

MHSA PRESIDENT'S WELCOME



On behalf of the MHSA Executive Board and the Montana High School Association I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you back to school for the 2014-15 school year. This will be my second tour of duty as your Board President and I sure have appreciated and been fortunate to work with you and your schools these past years. I have a passion for you, your work, and your concerns. I just thoroughly

enjoy working with people on a professional and personal level.

This past June, I gave a presentation at the NHSACA on principles to live by as a teacher, coach and administrator.

Principles to Live By

- Live each day with courage
- Take pride in your work
- Always finish what you start
- Do what has to be done
- Be tough, but fair
- When you make a promise, keep it
- Talk less, say more
- Remember some things are not for sale
- Know where to draw the line

These are simple items to live by, but they all carry an impact on our lives.

Most things in life are simple, but often are made into difficult issues. Every day, every one of us will deal with issues that are important to the person you are dealing with. Treat everyone with respect and dignity.

My wife, Debbie, has a quote that she lives by that I would like to share with you, "I believe that life should be lived—to the fullest each day with the ones you love and with a smile on your face and grateful for this beautiful day." Terrific advice for all of us to follow. I wish you the very best in the upcoming year. Stand tall, set a firm chin and enjoy the ride.

*Duane Walker, MHSA President
Hardin High School Activities Director*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The question I ask every August as I write this column is "Where did the summer go?" Kenneth Grahame author of *The Wind in the Willows* stated, "After all the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working." Well, we are all back to work now, and hopefully with some time off you are rejuvenated for the coming school year. Once again, my only regret is the more golf I played this summer the less improvement I seemed to realize. Comedian Phyllis Diller once said, "The reason a pro tells you to keep your head down is so you can't see him laughing." So true with me!

I hope you are as excited as I am to begin another fall season. As a new fall sports activity season begins there are two major changes that occurred last year regarding requirements for coaches, parents, student athletes, officials and schools in general. The requirements are the new concussion law and the switch from the MHSA Coaches Education Program to the NFHS Coaches Education Program. I had sent information regarding these changes multiple times last year and also recently emailed my Executive Director's Update to every administrator attaching this information once again to that email. If you have any questions on the concussion requirements please contact me or Brian Michelotti. Questions on the coaches' education program can be directed to Joanne Austin.

Another area where more attention is needed is in the recruiting and retention of sports officials. Without men and women willing to officiate high school sports, those sports could not come to pass for the thousands of high school players, coaches and spectators. During the past two basketball seasons, we experienced more fan ejections than in my previous seventeen years in the office combined. As the MHSA/MOA and as officials, coaches and administrators, what can do about changing the culture of some of our fan base in relationship to their constant criticism of officials? I am pleased to report that the Respect Officials Initiative ("**Without Officials, It's Just Recess**") has been successful and the second poster will be sent to the schools soon. Any assistance you can offer to help recruit new members (including high school students to join as associate members; associate members can work junior high and sub-varsity games and the dues are one-half of regular member dues) is greatly appreciated. Also, we are exploring initiatives on how to deal with unruly adult fans at our events. More information will follow.

The latest edition of the Executive Director's Update was emailed to all school contacts, activity directors, principals, and superintendents recently with, hopefully, a variety of useful information for Activity Administrators. Included in the Update is information on the online rules clinic format, coaches education, concussion law implementation, MOA items, and information regarding other changes that have been enacted by the Executive Board or by the membership for this coming year. I can never stress enough the importance of closely checking the eligibility of all student activity participants. It would be devastating to an individual participant and to the team he/she participates on if that student was declared ineligible and the team had to forfeit games because of eligibility rules violations. The Executive Director Update includes the "Quick Checks" for sports eligibility (located in the Fundamentals of Athletic Regulations) and for non-sport activities. Please take time to review this information if you haven't already done so, or if you didn't receive the email please contact the office.

The MHSA staff is eager to assist you with any activity related items and issues. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any comments, concerns and/or questions. Have a great 2014-2015 school year!

Mark Beckman, Executive Director

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

MHSA HANDBOOK TO BE PUBLISHED

The MHSA Handbook will be printed soon and mailed to each member school in September. Users will note a change in format from previous MHSA Handbooks. To comply with changing post office limits, the

Handbooks are now formatted to fit in 9x12 envelopes and are lighter in weight overall with fewer pages.

