

MINNESOTA BOYS HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL

ESTABLISHED IN 2018



THE MISSION

To create opportunities and support BOYS playing volleyball in Minnesota high schools, and ultimately for MSHSL to recognize, support, and sanction boys volleyball as a MSHSL sport.

PINNACLE FORCES SPEARHEADING THE INITIATIVE

HUGH MCCUTCHEON – U of MN Women’s Head Volleyball Coach,
Former Men’s & Women’s USA/Olympic Volleyball Coach

WALT WEAVER – MN Volleyball Hall of Fame Coach, MN Boys
HSVB Association Founder & Director

22 SCHOOLS IN 2018

Shakopee, Lakeville North, Lakeville South,
Prior Lake, Eastview, Farmington, Minnetonka, Hopkins,
Andover, Blake, Minneapolis, Minneapolis, St. Francis,
Spring Lake Park, Osseo, Roseville, Henry Sibley
Math & Science Academy, Hmong Prep Academy,
Kasson-Mantorville, St. Paul Harding, St. Paul Central

38 TEAMS

Varsity and JV Teams

400+ BOYS IN 2018!

Played High School Volleyball in its inaugural season

Benefits of a High School BOYS Volleyball Team:

- Low start-up and operating costs
- Opportunity for boys to experience a high-paced interscholastic team sport
- Opportunity to compete for an additional league championship
- Potential identification for collegiate scholarships
- Generate interest in a lifelong sport for a healthy lifestyle
- Provide a structured activity to condition & cross train for other sports
- Positive social alternative for boys
- Experience the same thrill and excitement as the girls who consequently may be their sisters or mothers who played competitively

Collegiate Opportunities

- 130 NCAA teams played a 2018 season: 22 DI, 25 DII, and 83 DIII
- There are 36+ NAIA Men's Volleyball Programs.
- There are 300-plus collegiate club schools that battle for a berth in a national Championship that started with 10 teams in 1985.
- Many strong club programs have two and sometimes three squads, creating opportunities for everyone from experts to novices.

Background:

Boys' High School Volleyball was established as a club sport in Minnesota high schools in the 2017-2018 school year. There were 22 High School established programs with 38 high school teams at both the Varsity and Junior Varsity levels.

In 2018, the league ran in the Spring Season from about Mid- March through Late May and was exceptionally well received. The League involved 400+ boys, 50+ coaches, numerous officials, bleachers filled with fans, and support from North County Region Volleyball (a branch of the United States Volleyball Association).

This is solid evidence that there is demand for the sport and all indications are that the number of high schools is expected to increase dramatically in 2019.

Rationale for sanctioning a Boys' Volleyball High School season:

1. SUPPORT GOAL OF MSHSL TO PROVIDE SPORT OPPORTUNITY

One of the major goals of the MSHSL is to provide opportunity, and a sanctioned high school season will provide a sport opportunity to hundreds of Minnesota high school boys.

It is important to note that in 2018, of the 400 or so boys playing in the league, over 300 of those were not involved in an additional Spring sport. To bring that many new boys into a sport in one year certainly is an indication of the high level of interest that currently exists for volleyball in Minnesota High Schools.

It is important to point out that almost all of the Sanctioned Sports offered by the MSHSL are offered to both girls and boys: Boys and Girls Basketball, Boys and Girls Cross Country, Boys and Girls Golf, Boys and Girls Hockey, Boys and Girls Lacrosse, Boys and Girls Nordic skiing, Boys and Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Swimming, Boys and Girls Tennis, Boys and Girls Track.

When volleyball was offered as a sanctioned sport in 1974, it was somehow seen as a girls/women's sport only. Who knows why, but 44 years later there is no doubt the sport has been established as a major boys/men's sport also, and there is no longer a valid reason for not adding it to the list of sanctioned sports offered to both sexes.

It is interesting to note also that of the few sports not currently offered to both sexes, state law allows that girls can compete in any of those sports offered to just boys, e.g. football and wrestling, but boys cannot compete in those offered to just girls, e.g.. volleyball and gymnastics.

Sanctioning a boys' volleyball season would be a good way to keep at bay the inevitable lawsuit from a boy wanting to play on a team for his school when his school has a volleyball program but he is denied the opportunity.

2. CONTINUE MSHSL'S PROGRESSIVE TRADITION AS A PIONEER OF ORGANIZED SPORTS

There are currently 22 states that offer boys high school volleyball, 188 collegiate programs, a national team and successful Olympic Men's Volleyball. National organizations including the AVCA (American Volleyball Association), USAV (United States of America Volleyball), Motor Volleyball Organization, amongst others continue supporting the growth of the sport through additional boys' volleyball opportunities.

Minnesota is a leader in the world of volleyball by being the sport with the highest participation numbers, leader with nationally competitive AAU/Club volleyball, many NCAA competitions and Elite 8/Final Four appearances, Olympians, and currently 2 local women winning Gold at the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Nations League Championship.

A supporting male counterpart to Minnesota's women's volleyball sport will only strengthen its feed to local, national and international success.

3. PROVIDE CONTINUITY FOR RULES, REGULATIONS, ETC WITH GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL

It makes sense to place the sport under the guidance of the MSHSL rather than have it operate independent of MSHSL rules as a club sport. This would provide continuity. In other words, what is the logic of having girls' volleyball under MSHSL rules and not boys' volleyball? If it is important for girls volleyball to be guided by the values, organization and policies of the MSHSL; why would we want less for boys?

