

2015 SOCCER COMMITTEE MINUTES

Monday, January 26, 2015, 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Bell, Freeland
Nick Binder, Mason
Todd Heugh, Troy
Orlando Medina, Harrison Twp
Dan Mesyar, Ludington
Greg Michaels, White Lake
Rick Noorman, Grand Rapids
Stacy Punczal, Farmington Hills
Zach VanDuinen, Lansing
Hally Yonko, Ann Arbor

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Conlon, Kentwood (MHSSCA)
Van Dickerson (MIAAA)

MHSAA STAFF

Andy Frushour (Recorder)

The 2014-15 MHSAA Soccer Committee met in the MHSAA office to review topics involving soccer and the tournament series. The meeting began with a review of the MHSAA decision making process and charge of the Soccer Committee. Agenda items were compiled from correspondence, staff, committee members and the coaches association.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

HEAD TRAUMA

The 2014 Soccer Committee discussed head trauma at length, paying particular attention to awareness of MHSAA's concussion protocols, review of NFHS Injury Surveillance data, and identifying most likely situations when head trauma could occur in soccer. The 2015 Committee recognized the increased focus on head trauma issues in soccer, and discussed possible game and practice changes that could reduce the instances of concussion in soccer. Ideas ranged from limiting heading in practices to limiting legal heading situations in games, potentially with different rules applied to varsity teams versus sub-varsity and junior high/middle school teams. The committee also noted studies which show higher incidents of concussion with younger players, females, and when games are played in cold or damp conditions.

After thorough discussion, the committee had no recommendations for rule changes. The committee would like input from experts studying this issue in the field, the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, the leadership of youth soccer in Michigan, and ultimately from USSF and FIFA, before recommending changes to the Representative Council.

OUT-OF-SEASON COACHING

Throughout this school year, options for out-of-season coaching rule changes have been discussed with school and league administrators in a variety of settings.

Historically, the three (or four) player rule has not been as beneficial to soccer coaches as it has to other sports' coaches; allowing a voluntary contact period may be of use in the soccer community. In particular the girls season may be a bigger benefactor than the boys season, since the boys often rely on the summer to ramp up preparations just prior to the fall season. The committee recognized a contact period would give the high school coaches more opportunities to work with kids (compared to kids working with an outside entity), but a rule that works for small schools might not be great for big schools (and vice versa). In general, the committee was in favor of the contact period concept.

SEEDING

Multiple formats for seeding the MHSAA Soccer Tournaments were discussed, but without a specific plan on the table the committee found it difficult to move forward the conversation. The committee directed MHSAA staff to design the mechanics of a simple seeding process, using criteria to seed the top two teams in each geographic District. Once completed, and after receiving input from administrators and coaches, the committee will discuss the seeding plan at the 2016 meeting.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Counting two full Saturday games as a multi-team tournament
- MHSAA disqualification rule for unsportsmanlike red cards versus run-of-play red cards (like denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity)
- Yellow card accumulation
- Goalkeepers leaving the field for cautions and injuries
- Length of the MHSAA regular season
- MHSAA Girls Finals at Michigan State University
- Clearing up the clogged District week, especially during the girls season
- Geographic Districts in Divisions 1 and 2

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

There were no recommendations to the Representative Council.