

## **GIRLS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Virtual Meeting - ZOOM**

**October 13, 2021 – 9:30 a.m.**

### **Members Present:**

Cole Andrews, Rockford  
Michael Bakker, Fenton  
Paige Comito, Bloomfield Hills  
Robin Dilday, Utica  
Ericka Kurili, Spring Lake  
Chris Riker, Portage  
Kaitlyn West-Cardenas, Novi  
Chloe Zdybel, Okemos

### **Member Absent:**

Jennifer Dunbar, Birmingham  
Shane Hynes, Troy

### **Staff Member:**

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

### **GENERAL REVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The 2021-22 Girls Lacrosse Committee met virtually to review its responsibilities as a standing sports committee; review prior Representative Council action; recommend to the Representative Council changes regarding NFHS or MHSAA rules or regulations relative to girls lacrosse; suggest points of emphasis for rules meetings; and evaluate current practices and procedures with MHSAA staff. Several of the Girls Lacrosse Committee will also assist in the assignment of officials to all levels of the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament. Members of this committee were provided with a history of the teams/schools participating in girls lacrosse and how the sport has grown in numbers of teams and schools. Also provided were the approved cooperative programs, important dates and times, rules changes, participating school tournament information and the manager's manual. From recent NFHS data, lacrosse continues to be one of the fastest growing sports in the past five years with a 13.1% rate of growth. Additionally, there are currently 104 officials registered in girls lacrosse and additional training for new officials will be provided at the MHSAA as well as in conjunction with official's associations.

Updated information was received regarding the progress and process of the NFHS/USAL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee, which is now a fourteen-member committee with seven voting members from the NFHS and seven voting members from USAL. Following the annual meeting of the NFHS/USAL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee, the NFHS publishes and distributes the rules book. Starting with the next meeting in June of 2022, this will become a NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee comprised of ten members representative of the states who offer girls lacrosse.

The minutes of the October 2020 Girls Lacrosse Committee were reviewed for the purpose of providing background of prior discussion and actions of the committee. Committee members also reviewed information regarding coaching requirements for 2020-21.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Additional health and safety issues were discussed including MHSAA protocol for implementation of National Federation sports playing rules for concussion. In addition, epidemiology summary reports were provided from the MHSAA Head Injury Reporting System for the 2018-19 and 2020-21 school years relative to sport specific injuries in girls lacrosse. MHSAA information showed girls participation in lacrosse at 3180 athletes and a head injury prevalence rate of 2.04% in 2018-19. COVID conditions attributed to lower participation rates in sports in 2020-21 with 2777 participants in girls lacrosse with a lower head injury prevalence rate of 1.48%.

Girls lacrosse equipment compliance was also reviewed. Beginning January 1, 2021, goalkeepers were required to wear chest protectors designed for lacrosse that meet the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture. There were also discussion points provided regarding the use of headgear in girls lacrosse. The use of headgear is presently optional and any headgear must meet the ASTM performance standard F3137. Any headgear manufactured after 01/01/18, must be permanently labeled with the SEI certification mark and any field player choosing to wear headgear shall wear it as the manufacturer intended and securely affixed with the chinstrap in place as intended for use. Committee members were provided with the findings from a three-year research study measuring the effect of protective headgear use by female high school lacrosse players. USA Lacrosse and the NFHS will continue to work with various sport science and safety groups, rule making bodies, and other leaders to best understand how data should impact policy moving forward. It was

reiterated that headgear for both men's and women's players is one component of a holistic approach to game safety and head injuries. Education, the use of age-appropriate rules, sport-specific training for coaches and the use of certified game officials are also critical factors.

Starting January 1, 2020, girls lacrosse eyewear had to be SEI certified and listed on the SEI website. All eyewear must bear the SEI mark for certification by January 1, 2025. In addition, a new clarification includes the responsibility for users to maintain the integrity of protective equipment for risk minimization purposes by establishing that equipment shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn. Also included in last year's rules book was language to expand any check to the head to include the neck as a major foul.

Additional equipment compliance for 2021-22 includes the allowance for goalkeepers to wear a clear, molded and non-rigid helmet eye shield in combination with tinted or clear eyeglasses and that face masks that are soft and non-abrasive be allowed to be worn for health and/or religious reasons. Also, there is the allowance for players to wear hair ties and other soft, non-rigid items on the arm. Included was clarification that hair adornments such as beads can be worn in the hair as long as they were secured and did not endanger other players.

### **2021-22 NFHS RULES BOOK POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

The 2022 high school girls lacrosse rules changes were put into place to align rules to match the flow of the game established by free movement. In essence, this was the major theme within the girls high school girls lacrosse rules changes which also featured notable clarifications to player position and self-starts from out-of-bounds as well as alterations to substitution frequency, field fouls, equipment and goalkeeper placement. To reduce the potential for false starts during the last two minutes of each half, the game clock will no longer be stopped in every instance that the official blows the whistle to stop play. A similar change was made which mandated that in overtime, the clock will only stop during official time-outs or fouls committed in the critical scoring area. Substitution restrictions were also removed from several sections of the rules and there is consistency as to how play is started when the ball goes out-of-bounds.