In the end we are not adding a completely new sport, but more of a "brother" sport to the existing girls volleyball sport.

4. ADDITION OF THIS SPORT IS COST EFFECTIVE

In the current environment of limited budgets, one of the best selling points for boys' volleyball is that it is a total bargain. Hundreds of boys will have the opportunity to be involved in a great sport as part

of their high school experience and there is little new cost to the schools involved.

The facilities and courts are in place and there are already nets, standards, balls, etc. available. At the most, there will be minimal outlays for coaching, balls, uniforms, officiating, and possibly transportation. In many schools today, a participation fee provides for most of these costs anyway.

5. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOYS

The volleyball opportunity provided to boys in Minnesota high schools will lead to more opportunity for Minnesota boys to join college programs. College volleyball programs for men exist in all college divisions and the sport continues to add colleges each year. At the D3 level the sport is exploding as colleges have added boys programs as an incentive to increase enrollment.

The NAIA organization is also making Men's volleyball a priority and recently both Viterbo college in Winona and Jamestown College in North Dakota have added Mens' Volleyball scholarship programs in their schools. At least one athlete in our 2018 High School Club program received a scholarship to play college volleyball next fall.

6. ALREADY SUPPORTED BY THE MN VOLLEYBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION AND OFFICIATING ORGANIZATIONS - SPECIFICALLY AS A SPRING SEASON SPORT

The best logic is to place a boys' season in the spring. It is where most states offering boys high school volleyball currently have placed it also. There are no sanctioned indoor sports using the gyms in the spring, so there would be less issues with facilities than in the fall or winter seasons. It has worked well to share coaching, officiating, and facility resources by doing it this way.

A Boys' Volleyball season in the Spring will offer employment opportunities for coaches and officials without compromising the quality of the coaching and officiating during the girls' fall season. In other words, because the seasons are opposite, it should not be difficult to find experienced coaches or officials for the Boys' season. The MN Volleyball Coaches Association and many Officials'

Association supports boys volleyball and the idea of the spring season so not to compete for the same resources.

Our proposal is for a shorter season, perhaps 10-12 weeks running from middle March when other spring sports move outside, to middle May, thus avoiding all of the issues with other sports playoffs, graduation, Prom, etc. We have tested this concept in the 2018 club season and will repeat it in 2019.

Response to Opposing Arguments:

Those opposed are mostly concerned that there is a lack of facilities in their community or that an additional spring sport will take boys out of existing programs making those programs less competitive.

1. LACK OF FACILITIES

The lack of facilities argument has existed for decades each time a new sport is introduced. When girls' sports first began, early opponents asked where they would practice. It happened also as sports were added. Our boys' club league, formed in 2018, did find practice space for their teams, and though space was tight before the outdoor programs moved outdoors, the weather was as bad as it has been in decades. With less problems due to weather and with teams not beginning officially until mid March, we believe that concern for lack of facilities should not be a deal breaker, especially when one takes into account the opportunity that the sport gives to boys, many who currently are uninvolved in school activities.

2. DECREASED PARTICIPATION IN EXISTING SPORTS

Another concern expressed in opposition to a sanction is that offering another boys' sport in the spring will take players from the existing MSHSL sports that currently are sanctioned. However, in the first year of our test club seasons, we found that was not the case. Again, out of the 22 schools and 400+ boys that took part in 2018, over 300 of those were not out for a spring sport.

In addition, there were many boys who had been cut from other programs and were looking for something to be part of. Like basketball, volleyball does not require a large number of players per team, and it is unlikely adding the sport will damage other programs that currently exist in larger schools.

All Schools, but especially smaller schools can choose to CO-OP with multiple schools to make teams if they have enough interest. The goal is to provide another option for boys, not to take away from existing sport teams. We had a few schools that did this in 2018 and it worked well. It is likely this will occur when starting up a new sports activity.

The argument is also made that some schools do not have enough boys in their school to warrant a program. This might be true, but it is our hope that those schools would not stand in the way of a sanction, and thus vote to allow those schools who do have the populations and want a program to have it.

3. TITLE IX LAW

Finally, when the proposal for a boys' volleyball sanctioned season was first made, concern was expressed that it was not possible for the MSHSL to sanction another boys' sport because it would violate the federal Title 9 law.

What can be said regarding those concerns is that we have talked to officials of the MSHSL and they have stated that the Title IX law should not impede a boys' sport from being added to those offered by the League.

CONCLUSION

We hope that the information provided will help in your understanding of the proposal to sanction a boys' volleyball season. We have believed for some time that there were a lot of boys in Minnesota schools interested in trying this sport, but all of us were shocked to see that the interest in 2018 was far beyond what anyone projected.

There is no question that the number of schools involved in 2019 will be much higher, certainly beyond the necessary 32 schools needed to create a State Tournament. As we have indicated there will never be a scenario where there are no opponents to any proposal, but we also feel that the arguments for providing this opportunity for boys are strong reasons for a MSHSL sanction.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

HUGH MCCUTCHEON, WALT WEAVER & THE MINNESOTA BOYS
HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION