

GIRLS LACROSSE COMMITTEE MEETING
MHSAA Office - East Lansing
October 16, 2019

Members Present:

Cole Andrews, Rockford
Brian Gordon, Novi
Marvin Hardy, DeWitt
Sal Malek, Bloomfield Hills (MIAAA)
Tom McCartney, Saginaw
Brian Fuller, Okemos
Ashton Peters, Brighton
Eric Pierce, West Bloomfield
Chris Riker, Portage

Member Absent:

Erin Maturo, Ann Arbor

Staff Member:

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

GENERAL REVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The 2019-20 Girls Lacrosse Committee met at the Michigan High School Athletic Association 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.

In addition, updated information was received regarding the progress and process of the NFHS/USL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee, which is now a fourteen member committee with seven voting members from the NFHS and seven voting members from USL. Following the annual meeting of the NFHS/USL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee, the NFHS publishes and distributes the rules book. The NFHS Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee will meet again in June, 2020.

MEETING MINUTES/COACHING REQUIREMENTS

The minutes of the October 2018 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 2019-20, which include the need for high school athletic administrators to attest that all varsity head coaches have a valid current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificate, and that sub-varsity coaches have had a rules meeting. In addition, each head coach of a varsity team, in an MHSAA tournament sport hired for the first time as a high school varsity head coach at any MHSAA member high school after July 31, 2016 shall have completed either Level 1 or Level 2 of the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program (CAP).

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 Michigan High School Athletic Association Head Injury Reporting System for the 2018-19 school year relative to sport specific injuries in girls lacrosse for 2019-20. MHSAA information showed girls participation in lacrosse at 3180 athletes and a head injury prevalence rate of 2.04%

Girls lacrosse equipment compliance was also reviewed. Beginning January 1, 2021, goalkeepers are 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 optional in girls lacrosse 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.

Starting January 1, 2020, Girls lacrosse eyewear must 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 this year's rules book for the purposes of risk minimization, is added language to expand any check to the head to include the neck as a major foul.

The Girls Lacrosse Committee firmly believes that the focus should be on the rules of the game and the responsibility of coaches to teach the game appropriately. Additional attention should be provided by officials to adhere to strict enforcement of the rules that prohibit rough and reckless checking and place a premium on participant safety. Over the past few years, there has been additional emphasis on major rules changes in the girls game at all levels, which has included increasing penalties associated with fouls caused as a result of dangerous play. This year, one of the main points of emphasis includes diminishing rough and dangerous play as well as additional penalty for repeated fouls. Coaches and athletic administrators opined that the physicality of play has to be reviewed and enforced by both coaches and officials.

The committee also encourages all coaches, players, officials and administrators to conduct themselves in a professional manner before, during and immediately following all contests. The committee reminds coaches and players to avoid the use of excessive dissent or abusive language and encourages calm, patient and productive dialogue between coaches and officials.

2020 MHSAA GIRLS LACROSSE TOURNAMENT

The teams and schools participating in the 2020 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Tournament were shared with the committee. There may be additional schools that still offer girls lacrosse in the 2019-20 season. Many committee members expressed the great growth and popularity of girls lacrosse in their school. Additional comment included that in some spring sports, because of the growth of girls lacrosse, there have been diminishing numbers in other spring sports.

There was some concern expressed regarding cooperative programs that have existed since the start of MHSAA girls lacrosse and that the numbers of participants on these teams should continue to be reviewed for possible new teams in the future. This was expressed to assist in the growth of girls lacrosse. Cooperative teams will continue to be examined for growth and size of roster.

Michigan girls lacrosse continued its run of setting a participation record every season since becoming a sponsored tournament sport in 2005, this past spring with 3180 participants which is a 9.7 percent increase from 2018.

2019-20 NFHS RULES BOOK POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The girls lacrosse rules changes from the NFHS/US Lacrosse meeting were reviewed. Specifically, attention was directed to the introduction of free movement, which will decrease official involvement in restarting play as well as continue to allow the high school game to keep up with the trends and growth of the game. Additional new rules include clarification of the requirements for crosse inspection on the back face of the pocket; establishing that electronic devices, video replay or television monitoring equipment shall not be used for any review of an official's decision; allowing for any number up to 12 players of each team to be on the field before the start of the draw; providing consistency in boundary starts and establishing that self-starting, when self-start is not an option, as a false start.

