

Executive Director's Update August 2013



Info from Mark Beckman

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

Two important changes will be implemented this school year that will affect requirements for coaches, officials, parents, student athletes and school trainers. One was passed by the state legislature and one by the MHSAA Executive Board.

Concussion Legislation

I have attached, once again, the information I sent out by email twice and by hard copy once at the end of last school year. It is important to note the requirements for all participants including coaches, officials, trainers, parents and student athletes.

If you have any questions regarding MHSAA's requirements to implement this state law please contact the MHSAA office.

NFHS Coaches Education

Also, I have attached the information sent by email last spring notifying schools of the Executive Board's decision to require all coaches (paid and volunteer, head and assistants) to complete the NFHS Coaches Education Program. OPI renewal units are available if approved locally and if your district is an approved renewal unit provider. MHSAA does not certify renewal units.

If you have any questions regarding the Coaches Education Program please contact Joanne Austin at the MHSAA office.

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 is the "[Fundamentals of MHSAA Athletic Regulations](#)" which combines many of our handouts pertaining to rules and regulations (athletic eligibility "Quick Check", open gym/field, fundraising, out-of-season contests etc.) into one document. Also attached is an [Activity Eligibility \(speech, music and cheerleading\) "Quick Check"](#) 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.

Foreign Exchange Students – Linked to this publication is the [CSIET resource page which included the 2013-2014 approved list of Foreign Exchange Programs from CSIET](#). As per Article II, Section (10), these are the only approved programs that waive the MHSAA Transfer Rule for participation. CSIET now approves programs that accept students with F-1 Visas. MHSAA By-Laws require students to possess a J-1 Visa. Only students with a J-1 Visa on a CSIET program are varsity eligible for two semesters. However, please keep in mind that while students under these programs are varsity eligible under the transfer rule for two semesters, they still must meet all other eligibility requirements, i.e., live in the school's attendance area, age, academics, number of semesters, etc., and they cannot have graduated from their high school.

MHSAA/MOA Required Rules Clinics

The MHSAA/MOA rules clinics are 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. The MHSAA still encourages all 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.

Farmers Union Insurance Banner Program

Long-time MHSAA corporate sponsor Farmers Union Insurance offered to provide a fully customized banner for MHSAA schools with Farmers Union paying for half of the cost of the banner. We had many schools take advantage of this gracious offer and if your school hasn't taken part to date there is still an opportunity to order a banner.

The price of the banner is \$90.00 and Farmers Union Insurance will pay \$45.00 of the cost for each school that is interested in ordering a banner that can be tailor-made. Banners are 3' by 8' and will be produced in school colors with your school logo.

If you are interested in purchasing a banner for \$45, with Farmer's Union Insurance paying the other \$45, please email me at mbeckman@mhsaa.org or you can email Brian Michelotti, MHSAA Assistant Director at bmichelotti@mhsaa.org. We will forward your request

to Farmers Union Insurance who will be in contact with you for design specifications.

The MHSA appreciates Farmers Union Insurance's support of high school youth activities and we appreciate their support in providing a high quality banner for display by our member schools.

I have attached a sample banner for you to review.

MOA Items

All regular season invitational tournament fees and post season fees are listed in the MOA Handbook. You can access [regular season MOA fees](#) on the forms page of the MHSA website. Also the mileage fee has **increased** from .555 to .565 (this is the IRS mileage rate). ***The per diem allowance for each official, including the driver has increased from \$0.08 per mile to \$0.12 cents per mile. Also, per diem at post season tournaments has increased from \$15.00 to \$20.00 per day for officials commuting to the tournament site and from \$25.00 to \$30.00 per day for officials staying overnight at the site.***

Reminder - Payment of Officials – there are only two ways that officials can be paid for contests:

- 1) All assigned officials must be paid before the contest with a check issued by the member school. A member school has seven (7) business days from the date of the contest to reissue appropriate checks to the official(s) who actually worked the contest or;
- 2) If a member school and the local official's pool agree to other methods of payment (still payment to the individual official – not to the pool) and the method of payment is approved by the regional director, the official must be paid within seven (7) business days of the contest. Pools cannot receive payments from the schools to distribute to individual members as this practice would make the officials pool the employer, nullifying the independent contractor status and subjecting the pool to unemployment and workers' compensation obligations. Any changes in the payment process must be approved by the MOA Commissioner.

Exception for soccer pools only: because the fee structure for soccer officials differs from all other MHSA sanctioned sports, an

alternative payment method for soccer officials may be approved by the MOA Commissioner, provided that the local soccer pool, the local school(s), and the Regional Director are in agreement. The alternative payment method must be submitted in writing for approval by the MOA Commissioner on an annual basis prior to implementation.

