

## **WRESTLING COMMITTEE MEETING**

East Lansing, January 21, 2016

### **Members Present:**

Aaron Babicz, Livonia  
Steve Baker, Grand Ledge  
Mike Bakker, Fenton  
Bruce Bittenbender, Stevensville  
Todd Cheney, Hartland (MWA)  
Delbert Craven, Sault Ste. Marie  
Chris Dunham, Battle Creek  
Wes Gall, Manchester  
Mike Garvey, Kalamazoo (MIAAA)  
Dan Hutcheson, Howell  
Jerry LaJoie, Gaylord

Don Markel, Cass City  
Mike Michelli, Muskegon  
Steve Newkirk, Clare  
Dennis Paquette, Bangor  
John Ray, Monroe  
Brian Southworth, Decatur  
Duane Watson, Allendale

### **Guest:**

Kevin Fleming, Jackson

### **Staff:**

Mark Uyl (Recorder)

The 2015-16 MHSAA Wrestling committee met to review wrestling issues and the tournament series. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision making process, charge of the Wrestling committee and a review of Representative Council action from last year which included the full use of Track Wrestling and a one-day weigh-in at the Team Wrestling Finals.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Wrestling Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The committee reviewed the recent publication posted at mhsaa.com for wrestlers competing with disabilities. The published protocols are for all regular season and MHSAA tournament competition, and cover students that are visually impaired, hearing impaired and those with an artificial limb.

**Health & Safety Topics:** The longest discussion topic of the meeting dealt with health and safety issues, specifically skin conditions and communicable disease. The committee directed staff to develop additional publications that emphasize reminders for daily, weekly and season-long guidelines for schools to follow to keep practice areas, competition areas, locker rooms and student workout gear clean. One committee member noted that the new styles of garments (dry-fit gear) does not wash and sterilize as easily as the old "practice whites and grays" gear in the hottest wash and drying temperatures. Staff will send out a link to the skin condition webinar that has been posted at mhsaa.com to remind coaches and officials of skin issues and conditions as the tournament season is near. The group also emphasized the need for athletic directors and coaches in other sports to be aware of these skin issues, as well, and establish guidelines when communicable skin conditions become issues in other sports

or in school facilities (locker rooms, weight rooms, etc). One final suggestion was to expand the rules meeting with more information on this topic, and to make the nutrition-based presentation currently available more of a general health & safety course to include nutrition principles as well as information and tips addressing skin conditions and issues.

NF/ Weight Class Issues: The committee, along with most of the input received from member school coaches, continues to favor keeping the current weight classes used in Michigan (103-285).

Home Weigh In: The annual conversation took place regarding the positives and negatives of the home weigh-in allowance for regular season competition. The two main concerns continue to be that principals are not taking an active role in the home weigh-in process and school coaches are not properly following the published protocols. Simply put, the committee believed that the good elements of Home Weigh-In continue to far outweigh the negatives. Staff will update various parts of the Home Weigh-In form and will also develop a short page of FAQ's to cover situations that arise when snow days impact weigh-ins and competitions along with additional information on 3-weight class window examples.

Final Venues and Formats: The committee reviewed the current Final venues in Mt. Pleasant and Auburn Hills, along with the format that each event uses. The MHSAA was involved with an 8-team "dry run" team tournament at CMU to fully prepare for the Team Finals in February held in McGuirk Arena for the first time. There continues to be very strong support in particular for the location and venue of the Palace.

Out-of-Season Coaching: Conversation took place on the changes to the out-of-season coaching rules which now allow rotations within a facility. The committee favored the new ways that coaches can utilize their time and the facility space out-of-season.

Use of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students: A brief report was given on the MHSAA Constitutional change allowing the use of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to begin the 2016-17 school year. The committee was excited that districts have the option to allow 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate with and against 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. There was great support and interest in this change for next school year.

Scheduling & Season Length: A robust conversation took place on the current regulations that allow teams to have a maximum of 8 tournament events on their schedule of 14 days of competition. Some committee members voiced concerns that 8 tournament dates, often consisting of all-day Saturday tournaments, are not helping to grow the sport in terms of fan and student body interest. An additional concern was a schedule heavy with Saturday competition could potentially burnout coaches over the course of a career. There was some sentiment to allow or encourage schools to have more dual or double dual events during the week by giving up some Saturday tournaments.

Girls-Only Wrestling: The committee again discussed the topic of girls-only wrestling. Data from other states was shared with the committee, along with statistics compiled by the National Wrestling Coaches Association. If girls-only wrestling was added as a tournament sport, committee members expressed concerns regarding Title IX requirements (practice times, competition times, facilities, number of weight classes in each gender, etc) that would impact separate, dual-gender teams played in the same season. The committee directed staff to gather more information regarding the style of wrestling used in girls-only events as most collegiate wrestling for women is freestyle, not folkstyle. The question about Title IX compliance when comparing girls freestyle wrestling with boys folkstyle wrestling will be researched by staff.

Additional Items: Other items discussed included elimination of the post-match handshake between opposing wrestlers and coaches, the expense to schools of the three-day Individual Final tournament and suggestions to move the Individual Regional start times later and increase the number of mats used from 3 to 4 for the early rounds of wrestling.

### **WRESTLING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

1. Allow schools that use only seven tournament dates (one less from the maximum of 8) to add one additional dual or double dual event to that school's schedule. Schools scheduling eight tournament dates would continue to have 14 days of competition while schools scheduling seven tournament dates would get one additional date of competition with a maximum of 15 total dates of seven tournaments and 8 dual or double duals (13-2).