  
 ↳ could start later

↳ could start later

Monday, August 12 - First allowable day of 2 days of conditioning period, helmets only. Shoulder pads may be added on the third and fourth days. First date of official practice, with full pads (if 2 days of conditioning were completed during the week) is on the fifth day.

Thursday, August 29 - First game date.

- Schools may not conduct inter-squad scrimmages until after nine separate days of practice.
- Interscholastic games (all levels) cannot be played until teams have completed 12 separate days of practice over a 3-week period.

### **Tournament Review**

The committee was provided 2018 Football Playoff information for both the 11-player format and the 8-player format, with statistical data for all levels of tournament competition. The data demonstrated consistency with previous years under the current format when comparing school classification, division enrollment breaks and the numbers of automatic qualifiers.

In 2016, 2017 and 2018, there were 218, 223 and 213 schools, respectively, which qualified automatically based on regular-season records. The 32 8-player schools with the highest playoff point averages qualified for the 8-player tournament. There were thirty-nine 11-player and eight 8-player games that were subject to the "Point Differential" procedure.

#### **2018 Enrollment Range by Division**

Division 1 3114-1593  
Division 2 1585-1160  
Division 3 1153-864  
Division 4 851-609  
Division 5 608-449  
Division 6 445-352  
Division 7 351-252  
Division 8 250-115  
8-Player D1 189-156  
D2 154-78

#### **2018 Classification by Divisions**

Division 1 32 Class A  
Division 2 32 Class A  
Division 3 30 Class A, 2 Class B  
Division 4 32 Class B  
Division 5 32 Class B  
Division 6 9 Class B, 23 Class C  
Division 7 32 Class C  
Division 8 18 Class C, 14 Class D  
8-Player D1 16 Class D  
D2 16 Class D

### **General Discussion**

1. 2018 Committee minutes and Representative Council Recommendations
2. Semifinal facilities
3. National Federation Rule changes for 2019
4. National Federation 40 Second Clock Michigan experiment
5. Junior High/Middle School Football
6. Finals venue review – Ford Field/Northern Michigan University
7. Health and Safety Issues - "Practice Like Pros"
8. NFHS Injury Report – Two direct fatalities, 3 indirect fatalities
9. Pre-season practice limits, Pre-season/In season contest limits
10. Tournament Ball - Wilson
11. Preseason Guide – Safety Blitz

### **Health and Safety**

MHSAA staff reported that the National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research reported that in 2018 there were two direct (head/neck) deaths and three indirect (heart/heat) related deaths.

Football continues to have the highest injury rate in the 22 sports under RIO surveillance with an overall practice and competition rate of 4.33 per 1000 athletic exposures.

### **40 Second Clock Experiment**

In 2018, there were 635 varsity contest and 299 junior varsity contest that used the 40 second clock protocols. School teams and contest officials' responses of those reporting demonstrated the below:

99% found more consistency in getting the ball spotted using the :40 second play clock.

98% found that the crew was efficient in getting the ball marked for the snap.  
98% experienced fewer delay penalties.  
100% experienced fewer pre-snap infractions.  
Average game time 2 hours, 10 minutes.

**The National Federation approved the :40 Second Play Clock for all NFHS contests for the 2019 season.**

### **2018 Update Meeting Survey Relating to Football**

Presented by Executive Director, Mark Uyl

Question #5 – Would you support keeping regular-season football scheduling and playoffs “as is” but with an adjustment to the playoff point formula to better reward schools for playing a tougher schedule, similar to the recent “strength of schedule” proposal?

Yes – 82.9% 533 Responses

No – 17.1% 110 Responses

Question #6 – Would you support reducing football regular season to eight games and expanding the football playoffs one round allowing 64 schools out of each pre-determined division of 68-69 total schools to qualify for the tournament?

Yes – 75.8% 482 Responses

No – 24.2% 154 Responses

Questions #7 – Would you support the MHSAA establishing football divisions prior to the start of the season and assigning every school to a “group of eight” (based on division and geography) which would determine the seven opponents a school would play in Weeks 3-9? The top four schools in each group of eight would qualify for the playoffs. Weeks 1 and 2 will not count toward playoff qualifications.

Yes – 60.6% 381 Responses

No – 39.4 % 248 Responses

Questions #8 – Which of the three concepts do you believe is best to ease the difficulty of scheduling regular-season games?

