

## **Executive Director's Update August 2010**



## **Info from Mark Beckman**

*Greetings from the MHSAA office. We hope your fall activity seasons are off to a great start.*

### **Student Eligibility**

It is extremely important that the eligibility of all student activity participants is checked thoroughly before the students participate in any Association Contest. Some of the areas that must be reviewed include academics, age, semesters, physical examination before practice, foreign exchange approved program, etc. Attached are two eligibility "Quick Checks" and more detailed information on each area to assist a school activities administrator in ensuring all students are eligible for competition. Please contact me with any questions you may have in regard to students' eligibility.

### **MHSAA/MOA Required Rules Clinics**

The MHSAA/MOA rules clinics once again will be provided in an online format for coaches and officials. All head coaches are required to view the clinic. However the MHSAA still encourages all members of the coaching staff and activity administrators to view the clinics. There is an information sheet attached explaining the procedure on accessing these clinics. Please share this information with your coaches of fall sports and with your cheerleading coach.

### **New NFHS/MHSAA Concussion Rule**

The National Federation approved a new concussion rule for all sports beginning this year. The MHSAA has expanded the scope of the rule to also include other serious injuries. MHSAA Rules and Regulations item (4) states: *A participant in any MHSAA sanctioned sport who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) or other serious injury shall be immediately removed from the game, evaluated by the coaching staff in regard to the nature of the injury, and if it is determined to be a possible concussion or other serious injury, the player shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional (MD, DO, PAC or NP).*

The MHSAA has implemented specific procedures for managing possible injury situations during Association activities. Officials, coaches and administrators are being asked to make all efforts to ensure the safety of athletes who participate in MHSAA activities

Given that most concussed athletes do not lose consciousness, yet they often show other common signs, symptoms and behaviors of concussion, the NFHS and the MHSAA strongly believes that officials must be empowered to remove these athletes from play, thus protecting them from potential further injury.

Neither officials, nor coaches, are expected to "diagnose" a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. The previous rule called upon officials to

determine "apparently unconscious" which appeared to expect some level of medical judgment. Officials are now being asked to use their best judgment again in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors of a possible concussion or serious injury, but are no longer being asked to make what could be perceived to be a medical opinion.

If there is a player that exhibits signs and symptoms of an injury, officials will make coaches aware of the injured player and call an injury time out. The official should notify the coach by making the following statement: *"Coach, you need to take a look at this player; he/she is exhibiting signs and symptoms of an injury."* The game official is not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the athlete after he or she is removed from play. The responsibility of further evaluating and managing the symptomatic athlete falls upon the head coach, appropriate health-care professional or other individual designated by school administrators. If an appropriate health-care professional on the sideline determines that the athlete HAS NOT suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to play. The official does not need written permission for an athlete to return nor does the official need to verify the credentials of the appropriate health-care professional.

Please use the link below to access the MHSAA Concussion Clinic, which can be found on the Sports Medicine Page: <http://mhsaa.org/Clinics/InstructionsConcussion.htm>

**This information and additional resources are available on the MHSAA website. Visit [www.mhsaa.org](http://www.mhsaa.org) and proceed to the Sports Medicine page by using the link on the home page.**

I hope you find this informative and helpful. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please send any questions to Brian Michelotti at [bmichelotti@mhsaa.org](mailto:bmichelotti@mhsaa.org).

### **Coaches' Education - Check on your coaches' status concerning completion of the Coaches' Education Program**

All coaches (9-12), whether paid or volunteer, and coaching at any level must complete this program. The coaches' education certification is good for three years and the MHSAA **strongly recommends** that coaches complete the program before their season actually begins. Spirit (cheerleading) coaches are no longer required to complete the program. Each coach must sign in each time she/he enters the curriculum. The coach will select his/her own password that must be remembered. The testing curriculum will also change with each login. See the coaches' education website for more details. All schools must submit the certification report listing whether coaches have completed the program or not. Schools will be subject to penalties for failure to submit this report.

OPI renewal units are available if approved locally and if your district is an approved renewal unit provider. MHSAs does not certify renewal units.

Schools that did not submit Compliance Reports for 2009-10 will receive a reminder in August. After that, any schools that did not submit the form will be subject to penalty.

#### **MOA Items**

MOA fees increased this year from \$55.00 to \$60.00 for a varsity game fee and all other fees increased accordingly. The last MOA fee increase was in 2002-03 when standardized fees were adopted. On behalf of the MOA Regional Directors and all MOA officials I want to express our appreciation to the MHSAs Executive Board for approving the fees increase and thank MHSAs member schools for their support of the fees increase. All regular season invitational tournament fees and post season fees are listed in the MOA Handbook and also online by navigating to the Handbook using the link on the MHSAs homepage. Also the mileage fee has **decreased** from .55 to .50 (this is the IRS mileage rate). The per diem allowance for each official, including the driver remains at \$0.08 per mile.

I am pleased to report that the third year of MOA/MCA "Train the Trainer" Mechanics Clinics was extremely successful. This year clinics were conducted in wrestling (held in Butte at the AAU National Tournament and in football (held at the MCA Clinic in Great Falls).

