

Major Stepup In Girls' Athletics

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — Women libbers in Michigan won a victory of sorts Thursday in Grand Rapids, probably without knowing what was happening.

Allen W. Bush, state director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA), said at the group's annual meeting here that there will be a major stepup in programs for girls' sports in Michigan soon.

"I anticipate there will be a fairly wide program for girls next year run on state level competition," he told the gathering of about 600 athletic directors and principals from member schools.

"We're concerned with girls . . . with expanding programs for girls. This year we anticipate state or regional gymnas-tics meets for girls. Later we'll contact schools to learn their intentions and desires in all girls' sports."

To Hire Coaches

"We will advise them to make preparations in their budgets for girls' sports in the coming years, planning for hiring of coaches, for one thing."

Bush said that skiing is the only sport for girls on a state-wide level now. He said eventually girls' basketball tournaments could become a reality.

Bruce B. Durbin, executive secretary of the Kansas State High School Activities Association, was principal speaker. He said that Kansas has already made the moves Michigan is about to make in this regard.

"Several years ago there was nothing for girls on a state level," he said. "We've started programs in some sports and next year we'll have a state basketball tournament."

"Girls want to participate in sports and, you know, they're

pretty doggone persuasive."

National Move On

Durbin said he told one school official not long ago to prepare for the rise of girls' athletics at his school because it is becoming a nationwide thing. "He told me it would never happen at his school," Durbin said. "But a year later he called me to ask what he had to do to start a girls' track program. It seems one girl who was about to become a ninth grader had been traveling around the country and doing well in meets. And it also turned out that her father was head of the board of education."

"It's been in the offing a long time," Bush said.

"Five years ago, there were probably not more than six or eight girls' track teams (in Michigan). Now I'd say there are in the vicinity of 100."

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 Mon, Dec 3, 2018