FUTURE OF GIRLS LACROSSE

Two questions were posed to the Girls Lacrosse Committee for study: How do we enhance the health and safety of the participants in girls lacrosse and, how do we expand/increase the number of participants in girls lacrosse? Several suggestions include additional training for coaches and officials, youth clinics, the development of additional middle school programs with school district affiliation, and reducing associated costs with emerging programs. Several committee members indicated that it is important to start programs in their school districts early and retain all students who try out for the sport. Additionally there are resources available through US Lacrosse for new middle school programs.

Included in this discussion was to work with schools who may currently have boys lacrosse programs and the viability of the addition of girls lacrosse at these schools. There was further discussion to increase opportunities at the sub-varsity levels by providing roles for all students who try-out for the sport.

Additional talking points included a review of the tournament structure including the new Michigan Power Ranking (MPR), as well as when additional regions should occur and the structure of divisions. Committee members were provided with scenarios for all three of these configurations. Information regarding the MPR computer rating formula included a provision in measuring a team's strength relative to other teams, based on games played against other MHSAA tournament teams, largely on the strength of their opponent's schedules. There will be additional future discussion that will occur relative to the MPR system. Conversation regarding configurations of the regional or divisional structure will be ongoing and may occur when there is additional growth in the number of teams who participate in MHSAA Girls Lacrosse.

OFFICIALS AND ASSIGNORS

The Girls Lacrosse Committee provided input regarding officials and assignors of girls lacrosse where further emphasis must be placed on the level of competition, skill level of team and experience of the officials who are assigned to a regular-season contest. Additionally, girls lacrosse officials need to be especially observant when there is a conflict of interest and to make certain that they are indicating the conflict during the season and MHSAA Tournament.

Further discussion included the need for more officials in all sports and providing additional creative ways to invite officials into the profession. Girls lacrosse officials training continues and a session at the MHSAA is scheduled for Saturday, February 1, 2020. It was further noted that the fees for regular season competition and assignment of officials are set by schools and that using an MHSAA registered assignor is voluntary. There are currently three officials associations operating in Michigan as well as 131 girls lacrosse officials who are registered.

REVIEW OF GIRLS LACROSSE RULES CHANGES PROPOSED

Five years ago, the rule of "sudden victory" overtime was not adopted by the MHSAA Committee. The 2019-20 MHSAA Girls Lacrosse Committee affirmed that the previous overtime rule will be retained. 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 stop clock overtime (clock stops on every whistle) 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 game will be restarted by a center draw. The team scoring the first goal wins the game. Play will continue with "sudden victory" stop-clock 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.

TOURNAMENT RECOMMENDATIONS/IMPORTANT DATES

Girls lacrosse tournament dates and Participating School Tournament Information were reviewed by the committee as well as the dates regarding online rules meetings. The online rules meeting for girls lacrosse will be available on February 3, 2020 and ends on April 16, 2020. Practice for girls lacrosse begins Monday, March 9, 2020 and the first available contest date is Wednesday, March 18, 2020. The 2019 Girls Lacrosse Tournament was also reviewed for any points of enhancement. Each year the starting times are reversed in girls lacrosse and in 2020, the Division 1 Girls Lacrosse Final will start at 2:00 p.m. and the Division 2 Final will start at 4:30 p.m.

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 11-11-11-11 and the Division 2 structure is currently at 11-12-12-12. Additionally, in the Division 1 semi-finals, Region 2 will play Region 4 and Region 3 will play Region 1. In Division 2, Region 6 plays Region 8 and Region 7 plays Region 5. 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 did indicate 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.

Division 1 and Division 2 enrollment numbers were also studied and 44 teams are presently in Division 1 (enrollment 1805 and above) and 47 teams are in Division 2 (enrollment 1804 and below). There are 23 cooperative programs in girls lacrosse with 91 teams involving 121 schools. It was also noted that two teams have opted up to play in Division 1 during the 2019-20 season. 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 continued to increase in number.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

There were no recommendations to the MHSAA Representative Council.