One copy will be sent to each school contact and one copy will be sent to each city superintendent. Additional copies are available through the MHSAs office for \$10 each. The Handbook is also posted on the MHSAs website (www.mhsa.org) where all coaches and staff can access the information.

2014-2015 DIRECTORY INFORMATION REQUESTED

The 2014-2015 Roster of School Personnel forms were sent to each school electronically in July. Electronic submission is preferred, but you may submit the form by fax or by mail. If you have not already done so, please return this form to the MHSAs office as soon as possible. **The directory cannot be printed until information is received from ALL MHSAs member schools.**

JOSTEN'S CALENDARS WERE MAILED IN JULY

Once again, the Josten's Company is providing the MHSAs Activity Calendars, which were sent to each member school under separate cover in late July. We ask that you express appreciation to Josten's representatives when you have the opportunity. If your school would like additional calendars please contact the MHSAs office.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

As noted in the August Executive Director's Update, concussion management is a primary area of emphasis for schools. Each coach must take the online NFHS Concussion Course, each official complete the course before working any contest, and each student/parent must be informed of concussion management and acknowledge the same. Please visit the MHSAs website's Sports Medicine page to find all applicable documents, including the necessary forms for each of your student-athletes to sign before taking part in practice. The page also includes and administrative checklist for your use in adhering to MHSAs rules as well as Montana's concussion legislation.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORM IS ENCLOSED

The MHSAs pre-participation physical examination form is enclosed. This form was updated several years ago to include questions concerning the cardiac history and cardiac health of the student (question 6-15). The MHSAs Medical Advisory Committee strongly recommends that if any of those questions are answered affirmatively that a student be referred to the appropriate medical professional for further screening.

This is a reminder to all member schools that physical exams are mandated for all students who are going to participate in MHSAs sanctioned sports. These exams must be completed before they practice and must have been performed after May 1, 2014. Examinations must be certified by a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice for the current 2014-2015 school year and the schools must use the MHSAs standardized pre-participation exam form.

The MHSAs is committed to the safety and health of our student activity participants and believe this form will facilitate that objective. In addition to the copy of the form enclosed, you may access this form any time at mhsa.org. Please feel free to copy the form and distribute it appropriately. Please contact the MHSAs office if you should have any questions, or direct any questions from physicians. According to HIPPA, schools should note that these physical forms must be kept in confidential private files.

PROCEDURE FOR ACTIVITY NEWS/QUICK BITS MAILINGS

One copy of *Activity News* plus enclosures and all pertinent rules books will be sent via US Postal Service to each school contact, and one copy plus enclosures will be sent to each superintendent who is **not** listed as the school contact.

Quick Bits is generally a smaller publication that is sent via e-mail. The same individuals who receive the *Activity News* will be sent the electronic version of *Quick Bits*.

All of these publications, including most enclosures, will be posted at www.mhsa.org.

CLINICS MANDATORY FOR ALL COACHES

The MHSAs/MOAs rules clinics will once again be provided in an online format for coaches and officials. **All coaches, including the head coach and all assistant coaches and all school-approved volunteer coaches, are required to view the clinic.** An information sheet explaining the procedure on accessing these clinics was linked to the Executive Director's Update emailed to schools recently. The information sheet is also available on our website, www.mhsa.org, under the clinics tab. If you have any questions, please contact the MHSAs office.

RECORDS OF TRANSFER MANDATORY

Any student who transfers to your school and desires to participate in athletics at any level of competition has to be reported to the MHSAs office on a Record of Transfer Form. This form and other related forms are available on our website.

The Record of Transfer form is required in reporting transfer students and certifying in writing to the MHSAs office that the transfer student meets the MHSAs eligibility requirements stated in Article II of the Association By-Laws. These forms **must be filed before** the student participates on **any** high school athletic team in any (sub varsity or varsity) Association contest. If you have any questions regarding transfer students please contact Mark Beckman.

Please review the more detailed information regarding eligibility in the recently emailed Executive Director's Update.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS EVENTS

The MHSAs will permit a school to modify certain uniform requirements from the school's colors for one (1) week during the regular season to be designated as breast cancer awareness week. This interpretation will be applied to all sports. Permission from the MHSAs office must be given before designating a breast cancer awareness week.

