



## **MIAA State Basketball Committee 2017-2018 Pre-Season Newsletter**



The MIAA State Basketball Committee is pleased to forward this 2017-2018 edition of our annual pre-season newsletter. Our primary goal is to supplement the information outlined within the formal Sport Specific Information ([2017-2018 BASKETBALL FORMAT](#)). We recommend that school administrators and Athletic Directors will not only review both documents, but also share with your coaches and other athletic community members.

Committee Chairperson Mike Lahiff and Executive Liaison Jim Peters wish to commend the supreme efforts of the State Committee over the past twelve months, with their work highlighted by an alignment process that included 80 plus appeals, the oversight of year two of our State Finals “Road to Springfield” initiative, and summer sub-committee meetings that provided focused time on a number of related topics.

It is our hope that the items below will assist all our member schools as we prepare for the exciting season ahead.

### **The 2018 MIAA Basketball State Finals: “The Road to Springfield”**

The upcoming tournament season will mark year three in the ongoing partnership to bring our state finals to the “Birthplace of Basketball”. It is exciting to note that once again our 800 boys’ and girls’ varsity basketball teams state-wide will vie for the 16 coveted spots in this weekend (March 16-17) of basketball related activities. Co-hosted by the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame and the Western Mass. Sports Commission, the overall event experience will prove to be a lifetime athletic highlight for the qualifying teams and student athletes.



In order to keep the lines of communication open and up-to-date, we plan on re-launching the MIAA State Basketball Tournament (“The Road to Springfield”) website in the near future. It will be initially designed in order to be easily revised and updated as more information becomes available. Schools/teams with the potential and goal to reach this pinnacle event should keep their eyes open for updates.

The following provides a quick snap-shot of the most exciting aspects of the updated partnership:

- All state semi-final games (**North/South and Central/West**) will be completed on Monday and Tuesday (weather permitting). As early as Wednesday morning (March 14), the

*schedule for the eight state final games (4 divisions/gender) will be determined by MIAA tournament staff.*

- *There will be four games at each of the two playing venues- The Mass Mutual Center and Springfield College. Saturday game times and sites will be determined and communicated based on all considerations, especially projected crowd bases from the participating schools.*
- *As early as late Wednesday morning, all schools/teams will be notified as to their game time and site. In addition, **schools will be provided/offered a Friday practice time. This year, teams playing at Springfield College will practice at the game venue, with the teams scheduled at Mass Mutual offered practices at a local college site to be determined.** Along with this information will be immediate contact information to begin the coordination and planning for the Friday arrival. Each school will be provided up to ten complimentary hotel rooms, and the Western Mass. Sports Commission staff and various hotel staff will help guide the reservation information, arrival times, and other related needs. Tournament Rate packages will be available for additional interest or needs from the school and community.*
- ***IMPORTANT POINT OF EMPHASIS: Finalist schools planning on full participation in the Friday schedule, including the venue practice, will need to coordinate an early Friday school dismissal and departure.***
- *The partnership group will help guide the overall timing/planning for each school; including the order and timing of practice, lunch and hotel check-in. This will vary for each game/school. Schools will be required to plan for and organize travel arrangements. However, following review of last year's post season survey of all state finalist schools, the partnership will be supporting the recommendation to offer transportation (schools taking advantage of this will share in the expense) within the city for the twenty-four plus hours between the school-sponsored bus drop-off on Friday through arrival to the Saturday game venue. This will eliminate the possible need for overnight bus and driver costs.*
- *Friday activities will culminate with an evening State Finals Celebration Banquet on center court at the Hall of Fame. With all teams and designated school leaders present, a special keynote address from a Naismith Hall of Fame Inductee will highlight the program.*
- *Team tours of the Basketball Hall of Fame (Friday or Saturday) and a Saturday morning team breakfast at each team's hotel will be additional program enhancements.*

*Again, please keep your eyes and ears open for ongoing communications. We hope to see this potential opportunity for our 16 finalist teams to be a state-wide motivation from the very first days of the pre-season practices.*

## **State Semi-Final Round**

Tentative plans are in place for the State Semi-Finals... **(Monday and Tuesday, March 12-13)**

- **North/South:** TD Garden- 4 games/day
- **Central/West:** Small college sites in both Central and West. Two doubleheaders on both nights. Sites to be determined.

