

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE MINUTES
East Lansing, January 20, 2016

Members Present:

Rick Bennetts, Detroit
Tim Blashill, Big Rapids
Aaron Crouse, Pontiac
Jim Garofalo, New Boston
Tom Hunt, East Lansing
Troy Lynch, Bay City
George Porritt, Orchard Lake
Mike Quint, Wyandotte (MHSICA)
Pete Ryan, Saginaw
John Thompson, Brighton (MIAAA)

Mike Slobodnik, Grand Rapids
Rodney Wakeham, Trenton
Joe Wallace, Portage
Tim Wedge, Petoskey
Don Wright, Chelsea

Staff Member

Cody Inglis (Recorder)

The 2016 Ice Hockey Committee met in the MHSAA office to review the MHSAA tournament, policies and procedures governing hockey, playing rules changes, make recommendations to the MHSAA Representative Council, and discuss topics concerning high school hockey in MHSAA member schools. After introductions, the role of the committee was reviewed.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL REVIEW

The committee was given an update on the four game minimum to the player for inclusion on the MHSAA tournament roster. This change occurred for the 2015-16 school year and mandates that a player must have played in at least four games of high school hockey prior to MHSAA tournament participation. Waiver procedures for this rule were also discussed for extenuating circumstances that may occur during the high school season for individuals and teams. Support for this new rule was expressed by the committee. Four-person officiating crew use was also approved by the Representative Council to be implemented at the Quarterfinal level starting in 2016. The four-person officiating system was used for the first time at the 2014 MHSAA Semifinal and Final games as approved by the Council in 2013. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from coaches, officials and players that the game was better officiated, allowed more deserving and quality officials to experience the Finals and focused the officials' attention to their specific jobs, either lining or refereeing the games.

NATIONAL FEDERATION PLAYING RULES

The committee voiced satisfaction with the new NFHS rules book reformatting. Coaches and officials alike have agreed that the rule book is easier to follow and finding specific penalties in a much more expedient way is appreciated by those who use the book regularly. Additionally, the new "tiered system" for officials to follow when calling penalties gives officials options of severity for most penalty calls. This option allows officials the latitude to call the penalty based upon their judgement, while not being "locked" into a call as it has been in the past.

Continued diligence on controlling dangerous hits by coaches and players including blindside hits, hits to defenseless players, checks from behind and boarding remain critical to help the high school game. Players taking responsibility for their actions and coaches teaching the game in these health and safety areas remains a priority. Increased education, coaching and teaching by all should remain high to help all enjoy the game safely and within rules.

The MHSAA neck guard policy was reviewed and reinforced as an important piece of the health and safety aspect of high school hockey.

TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

Updates on the MHSAA tournament were discussed including tournament structure, time schedule and a review of the 2015 tournament. New MHSAA hockey quarterfinal venues were reviewed along with a discussion on the semifinals and finals location. The new USA Hockey Arena, formerly Compuware Arena, home of the MHSAA hockey semifinals and finals since 2003 has started a dramatic upgrade to the facility. These upgrades will enhance the MHSAA finals and future use of the venue past the current contract will be discussed. Discussion of the MHSAA tournament focused on consideration for a seeding plan. Last year's committee meeting minutes were reviewed where a seeding plan was forwarded. After MHSAA staff discussion, the specifics and details of the seeding plan needed to be looked at more closely and were not ready, so the seeding plan was brought back for further discussion. An MHSAA hockey task force will discuss MHSAA tournament planning and restructuring during the 2015-16 school year. This MHSAA task force will meet starting in the 2015-16 school year to discuss the MHSAA hockey tournament and include topics such as location, venue, length of the tournament, classification, seeding, districts and other restructuring details. These discussions and ultimately a potential recommendation will come from the Hockey Task Force to the MHSAA Hockey Committee and then to the MHSAA Representative Council for potential change to occur.

A three week tournament and seeding at the initial level of pre-regional play were discussed as a desire of the committee. While there is support from the committee on a three week tournament and seeding, it is understood that other factors such as the site of the semifinals and finals and the length of the tournament may dictate further action.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The committee reviewed several informational items including video review of officials' calls, the MHSAA supplemental discipline, MHSAA overtime procedures for regular season and postseason, MHSAA CAP requirements for new coaches starting in 2016-17, MHSAA head injury tracking procedures, MHSAA enhancements to the Finals tournament, MHSAA officials observation procedure at semifinals and finals and a "Super 8" proposal for enhancing the MHSAA hockey tournament. The committee did ask to enhance regular season overtime procedures that would allow schools who compete in a two game total goal series to use a shootout to determine a winner. That recommendation will be forwarded the MHSAA Representative Council.

The committee was updated on the MHSAA overtime rules and the recommended change in format to have teams change goals starting at the first overtime period. This overtime procedure has changed for the 2015-16 regular season and MHSAA tournament and has thus far been well received by MHSAA hockey schools around the state.

While no recommendations to Representative Council were made there was good feedback and discussion on all topics presented.

A draw was conducted for the 2016 MHSAA Tournament Semifinal pairings as follows:

Division 1 – QF #4 vs. QF #3, QF #2 vs. QF #1
Division 2 – QF #6 vs. QF #8, QF #5 vs. QF #7
Division 3 – QF #11 vs. QF #9, QF #10 vs. QF #12

Recommendations to the Representative Council

1. Add an option to the MHSAA hockey overtime procedures for the unusual situation of a regular-season two game total goal series. The MHSAA shootout procedure can be used to break a tie if the total goals are tied at the end of the two game series, with prior written MHSAA approval.

(14-1)