Please share this information with your coaches and other appropriate personnel. Should you have any questions or concerns about the above, please call the MHSAs staff liaison for the particular sport.

COACHES' EDUCATION

COACHES' EDUCATION UPDATE

Please refer to the enclosed information regarding the MHSAs Coaches' Education requirements, including instructions on concussion awareness.

If you have any questions about the Coaches' Education program, please contact Jo Austin at the MHSAs office.

COACHES' EDUCATION REPORTING FORMS

Each year schools are required to submit a report detailing their compliance with the Coaches' Education requirement. Schools that did not submit a report for **2013-2014** were sent electronic reminders. Please be aware that schools failing to submit a report form are subject to penalties under By-Laws, Article VIII. If you have questions about your status for **last year**, please contact Jo Austin at jpaustin@mhsa.org. Compliance forms for 2014-2015 will be sent in the spring.

EXECUTIVE BOARD ITEMS

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

The next regular meeting of the MHSAs Executive Board will be held in Helena beginning on Monday, September 22, 2014, at 8:30 a.m. in the MHSAs office. The Board meeting will continue Tuesday, September 23, if business has not been completed.

If any member school administrator wishes to have an item placed on the agenda for the Board to consider at this meeting, he/she must furnish the same to the Association office **ten (10) days** prior to the meeting. If any member school wishes to meet with the Executive Board concerning any items, request for appointment must be made in advance.

Major agenda items for Executive Board Meeting:

1. Review and approve Auditor's report.

2. Hear spring activity reports.
3. Review spring activity financial reports.

MEETING DATES SET FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD

The MHSA Executive Board has established dates for their regular meetings for the coming school year. While the Board is required by MHSA By-Laws to hold a minimum of four (4) meetings, they can also hold special meetings in person, or the Board can conduct business by conference phone calls.

2014-15 Board Meeting Dates & Sites

September 22-23, 2014 ----- Helena
 November 24-25, 2014 ----- Helena
 January 17 & 19, 2015-----Kalispell
 April 13-14, 2015 ----- Helena

ANNUAL MEETING IN KALISPELL

The next MHSA Annual Meeting will be held in Kalispell on January 19, 2015. The Hilton Garden Inn is the host facility. Reservations may be made by calling 406-756-4500 and asking for group code MHSA.

CROSS COUNTRY

STATE MEET TO BE HELD IN MISSOULA

The 2014 State Cross Country Meet will be staged in Helena on October 25. The competition will take place at the Bill Roberts Golf Course. To view the current MHSA State and NFHS Cross Country Rules addressing uniform and sportsmanship items that all coaches and competitors will be expected to adhere to during the regular cross country season and at the State Cross Country Meet, go to www.mhsa.org; navigate to the cross country page and click on the 2014 State Cross Country Policies and Procedures and NFHS Rules.

STATE CROSS COUNTRY FEES

Each school participating in the 2014 State Cross Country Meet shall share proportionally the cost of running the State Cross Country Meet by paying a \$7.00 fee for each athlete that actually participates in the State Cross Country Meet (alternates are not considered participants). Example for Team A: 7 boy participants and 7 girl participants = 14 total participants X \$7.00 for each participant = \$98.00 will be the fee Team A must pay to participate in the State Cross Country Meet. Coaches will be required to pay the total fee at the time they pick up their State Cross Country Meet Coach's Packet. Checks should be made payable to Helena Public Schools.

QUALIFYING TIME

As recommended by the MHSA Athletic Committee and approved by the MHSA Executive Board, for the State Cross Country Meet: athletes must meet a qualifying time in at least one regular season cross country meet prior to participation in the 2014 State Cross Country Meet. The qualifying times are as follows:

Boys – 30.00 minutes or faster
 Girls – 35.00 minutes or faster

Athletes who do not meet the required performance time at least once during regular season competition will not qualify for participation at the State Cross Country Meet and cannot be entered as a team member or alternate.

Coaches will be required to submit a form stating the qualifying time of each athlete entered in the State Cross Country Meet when they pick up their State Cross Country Meet Coach's Packet in Helena.

