

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Long Overdue Equity for Girls; Season Changes Underway

August 13, 2007, Grand Rapids, MI - Communities For Equity (CFE) is excited to see the implementation and resolution of seven original complaints of discrimination brought before Federal district court in 1998. Although CFE recognizes there are still issues that will need to be addressed to level the playing field, and although the compliance plan is not what CFE preferred, we are ready to move forward with the court's decision.

The Court ordered the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) to submit an athletic schedule that was fair and equitable: It was not acceptable for *only* the girls to be placed in the harmful seasons. The Court instructed the MHSAA to either place all sports in the correct (traditional) seasons or share the burden of discriminatory seasons equitable between genders.

The compliance plan that MHSAA designed and submitted and the court accepted, is less than perfect, It will result in 16% of female athletes still being discriminated against by playing in a harmful season compared to 9% of the male athletes and places the Upper Peninsula and the Lower Peninsula in split seasons, further harming female athletes in four sports (swimming, soccer, golf and tennis) and male athletes in one sport (soccer). Also, female athletes will continue to have limited participation opportunities in the winter because there will not be a non-cut winter sport.

The Court will monitor and hold accountable the MHSAA's responsibilities for athletics in Michigan. The local school district's responsibilities for equity in athletic programs were not addressed in the case. Parent, student athletes, athletic directors, coaches, and Boards of Education need to be vigilant in identifying the areas of compliance under Title IX, making sure program equality (equal opportunities to compete and treatment and benefits exists between girls and boys at ALL levels. The areas of treatment and benefits include: equipment and supplies, locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities, scheduling of games, scheduling of practice times, coaching, travel and related expenses, publicity, medical and training services, and support services.

If parents or student athletes need assistance in dealing with equity issues, please contact CFE at www.communitiesforequity.com. More information can be obtained from the CFE, local school district Title IX officers, Kent Intermediate School Districts' Athletic Equity Audit Reports, Michigan Department of Education Title IX officer (Roberta Stanley), State of Michigan's Office of Civil Rights (Lansing), or the Federal Office of Civil Rights, Women's Sports Foundation, National Women's Law Center.