13% - Make no change

31% - Make no change but adjust playoff points to reward schools for playing tougher schedule

33.9% - Reduce regular season to eight games and expand playoffs

### **MHSFCA Proposal - Enhanced Strength of Schedule**

Purpose – To ease football scheduling concerns by rewarding teams for playing strong opponents. The hope is that this proposed football playoff system will encourage more “local scheduling without the need to “schedule for wins”.

When the initial proposal was made four years ago, it was edited to include automatic qualifiers with 7 wins and the additional protocol that a team have a minimum of 4 games in order to be tournament eligible. The automatic qualifiers with 7 wins and 4 minimum games have been removed from this updated version.

- A. Divisions – Establish prior to the start of the season. Each division will have 72-75 school teams.
- B. Tournament Qualifiers – By playoff points filling 32 positions within each division.
- C. Playoff Points –  
Div. 1 = 60, Div. 2 = 55, Div. 3 = 50, Div. 4 = 45, Div. 5 = 40, Div. 6 = 35, Div. 7 = 70, Div. 8 = 25
- D. Bonus Points for opponents’ wins/losses – A team will earn points for each of its opponents’ wins regardless of whether or not the team defeated the opponents.
- E. Bonus Point Multiplier – The multiplier is adjusted depending on the enrollment/division of each opponent.  
Div. 1 = 6, Div. 2 = 6, Div. 3 = 5, Div. 4 = 5, Div. 5 = 4, Div. 6 = 4, Div. 7 = 3, Div. 8 = 2
- F. Out of State Opponents – Michigan teams will be awarded playoff points and bonus points based on enrollment.

1. Regarding strength of schedule. (See recommendation)
2. Reduce current number of 11-Player divisions and increase the number of 8-Player divisions. (No action)
3. MHSAA Forfeit Win Policy – Allow teams that receive forfeit wins to also find another opponent. (No action)
4. Allow appeals to player ejections. Allow video to overturn official's game decisions on disqualifications. (No action)

### **Recommendations to MHSAA Staff**

#### Position Statement – Youth Football

The committee discussed the decline in football participation generally and the delivery systems currently in place for the introduction of age appropriate skill development.

The committee recommends the continued discussion with the major organizations that contribute to football preparedness and the development of a position statement that will assist in an overall philosophy and share core principals of developing football interest.

These organizations will include the MHSAA, MIAAA, MHSFCA and Michigan Athletic Trainers. (21-0)

### **Recommendations to the Representative Council**

1. Adopt the MHSFCA enhanced strength of schedule plan effective for the 2020 football season. (17-2)
2. Allow Video Replay at the MHSAA Finals only for both the 11-Player and 8-Player Football Finals with limited provisions: (16-5)

**Purpose:** Instant video replay is a process whereby video review will be used to “confirm”, reverse or let stand specific on-field decisions made by game officials.

The video review process operates under the fundamental assumption that the ruling on the field is correct. The replay official may reverse a ruling if and only if the video evidence convinces beyond all doubt that the ruling was not correct. Without complete and indisputable replay evidence, the replay official must allow the on field ruling to stand.

**When:** MHSAA Finals, only, and only if appropriate equipment and personnel can be secured at an approved cost.

**How:** Booth review with game referee communicating with the booth review official. A sideline communicator will assist the game referee in communicating with the booth review official.

**What:** Automatic Review for;

- Turnovers or potential turnover
- All scoring plays
  - Scoring pass ruled complete, incomplete or intercepted anywhere in the field of play or end zone.
  - Scoring pass ruled forward or backward when thrown from behind or beyond the neutral zone.
  - Scoring pass catch or recovery of a loose ball in the field of play or end zone.
  - Clock adjustment and status when ruling is reviewed.
  - Down adjustment when ruling is reviewed.

**Personnel:**

- Booth review official.
- Assistant booth review official.
- Sideline Communicator.

**Equipment:**

- Arena microphone for game referee.

3. 8-Player Division Cap – Following lengthy and passionate discussions, the committee recommends that to be tournament eligible for the 8-Player Tournament a member school may not have enrollment greater than 215 students. (17-2)
4. Practice Like Pros – Tackle performance, analysis and coaching technique.
  - Change current language (new definitions):
    - Collision – Full contact at game speed that take player to ground.
    - Thud – Game speed contact that does not take player to the ground.
  - In-Season:
    - 30 Minute maximum live collision contact per week.
    - Thud tempo not considered collision and unlimited.
  - Pre-Season:
    - Collision contact maximum 6 hours total per week.
    - Thud tempo not considered collision and unlimited.
  - Intra and Inter-squad scrimmages will equal 1 hour of the maximum collision contact hours.