

Following expressions of interest in the fall, the MHSAA conducted three informational meetings in January regarding football for fewer than 11-player teams. On Feb. 5, the MHSAA Football Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Representative Council that (a) a committee be established to formulate regular season and tournament plans for a new division of 11-player football teams, and (b) such division should be the eight-player version using established National Federation rules published for the eight-player game.

On March 27, 2009, the MHSAA Representative Council approved a month-long process to prepare major components of a plan to accommodate small schools' interest in the eight-player game to create or preserve the interscholastic football experience for their students and communities.

The first step in this process was a meeting on April 2 during which a working group of member school constituents developed draft recommendations and raised several unresolved issues which are included in a document that was sent to all MHSAA member Class C and D schools.

The working group reconvened on April 21 to consider all input that was received on the initial recommendations and to discuss additional topics raised during this process. This second expanded draft of recommendations was reviewed by several groups in late April and the Representative Council in May.

**Recommendations Approved by the Representative Council**  
**May 3, 2009**

1. To further assess interest, receive not later than Nov. 19, 2009 from each interested school a letter, signed by at least the athletic director, stating the school's intent to support eight-player football beginning 2010.
2. To assess commitment, receive by April 1, 2010 from each interested school's superintendent a letter of commitment for eight-player football in 2010.
3. Establish the maximum Class D enrollment as the limit to participate in the MHSAA eight-player football division(s). The enrollment of any single school or the combined enrollment of any involved cooperative schools shall not exceed Class D enrollment.

If the enrollment of a school which has been playing eight-player football increases beyond the Class D maximum, it may continue to sponsor eight-player football. However, it will not be eligible to participate in the eight-player division(s) of the MHSAA Football Playoffs unless a waiver is granted by the MHSAA Executive Committee.

4. Establish 20 schools as the minimum number to support eight-player football before the MHSAA sponsors a post-season tournament for an eight-player division.
5. Require eight-player competitions to comply with NFHS Rules for the eight-player game. The number of officials for games in the eight-player division(s) of MHSAA Playoffs is five.

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6. Require the field size for the eight-player division(s) of the MHSAA Tournament to be 100 x 40 yards.
7. Establish the tournament qualification format as follows:
  - a. If 20-39 schools sponsor eight-player teams:  
16-team, four-week playoff format.
  - b. If 40-64:  
32-team, five-week playoff format.
  - c. If teams exceed 64:  
Two divisions, four-week playoff format.
8. Facilitate a meeting for all schools sponsoring eight-player football to assist in their developing regular season schedules.
9. Schools will declare as they submit schedules in April of each year that they are eight-player teams or 11-player teams for the purpose of MHSAA playoffs. Games between an eight-player school and an 11-player school will not count toward MHSAA Football Playoff qualification, regardless if the game is played under eight-player or 11-player rules. A minimum of seven games of eight-player football would be required to qualify for the MHSAA playoffs (same as for 11-player divisions).
10. A school which has an enrollment too large for the MHSAA eight-player playoff division(s) may sponsor eight-player football but not qualify for the MHSAA playoffs. If that school's schedule includes at least seven eight-player games, then games against that school would count toward MHSAA Football Playoff qualification for schools of proper size. (That opponent would provide playoff points corresponding to its classification.)
11. Schools which must terminate contracts because they change from the 11-player to the eight-player format will not be subject to penalties, nor will their opponents receive forfeits if notice is provided prior to June 1 of the year in question.