The 2022 points of emphasis include sportsmanship and the commitment to fair and ethical play as well as respect for one's opponent and an attitude of goodwill toward all participants. Additional points of emphasis include that with the introduction of free movement, rough and dangerous play needs to be effectively managed and eliminated and that disruptive actions jeopardize the safety of players, impede the flow of the game, and negatively affect the integrity of the sport.

### **TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE**

A review of the current tournament structure also occurred and included in the discussion was the utilization of the Michigan Power Ranking (MPR) system that is currently being used in some other MHSAA sports. Numbers of school teams were also reviewed to examine expansion of the divisional structure. Information regarding the MPR rating formula included the provision of measuring a team's strength relative to other teams, based on games played against other MHSAA team's strengths, while separating the top two on opposite sides of the bracket in a regional tournament. The committee elected to continue with the current structure and to be watchful of how this is working in other sports. Conversation regarding configurations of the regional or divisional structure will also be ongoing and may occur when there is additional growth in the number of teams who participate in MHSAA Girls Lacrosse.

Additional conversation included the proposal regarding "contact" days that was included in Update Survey questions. The basic proposal adds six "contact" dates, no more than once a week (Mon.-Sun.) where a coach may practice with an unlimited number of players in voluntary sport specific activity to the already existing "4 player" allowance. These permitted contact days would not begin until in-season competition has started and must be ended prior to the MHSAA tournament. Several members of the committee were strong proponents of contact days as it would place students with high school coaches more often, however, did not want the number of contact days to expand beyond six. Opponents of the proposal were concerned with multi-sport athletes and the limited number of athletes available in smaller schools. Conversation also included the rule of 5<sup>th</sup> quarter which some sports are currently utilizing. The committee indicated that this would be challenging in this sport as oftentimes the JV and Varsity are participating on separate days with different opponents. There was sentiment to re-visit this in the future, after reviewing the development of it in other sports.

## **REVIEW OF GIRLS LACROSSE RULES CHANGES PROPOSED**

Several years ago, the rule of “sudden victory” overtime was not adopted by the MHSAA Committee. The 2021-22 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Committee affirmed that the previous overtime rule will continue to be retained with the conditions of no stop clock for whistles except in the critical scoring area or whistled stop play. This includes that when the score is tied at the end of regular playing time and overtime is to be played, both teams will have a 5-minute rest and toss a coin (visiting captain calls) for choice of ends. Two 3-minute halves of overtime will be played. The clock will be stopped after 3 minutes of play in order for teams to change ends with no delay for coaching. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team which is ahead at the end of six minutes wins the game. If the teams are still tied after six minutes have elapsed, the teams will have a 3-minute rest and change ends. The winner will then be decided on a “sudden victory” stop-clock overtime of no more than six minutes in length with the teams changing ends after 3 minutes. The team scoring the first goal wins the game. Play will continue with “sudden victory” overtime periods of six minutes in length (two 3-minute halves) with 3 minutes in between and change of ends until a winning goal is scored.

The committee elected to retain the rule citing there was equal opportunity for play in the established six minutes. Additional conversation included a potential future recommendation to not have periods of overtime during the regular season with only utilizing overtimes for advancement during the MHSAA tournament.

## **2022 MHSAA GIRLS LACROSSE TOURNAMENT**

The teams and schools participating in the 2022 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament were shared with the committee. There may be additional schools that still offer girls lacrosse in the 2021-22 season. Division 1 and Division 2 enrollment numbers were also studied and 46 teams are presently in Division 1 (enrollment 1743 and above) and 47 teams are in Division 2 (enrollment 1742 and below). There are 24 cooperative programs in girls lacrosse with 93 teams involving 122 schools. Schools participating in the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament have continued to increase in numbers throughout the years with the initial tournament in 2004-05 consisting of 39 teams (50 schools) to now more than double the status. Overall, each year, schools participating in the MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament have increased.

Girls lacrosse tournament dates and Participating School Tournament Information were reviewed, as well as the dates regarding online rules meetings. The online rules meeting for girls lacrosse will be available on January 31, 2022 and ends on April 14, 2022. Practice for girls lacrosse begins Monday, March 14, 2022 and the first available contest date is Wednesday, March 23, 2022. The 2021 Girls Lacrosse Tournament was also reviewed for additional points of information.

The tournament format and expected regional/semi-final sites were evaluated and there will be four regionals in Division 1 and four regionals in Division 2. Currently there are several games that will be played as “pre-regional” games. The Division 1 structure is currently at 12-11-11-12 and the Division 2 structure is currently at 11-12-12-12. Additionally, in the Division 1 semi-finals, Region 2 will play Region 3 and Region 1 will play Region 4. In Division 2, Region 6 plays Region 7 and Region 5 plays Region 8. There will be three field officials for each semi-final and final game. The committee also reviewed the intended regional sites and several sites for the semi-final games. Host managers may host all levels of the Regional Tournament if desired. The Committee also indicated that it would be appropriate to host games on either a regulation girls lined field or on a Unified field.

The alternate site travel accommodation rule for lacrosse was reviewed which indicates that MHSAA staff may change the date, time and location of a previously scheduled tournament game if the originally scheduled game involves extensive travel for both teams and an acceptable site can be secured. The determination includes consultation with both teams and the Tournament Manager, and may require that the competing teams secure an acceptable field.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

There were no recommendations to the MHSAA Representative Council.