FIRST DAY OF CROSS COUNTRY PRACTICE AND MEETS

For the 2014-15 school year, the starting date for cross country practice will be Friday, August 15th and the first date for cross country competition will be Friday, August 29th. No individual shall participate in any Association cross country meet until he/she has a minimum of ten (10) days of cross country practice of at least one practice session per day on ten (10) different days (no practice is permitted on Sunday), prior to the date of the first allowable cross country meet.

NUMBER OF MEETS

No student shall participate in more than ten (10) meets excluding Association sponsored meets. No cross country athlete may participate

in an out-of-state invitation only meet unless approved by the MHSA Executive Director. Any out-of-state participation approved under this criteria will count toward the ten-meet limit for the particular athlete.

POST SEASON COMPETITION

For an athlete to be eligible to compete in post-season competition he/she must compete in at least two (2) Association sanctioned meets, which can be varsity or sub varsity meets, during the regular cross country season. Only a medical waiver from a certified physician stating that an athlete has sustained an injury preventing him/her from competing until that time will be accepted as a condition to be exempt from the rule. The high school for which the student will participate must file a request with the MHSA Executive Director for consideration of a waiver of this rule.

Please share this information with your cross country coaches and if you have any questions or concerns please call Scott McDonald at 442-6010 or email him at smcdonald@mhsa.org.

VOLLEYBALL

FIRST DAY OF VOLLEYBALL PRACTICE AND CONTESTS

The starting date for volleyball practice will be Friday, August 15th and the first date for volleyball competition will be Friday, August 29th. No individual shall play in any Association volleyball contest until she has a minimum of ten (10) days of volleyball practice of at least one practice session per day on ten (10) different days (no practice is permitted on Sunday), prior to the date of the first allowable match.

SOLID WHITE VOLLEYBALL TO BE USED FOR THE 2014 SEASON

As approved by the MHSA Executive Board, for 2014 MHSA Volleyball regular and post season play, a solid white volleyball shall be used for all levels of play which shall include the NFHS authenticating mark. During MHSA post season play, the Baden Lexum Comp VX450 solid white volleyball shall be used.

VOLLEYBALL MATCH LIMIT

Eighteen (18) volleyball matches will be the maximum limit for schools in Classes A, B and C with no more than three (3) 3-out-of-5 matches [or five (5) 2-out-of-three matches in dual tournament format only] on any one date excluding Association sponsored tournaments, and twenty (20) volleyball matches will be the maximum limit for schools in Class AA with no more than three (3) 3-out-of-5 matches [or five (5) 2-out-of-three matches in dual tournament format only] on any one date excluding Association sponsored tournaments. These match limits apply for each squad: varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, freshman.

VOLLEYBALL PARTICIPATION

For the 2014-15 school year, the Athletic Committee recommended and the MHSA Executive Board approved the following:

- Individual volleyball players shall be allowed to play in no more than two matches/levels of competition (freshman, sophomore, junior varsity, varsity) in any school's dual match. Entering a contest for one live ball counts as participation in one match. As per MHSA By Laws, Section 2 General Penalties, the contest in which a participant exceeds the limitation will be followed. The player limitation rule doesn't apply during invitational or dual tournaments. Montana volleyball teams will always follow the MHSA match limitation rule when playing in neighboring states.
- For post season volleyball play, volleyball teams will not be allowed on the playing floor until 30 minutes before the start time of the match.
- The volleyball prematch conference (with the head coaches and captains) and coin toss will occur when the twenty (20) minute warm-up countdown reaches minute sixteen (16).

FOOTBALL

MAJOR FOOTBALL REVISIONS FOR 2014

There are several major changes to MHSA rules that will go into effect for the MHSA football season, including new rules on several major rules changes from the NFHS and other important MHSA football safety issues. Please review the enclosed football information and distribute it to all affected personnel. Please feel free to contact Brian Michelotti if you have questions on the enclosed football materials.

MOA

THE HIRING OF OFFICIALS

ATTENTION: All administrators and coaches — please make sure all officials whom you hire for varsity contests are members in good standing with the Montana Officials' Association. Per MHSA/MOA rules, schools must go through the local official's pool when hiring officials unless the official is not in a pool (an approved non-pool affiliated official). To be a member in good standing, officials must have passed the qualifying exam for the respective sport or pay to take the exam that will be given at the start of the season. We had a few non-MOA's work varsity contests in the past few years which is a serious violation of MHSA/MOA rules and schools will be penalized accordingly for any violations.