## **Game Officials**

The topic of Game Officials was again a focus area during summer sub-committee work. Discussion points included:

- **Tournament Game Official Recommendations:** With reference to the posted MIAA Basketball Format- **“For the 2018 tournament season, the MIAA will not require AD’s and coaches to recommend officials for utilization in the assigning of tournament officials. League Assignor recommendations will be utilized for tournament assignments”.**
- **Tournament Home Site Supervisors (Also recommended for regular season): Game Officials Topics and Responsibilities:**
  - ✓ A host site worker should be prepared to greet the game officials upon arrival to the venue and escort them to their designated private locker room area. Please be prepared to meet the needs of a mixed gender officiating team. In the case of a mixed gender team, the crew will likely ask for a private/appropriate location for a pre-game and half-time meeting.
  - ✓ Site personnel should be available to escort the game officials to their locker room areas both at half-time and following the completion of the postgame handshake protocol.

## **Basketball Observer Program**

The longstanding MIAA Basketball Observer Program will see changes for the coming season. School visits will be organized by our sectional Tournament Directors based on the following priorities- 1.) School sites with new Athletic Directors; 2.) Sites where Directors wish to clarify suitability for possible tournament play; 3.) Schools who request a formal visit from an MIAA Observer. School Leaders requesting an Observer visit are asked to communicate with your sectional Tournament Director and/or the MIAA office as early in the season as possible.

The Observer Program visits will continue to focus upon assisting schools in implementing “best practices” in hosting athletic games, with topics observed to include game management and organization , and conduct of parties involved (coaches, players, and spectators). As in the past, the final Report Form will be sent to the Principal and Athletic Director of both schools.

## **Neutral Site Options and Selection**

*Our Tournament Directors are faced with the yearly challenges in both finding appropriate neutral site venues and establishing a tournament schedule that best meets the needs of the association and the participating schools. We acknowledge that the final scheduling of games may not equally satisfy the participating schools, but it is in everyone's best interest to better articulate the issues involved.*

*As Directors begin compiling their list of potential sites, they must take into account a given venue's size, seating capacity, parking, and any safety concerns. A site may be considered appropriate for one or more divisions based on these determinations. Thus, Directors may find themselves with limited options if a section/division creates greater issues and limitations. While the brackets with site selections can be communicated in advance (or early) in some cases, this is not possible in many other situations.*

*Tournament Directors welcome and encourage your consideration in making your school venue available for neutral site rounds of play. If you feel your site meets the stated goals and you are interested in hosting neutral site games, please contact your sectional director and/or the MIAA office as soon as possible. Subsequent conversation could lead to much needed additions to our list of available sites.*

## **Basketball Rule Changes**

*All 2017-2018 **Basketball Rule Changes (5)** and **Points of Emphasis (4)** are listed on pages 1 and 2 of the **2017-18 NFHS Basketball Rules Book**. It is recommended that all coaches and athletic directors review and discuss these changes. The State Committee wishes to place special emphasis on the following two topics:*

- **Rule 1-13-2... Coaches Box...** *The State Committee will implement the new NFHS Coaches Box as described, with the decision to review our options following the upcoming season. The increased dimension of the box, now 28 feet from the baseline, provides the option for schools to temporarily leave the former first line, now 14 feet from the baseline, provided the required line is marked at 28 feet.*
- **Point of Emphasis... Head Covering for Medical or Religious Reasons...** *For MIAA basketball, this is simply a reminder of our past practice. Schools with any student athlete in need of a waiver for either of these reasons should place a written request to our office, with attention to Jim Peters. In the case of medical reasons, supportive documentation from a physician should be included in the request.*

## **Official MIAA Basketball**

All schools are reminded of our new partnership with **Spalding** as the approved MIAA basketball. This change appears to be widely supported by our coaches and game officials. The [linked flyer](#) provides a summary of the **LEGACY** ball as well as contact information with the Spalding representative, Vernon Pindar.

## **Court Storming**

Since the adoption of the **Participating School Supervision Protocol** (see Format), the State Committee's ongoing focus in this area has reaped positive results. The Committee thanks Tournament Directors, tournament staff, and participating schools for the improved and enhanced efforts in maintaining the safest possible environment at all game venues.