One major addition to the MOA Handbook approved by the MOA Regional Directors and the MHSAs Executive Board include:

Guidelines for MHSAs Pools addition – Pools may provide information regarding availability of eligible officials for post season assignment to a district or division representative for distribution to schools in those districts or divisions, when requested in writing. Individual officials shall not provide such information. The Regional Directors are allowing pools to provide a list of officials and the dates those officials are available for post season assignment to a district or divisional representative to distribute to the schools in their respective districts or divisions allowing coaches to vote for officials who are available on each weekend of post season competition.

#### **Contingency Bids for State Wrestling and Class A Boys' Basketball/ No Bids for State B-C Softball**

As of this time we have not received any official bids for this year's State Class B-C Softball Tournament. We have received some unofficial inquiries but no official bids have been submitted. Please contact the MHSAs office as soon as possible if you are interested in bidding on this event. It is imperative we place this event quickly to allow schools the opportunity to reserve rooms etc.

A tornado in June severely damaged the MetraPark in Billings. Completion of the necessary repairs could have an impact on MetraPark's ability to host the 2011 State All-Class Wrestling Tournament and the Class A Boys' Basketball Tournament.

The MHSAs Executive Board has solicited bids for the 2011 State All-Class Wrestling Tournament and for the 2011 State A Boys' Basketball Tournament in the event that the MetraPark is unavailable to host those previously placed tournaments. At this time, the call for bids is a contingency pending further communication with MetraPark officials. To receive a bid memo and the accompanying forms, please contact the MHSAs office.

Also, please note that the State Class B-C Speech & Drama Meet has been scheduled for January 28-29, 2011 in Townsend, hosted by Broadwater High School.

#### **MHSAs Handbooks and Directories**

The 2010-11 MHSAs Handbooks and Directories will be mailed to schools after Labor Day. The Directories will not be published until every member school has submitted the appropriate information. The MHSAs Handbooks are in the process of being printed, but in the interim, the individual chapters of the Handbook are available in PDF format at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org) under HANDBOOK.

#### **Other Items of Interest ...**

I have attached a handout regarding MHSAs Present and Future issues from my presentation at the MCA Clinic. Included is information regarding MHSAs staff, MHSAs Handbook changes, activity specific rule changes and possible future issues of the MHSAs.

#### **The MHSAs office staff is here to serve you!**

Please contact the office with any questions, concerns, comments or suggestions.

**Have a great fall season!**

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## ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ADMINISTRATORS

### Eligibility Quick Check *Athletics*

#### Is a student eligible for athletic competition?

- 1) Is he/she enrolled and attending at least 20 hours per week (4 classes ½ credit each)?
- 2) Is he/she academically eligible? Did he/she pass 20 hours of prepared class work the preceding semester? (first time ninth grade exempt)
- 3) Is he/she semester eligible? Eligible for eight consecutive semesters after enrolling in the ninth grade (semesters accrue whether attend or not)
- 4) Is he/she age eligible? He/she can't turn 19 before midnight August 31st.
- 5) Has he/she graduated or earned their GED? If so, the student is not eligible for any level of contests.
- 6) If he/she meets all the above requirements and he/she is a transfer student will he/she be varsity eligible? Examine each part of the transfer rule.
- 7) Before participation in any contest at any level a physical examination must be performed using the MHSA form and the minimum number of practices for that sport must be completed.

### Eligibility Quick Check *Music and Speech*

#### Is a student eligible for music and speech activities?

- 1) Is he/she enrolled and attending at least 20 hours per week (4 classes ½ credit each)?
- 2) Is he/she academically eligible? Did he/she pass 20 hours or prepared class work the preceding semester? (first time ninth grade exempt)
- 3) Has he/she graduated or earned their GED? If so, the student is not eligible for any level of contests.

The semester rule, age rule and transfer rule do not apply to speech and music student participants.

## **Checklist for School Activities Administrators:**

### **✓ Submit a Record of Transfer Form**

The pink form that must be submitted to our office for any student who transfers to your school (except first time ninth graders) and desires to participate in athletics at any level. **These forms must be filed before the student is eligible to participate in an Association Contest on any high school athletic team at any level of competition (freshman, sophomore, junior varsity or varsity).**

### **✓ Check Foreign Exchange Programs**

Make sure your foreign exchange student's program is approved by CSJET. An approved list will be included with the August Activity News, or call the office for a copy. The list is also on the web at [www.csjet.org](http://www.csjet.org). Keep in mind that students in these programs must also meet all other eligibility requirements, i.e., age, number of semesters, academic grades, and they cannot have graduated from their high school (some foreign high schools graduate students after three years of school). Also the foreign exchange student must live in the attendance area of the school requesting eligibility for that student.