In compliance with the Dylan Steigers' Protection of Youth Athletes Act, any sports official working an athletic contest in your district must have completed concussion education. This includes all varsity contests (for which MOA officials must be used) and any other contests, including sub-varsity, middle school, and elementary. The local district is responsible for ensuring that officials who are working all athletic contests have completed concussion education.

Also, please remember to be on hand to greet officials, assist the crew at half-time and to insure that security and locker rooms etc. are provided for them from the time they arrive until the time they leave the premises.

SOCCER

SOCCER MATERIALS SENT SEPARATELY

Activities Directors should be receiving a separate envelope with soccer rules books and pre-season guides for their coaches. Please ensure that the materials are distributed to coaches.

SPIRIT

SPIRIT REMINDERS

This year, Spirit Rules Books will be sent under separate cover to school contacts. Please distribute the books to your cheer coach as soon as possible.

If your school will field cheerleaders only during the **winter season**, or if your school will not be fielding a cheer team at all during this school year, please advise Janie Holmes @ jholmes@mhsa.org.

Also, remember all cheer coaches must complete or be current with the AACCA Safety Certification course if their squad does any stunting. This year the AACCA Safety Certification is again offered online through the National Federation's web site. **Once your coach completes the course, please email or fax the verification so we may update our records. Also mandatory for all spirit coaches this year is the online NFHS concussion course and the Spirit Rules Clinic.**

There were several changes made to the Spirit Rules Book, and these changes are covered in the online Spirit Rules Clinic.

MUSIC

MUSIC COMMITTEE FALL MEETING

The MHSA Music Committee will meet in August. Anyone wishing to have items put on the agenda or meet with the committee should contact Jo Austin at 406-442-6010 or jpaustin@mhsa.org.

MUSIC DATES FOR 2014-2015

All State Band, Orchestra and Chorus.....October 15-17
District Music Festival for District 9 (large groups only).....March 31
District Music Festival for Districts 4, 5, 8, 10, 12.....April 10-11
District Music Festival for District 9 (solos & ensembles only).... April 13
District Music Festival for District 6..... April 16-17
District Music Festivals for Districts 1, 2, 7, 11, 13..... April 17-18
State Solo & Ensemble Festivals..... May 1-2

SPEECH & DRAMA

FORENSICS & DRAMA BOOKLET UNDER PRODUCTION

The Speech & Drama booklets will be sent to schools in September. Each coach will receive a copy.

Also, administrators are asked to encourage their speech & drama coaches to utilize the information on the MHSA website. All ballots and the tentative schedule are currently posted. Whenever possible our mailings will be sent to coaches electronically so we would appreciate receiving every coach's email address.

ENCLOSURES

[2014-2015 Events Calendar](#)

[2015-2016 Events Calendar](#)

[2014-2015 Ready Reference Activity Dates](#)

[2014-2015 National Testing Dates](#)

2014-2015 Football Rules Book (1)

[2014-2015 NFHS Football Rule Changes](#)

NFHS Football Rules Poster

NFHS Football Changes and Information

[NFHS Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention Position Statement](#)

2014 Volleyball Rules Book (1)

[2014 NFHS Volleyball Rule Revisions](#)

NFHS Volleyball Rules Poster

[Volleyball Line Judges, Scorer and Timer Responsibilities](#)

Volleyball Scoring Information

[Athletic Pre-Participation Physical Exam Form](#)

[Coaches' Education Handout](#)

[Online Rules Clinic Instructions](#)

Staff Members

Mark Beckman, Executive Director
Joanne Austin, Associate Director
Scott McDonald, Assistant Director
Brian Michelotti, Assistant Director
Janie Holmes, Business Office Manager
Theresa Stanisich, MOA Coordinator



Executive Board Members

Duane Walker, Activities Director, Hardin High School
(President)
Mike Cutler, Superintendent, Philipsburg Public Schools
(Vice President)
Mark Ator, Activities Director, Colstrip High School
Drew Blewett, Governor's Appointee, Great Falls
Peter Fusaro, Principal, Flathead High School (Kalispell)
Lance Voegelé, MTSBA Appointee, Belgrade
Don Wetzell, Jr., State Superintendent's Appointee, Helena