The following represents a listing of recommendations from the State Committee:

- Spectator behavior expectations (and consequences) should be consistently communicated and applied throughout the season, beginning with our first regular season games and extending through tournament play. **Student sections are ultimately the responsibility of each individual member school administration.** Whether at a home or neutral site, "Court Storming" is strictly prohibited. At no time, whether it is before, during, or post game, are spectators allowed on the playing court.
- Recommendations include... 1.) The distribution of spectator expectations prior to the start of regular season and tournament play. 2.) Reinforcement of stated expectations throughout the tournament. 3.) Reminders through the school's written communications (school/athletic handbooks, newsletters, etc.) and PA announcements at strategically determined times. 4.) Through placement of designated school supervisors at the game site, school leader visibility will prove to be the most effective deterrent.
- Prior to any level of tournament play, school leaders with any concern over potential spectator issues should address these with tournament/site staff as soon as possible. These concerns can also be addressed during a pre-game meeting between the site director and the designated school leaders.

The Committee will continue to monitor this topic and everyone's assistance is recognized and appreciated.

## **Basketball Revenue Sharing: 2018 Tournament**

The revised Basketball Revenue Sharing Program, implemented by our MIAA Board of Directors for the 2016 tournament season, will remain in place for the 2018 tournament. Once again, revenue sharing will begin with **sectional quarter-final games**, with earlier round games the responsibility of host schools. Consistent with the previous year, we are pleased to recognize that this adjustment resulted in a state-wide net gain of well over \$100,000 for our membership.

## **Endowment Games**

All schools are reminded that our MIAA Endowment Game Program, in support of the Endowment Fund, is an ideal way to schedule and play an additional game without the concern of impacting your seasonal record or tournament qualification. It is great to see a number of basketball Endowment Games already approved for the coming season.

Please feel free to contact our office (Jim Peters, Phil Vaccaro, or Michele Blackburn) if you have any Endowment Game questions.

## **Game Exclusion Process**

Athletic Directors and coaches are reminded that the scheduling of any **Exclusion Game**, where your school **DOES NOT WISH** to count the game for tournament qualification and seeding, must complete and forward the **Game Exclusion Notice** "BEFORE THE FIRST ALLOWABLE DATE FOR COMPETITION IN THAT SPORT". Thus, the deadline date for submitting these forms is, **December 7<sup>th</sup>**.

## **Basketball Awards Programs**

Our sport of MIAA Basketball continues to promote and celebrate two significant awards programs, one recognizing our student-athletes and teams while the other honors an adult contributor to our great game. Please consider nominations to these initiatives:

- **Sherman A. Kinney Award**: "For outstanding contributions to the sport of high school basketball". This award is presented annually as part of the state basketball tournament festivities. The nomination information is available on our website (Hot Topics) with a deadline date of, 2 February 2018.
- **Boys' and Girls' Basketball Team Sportsmanship Awards**: Presented to one team per division for displaying the highest degree of sportsmanship. These awards are presented to each school during our state finals activities. The nomination form is part of the Sport Specific Information (Format), with the nomination deadline of, 16 February 2018.

### **Use of Electronic Scorebooks**

*The MIAA's past approach to the utilization of technology/IPAD apps for electronic basketball scoring will remain in place for the coming season. Should schools and/or leagues consider their use, the MIAA recommends them as a "secondary book" in the 2017-18 regular season, with the requirement to also continue with the official hard copy scorebook. Tournament play will require the traditional scorebook. Future considerations for official electronic scoring can be reviewed by our State Committee.*

### **Massachusetts Basketball Coaches Association**

*The MIAA and the State Basketball Committee are happy to support and communicate the great efforts performed by the MBCA in improving and promoting MIAA high school basketball. Their annual efforts include conducting coaches' clinics, hosting a Hall of Fame Induction Banquet, leading a state-wide foul shooting contest, and presenting yearly player and coach awards. Schools can utilize this link ([CLICK HERE](#)) to find the MBCA website. We encourage our member schools to consider the **School Membership Discount Package** outlined on the website.*

***Wishing all our schools a successful 2017-2018 season***

***Let the Games Begin!!***