### **✓ Waiver of Transfer Rule Petition "Hardship Petition"**

Waivers must be filed by the school after the student is enrolled at your school. A waiver of the transfer rule is considered if the circumstances are beyond the control of the student applying for the waiver. If the behaviors that caused the extenuating circumstances are "self inflicted" by the student, the petition is usually not considered. The information provided for the waiver is confidential, but please include as much information as possible so a well-informed decision can be made. The student can participate only at the sub varsity level until the petition is approved if they are eligible in every other way. If the petition is approved the student is eligible for varsity competition, but if the petition is not approved he/she can play sub varsity but is ineligible for varsity competition for 90 P.I. days (or its equivalent in districts with extended school days/four day weeks). All other eligibility requirements must be met such as age, number of semesters, academic grades etc. Any student who is transfer ineligible becomes eligible on the 90<sup>th</sup> P.I. day (or its equivalent in districts with extended school days/four day weeks) at 3:00 p.m.

### **✓ Age Rule**

A student who turns 19 after midnight August 31<sup>st</sup> is age eligible. Any 19 year old (who turns 19 on or before midnight August 31<sup>st</sup>) can file a waiver of the age rule if the following is proved by the student – 1) student does not create a safety risk, 2) student does not skew the overall competitiveness of the activity, 3) participation will not exclude others, and 4) the student meets all necessary criteria to participate in MHSA activities.

### **✓ GED**

If a student has earned a GED he/she is considered a high school graduate and is not eligible to compete in any MHSA sanctioned activity.

### **✓ Academically Ineligible Students**

Students who are ineligible because of grades cannot participate in any Association contest (varsity or sub varsity) for a period of one semester. They can practice if the school allows but they cannot suit up or participate in any games at any level of competition. They become eligible to compete on the Monday morning following the week in which the semester ends. A student who becomes academically ineligible also becomes ineligible on the Monday morning following the week in which the semester ends. A student must have received a passing grade in at least twenty periods of prepared class work in the last previous semester at the school where the student participates or during the last preceding semester in which he/she was in attendance to be eligible. If a student was enrolled 20 days or more or played in an Association contest he/she has attended a semester and must have received credit and passed 20 periods. If he/she withdrew and didn't receive credit (or even W's) he/she did not receive credit and is ineligible. If a student had not been enrolled in school at all for the semester (less than 20 days and did not participate in a contest) then the grades from the last previous semester enrolled are used.

### **✓ Physical Exams**

Physical exams are required for students participating in MHSA sanctioned sports. The exam is valid for one school year and the MHSA form must be used. This examination must be certified by a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice. Physicals performed before May 1<sup>st</sup> are not valid for the next school year.

## ✓ Semester Rule

Students are eligible for eight consecutive semesters and the semesters start to accrue after entering the ninth grade.

Below is a listing of the eligibility rules revisions enacted last year.

### Eligibility

2.1 A student must be regularly enrolled and in regular attendance in twenty hours per week at the school where the student participates. A home school student is not eligible to participate for an MHSAA member school.

2.2 A grading period is defined as one semester. A semester is defined as one half of a school year (approximately 18 school weeks or 90 school days). This definition is applicable to all schools regardless of the type of class scheduling format utilized (i.e. block, traditional, trimester etc.).

5. The scholastic record at the end of the semester shall be final and deficiencies may not be made up in any manner. Deficiencies, including incompletes, conditions and failures for the previous semester may not be made up during a subsequent semester, summer session, night school, correspondence, or tutoring for the purpose of establishing or maintaining MHSAA eligibility.

8.1 A student will be eligible to participate in Association Contests for four (4) consecutive years [eight (8) consecutive semesters] after entering the ninth grade. An attendance Enrollment of twenty (20) pupil instruction days during a ninth grader's first semester in high school constitutes his/her first semester of attendance. A ninth grader who attends is enrolled fewer than twenty (20) pupil instruction days in his/her first semester of high school does not begin his/her eight (8) consecutive semesters unless he/she has participated during this time in an Association contest. Such a period of fewer than twenty (20) pupil instruction days is not considered to be "the last previous semester attended" under Section (2).

This change specifies that the days of enrollment, not attendance, will be used in determining eligibility.

Deadline for enrollment

9.1 A student shall have been regularly enrolled and in attendance no later than fifteen (15) school days after the beginning of the semester to be eligible during that semester. This rule shall not apply to transfer students who have met the attendance requirements in the school last attended.

### Transfer Rule additions

A. Any student who transfers from one member high school, home school, or non-member school to another a member high school is ineligible to participate in a varsity Association Contest for 90 P.I. days or its equivalent in districts with extended school days/four day weeks from the date of enrollment in the school to which he/she transfers. A student and his/her parents or legal guardians must reside in the attendance area of the school in which he/she is enrolled except for a student enrolling in ninth grade for the first time (see Section (12) Record of Transfer.) This rule applies to a student who transfers after twenty (20) days of attendance enrollment or after he/she participates in an athletic contest while enrolled in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12.

1. A student who moves into a new district or school attendance area upon a corresponding change of residence by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) with whom the student was living during his/her previous school enrollment. The legal guardianship must have been established at least one calendar year before the transfer. If the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) move to a new location a student must follow within a calendar year of the move to be eligible for varsity competition after proper certification by his/her principal.

2. A change of residence is the actual physical relocation by the parents or legal guardians of a student at a new residence and termination of all occupancy of a previous residence. The change in residence must be bona fide, include other minor siblings and involve transfer from one school district attendance area to another school district attendance area. For the purpose of eligibility, there can be only one residence.