

**Comparison of 38 Basketball Playing States & Michigan**

Sources: NFHS, covidactnow.org (Jan. 26, 2021)

Ranked by New Cases		New Cases per 100K	Positive Test %
1	North Dakota	17.7	2.4
2	Michigan	20.9	6.1
3	Minnesota	21.4	4.4
4	South Dakota	24.6	7.3
5	Alaska	24.9	3.9
6	Colorado	27.1	4.8
7	Montana	31	8.1
8	Wisconsin	32.2	6.7
9	Wyoming	33.4	7.1
10	Maine	33.7	4.6
11	Missouri	33.9	11.3
12	Maryland	35.3	8.8
13	Iowa	35.4	9.9
14	Idaho	36.3	11.8
15	Nebraska	41.4	14.7
16	Pennsylvania	41.5	9.9
17	Indiana	43.6	10.9
18	Tennessee	44	13.5
19	Ohio	45.9	9.9
20	Kansas	47.6	9
21	Louisiana	49.1	10
22	New Hampshire	51.5	11.7
23	Florida	52.5	12.4
24	Virginia	53.7	12.6
25	Mississippi	53.8	13.2
26	Utah	55	15.9
27	Alabama	55.3	15.4
28	New Jersey	57.7	10.2
29	Arkansas	58.9	9.6
30	Kentucky	62.3	15
31	Massachusetts	62.7	5.6
32	Delaware	62.8	8.3
33	Texas	64.9	16.5
34	Oklahoma	65.1	18.3
35	North Carolina	66.6	11
36	Georgia	68.3	15.4
37	South Carolina	83.1	14.2
38	Arizona	96.1	18.1
39	Rhode Island	98.6	4.9

Ranked by Positive Test %		Positive Test %	New Cases per 100K
1	North Dakota	2.4	17.7
2	Alaska	3.9	24.9

3	Minnesota	4.4	21.4
4	Maine	4.6	33.7
5	Colorado	4.8	27.1
6	Rhode Island	4.9	98.6
7	Massachusetts	5.6	62.7
8	Michigan	6.1	20.9
9	Wisconsin	6.7	32.2
10	Wyoming	7.1	33.4
11	South Dakota	7.3	24.6
12	Montana	8.1	31
13	Delaware	8.3	62.8
14	Maryland	8.8	35.3
15	Kansas	9	47.6
16	Arkansas	9.6	58.9
17	Iowa	9.9	35.4
18	Pennsylvania	9.9	41.5
19	Ohio	9.9	45.9
20	Louisiana	10	49.1
21	New Jersey	10.2	57.7
22	Indiana	10.9	43.6
23	North Carolina	11	66.6
24	Missouri	11.3	33.9
25	New Hampshire	11.7	51.5
26	Idaho	11.8	36.3
27	Florida	12.4	52.5
28	Virginia	12.6	53.7
29	Mississippi	13.2	53.8
30	Tennessee	13.5	44
31	South Carolina	14.2	83.1
32	Nebraska	14.7	41.4
33	Kentucky	15	62.3
34	Alabama	15.4	55.3
35	Georgia	15.4	68.3
36	Utah	15.9	55
37	Texas	16.5	64.9
38	Arizona	18.1	96.1
39	Oklahoma	18.3	65.1

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to engage about education, educational athletics and Michigan Kids.

Specifically student athletes from our great state. Kids from the UP's Copper Country, kids from small rural communities like Remus and Brown City, kids from urban areas such as Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Saginaw, and Detroit Public Schools, kids from suburban areas like Ann Arbor, Bloomfield, Dearborn, Grandville, Rockford, Troy, and where I call home; Brighton, Michigan.

All kids deserve the best education possible. The best education possible happens both inside and outside of the classroom. For Michigan's student athletes the best education must include the opportunity's to participate fully in school sports and activities after the last bell rings.

There is a reason that 95% of Fortune 500 CEO's participated in high school athletics and hire people who participated in high school athletics. I bet many of you participated in school sports and or activities that helped make you who you are today.

Michigan's 1500 plus high schools and middle schools have nearly 200,000 student athletes participate in a given year. 200,000 thousand Michigan kids and roughly 500,00 people impacted by decisions that limit access and or restrict how they can fully participate in educational athletics.

I have stood in front of our kids and personally have delivered the bad news when it comes and that is ok, part of the deal I signed up for.

However myself and my colleagues across the state tell our kids them to hang in there, stay ready, and control what you can control. We tell them take care of each other, and keep spirit and hope alive. That is what we do in school sports.

But privately I ask myself how many times will Lucy pull the ball out from Charlie Brown? In the comic strip I know the answer it is every time but our kids' lives are not a comic strip and they deserve better.

Kids and student athletes in particular are resilient. But make no mistake these decisions are taking a toll on our student athletes and families. A social emotional toll, a mental health toll, a physical health toll, and a school climate toll.

You can look at the data. As the kids would tell you; just Google it. Increased depression and anxiety, kids more prone to making bad choices, and our most physically active kids are becoming physically less active. Our adult decisions as they relate to Covid and playing youth and school sports in Michigan are not helping kids.

Kids are smart and our kids are willing to do what is right as long as it makes some sense.

As a respected colleague from Livonia asked the Governor yesterday, what else would you like us to do?

They have done the daily Covid screenings, stayed home when not feeling well, equipment sanitizing, not using locker rooms, coming dressed to practice and games, and playing with limited or no spectators. They just want to play. Even when the orders were to wear a mask while practicing or playing they said, "game on", even though their peers in other states play without.

The question of what it is going to take is a fair question. I hear lots of talk of following the science, the metrics, etc., but what is the pathway for all sports to be played?

Kids are smart, and can deal with facts and things that make sense.

Our kids and families know that 97% of all M.H.S.A.A. contest were safely played this fall.

Our kids and families know the results of the 3x a week antigen testing program that football, volleyball and girl's swim and dive had to comply with to finish their season yielded a 99.8% negative test rate.

In January the message came out that we want all kids back in some format of face to face learning by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

My Brighton High school kids of which 85% were in person this semester and about 95% will be next week have a tough time reconciling that they can be together all day in their classrooms with masks, be together w/out masks while they eat lunch but when the bell rings they cannot compete in basketball, competitive cheer, hockey or wrestling. Kids are smart and not just in Brighton.

Winter contact sports have started in 38 states as of this week but not in Michigan.

Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin have been practicing and competing in basketball, cheer, hockey and wrestling since November 15<sup>th</sup> without masks. Furthermore in these three neighboring states daily new cases and positive test rates have decreased since starting.

When will Michigan kids be able to play without leaving the state? We want folks to travel less, but yet by default are making kids and parents travel out of state to play. By default we are making kids and parents seek out alternatives from school sports who have established and follow Covid protocols.

So many things that when compiled as a whole that do not make sense.

This latest governmental delay puts our kids at a crossroads for winter contact sports and in doing so threatens effecting spring sports who lost everything last spring.

The M.H.S.A.A. latest adopted schedule prior to this last set back is to start contests in hockey on 2/1/21, boys and girls basketball on 2/4/21, and competitive cheer and wrestling on 2/8/21.

Our kids and families need your help to make this happen now!

I do not care what side of the aisle you represent. Our kids and families need people who will stand up, and stand together to provide the best education possible both inside and outside of the classroom.

Thank you, make it a great day, and let them play!

*John Thompson, C.M.A.A.*

*Brighton Area Schools*

*M.H.S.A.A. Representative Council Member*