Cultural Diversity Training

In 2011-12, the MHSA Executive Board approved Cultural Diversity Training for an onsite administrator and/or athletic activities director from each member school, for all MHSA sanctioned sports head coaches and for all MOA officials.

Even though this was a onetime requirement, the MHSA/MOA encourages administrators, coaches (head and assistant) and officials to view the clinic. The clinic can be accessed on the clinics page of the MHSA website after August 1st.

The purpose of the training is to help administrators, coaches and officials enhance their knowledge and self-awareness of diversity issues in MHSA-sanctioned athletics and activities to prevent cultural miscommunications, disconnects or conflicts.

MHSA Handbooks and Directories

The 2013-2014 MHSA 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 MHSA 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 under HANDBOOK.

Other Items of Interest ...

I have included information on the following pages regarding changes that were made last year by the Executive Board and by the membership, including information regarding changes to the By-Laws, Rule and Regulations and sport and activity specific rule changes.

Summary of Attachments and Links: [Fundamentals of Athletic Regulations](#); [Activity Eligibility "Quick Check"](#); [Current CSIET List](#) (linked only); [Fall Clinic Instructions](#); [Sample School Banners](#) (attached only); [Current MOA Fees](#) (linked only)

The MHSA office staff is here to serve you!

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

Have a great fall season!

Montana High School Association, 1 South Dakota Avenue, Helena, MT 59601

Phone: 406-442-6010 Fax: 406-442-8250

Website: www.mhsa.org Email: mbeckman@mhsa.org

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 CSIET **and by MHSAs rules Foreign Exchange students must possess a J-1 Visa. This year CSIET approves programs where foreign students possess an F-1 Visa – those students are not eligible for varsity in Montana until they have been attending 90 school days.** An approved list is attached with this [Executive Director's Update](#), or contact the office for a copy. The list is also on the web at www.csiet.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 PI 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 90th P.I. day (or its equivalent in districts with extended school days/four day weeks) the end of the day.

✓ **Age Rule**

A student who turns 19 after midnight August 31st is age eligible. Any 19 year old (who turns 19 on or before midnight August 31st) 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 MHSAs activities.

✓ **Graduate Students**

Any student who meets any of the following criteria shall be ineligible to participate in any Association Activity:

- a. The student is a graduate of a regular four-year high school.
- b. The student is a graduate of a secondary school which has the same requirements for graduation as a regular four-year high school.
- c. The student has earned enough credits to entitle him/her to be graduated from the high school and has completed eight semesters of high school.
- d. The student has received a GED.

Interpretations

1. A student who graduates the first semester is ineligible the second semester.
2. A student who has earned enough credits to graduate the first semester but remains enrolled and graduates on the regular date remains eligible to participate.
3. Senior students who are currently eligible in their eighth semester (4th spring) will continue to be eligible for all interscholastic activities even though graduation exercises precede the completion of interscholastic activities for that specific year. If a student has earned a GED he/she is considered a high school graduate and is not eligible to compete in any MHSAs 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 MHSAs sanctioned sports *before they practice for the first time*. The exam is valid for one school year and the MHSAs 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 1st 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 are a Listing of Changes to the By-Laws and Rules and Regulations Effective This Year:

MHSA Annual Meeting Actions

The following proposals were adopted at the 2013 Annual Meeting:

1. The membership approved a proposal to amend the Executive Board's authority to grant waivers.
2. The membership approved a proposal to amend the appeals process By-Law.
3. The membership approved a proposal to amend the reclassification timeline.
4. The membership approved a proposal to amend the cooperative sponsorship enrollment limits.
5. The membership approved a proposal to amend the cooperative sponsorship enrollment for six player football to go into effect at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.
6. The membership approved a proposal to amend the MHSAs's wrestling weight classes to the National Federation weight classes with the addition of the 98 pound weight class.

All these adopted proposals are available on the MHSAs website – www.mhsa.org

MHSA Executive Board Actions

Reclassification

- Approved reclassifying the following schools:
Powder River County High School from Class B to Class C
St. Labre High School from Class C to Class B

Realignment

- Approved the realignment of the Southern B Football Division and the Six- Player Football League.
- Approved two schools for competition in six-player football.
- Approved assigning the new Hysham/Custer various co-ops to districts.

Other General Rules and Regulations Items

- Approved allowing Miniature Awards (through the MHSAA awards provider Universal Awards) for third place state championship teams.
- Approved coaches must complete the NFHS Coaches Education Program every five years and must complete the curriculum prior to the first day of practice for their activity.
- Approved extending the prohibition of fireworks, firearms, explosives, etc. to include regular season MHSAA contests.

MOA Items

- Approved increasing the per diem and travel allowances for both regular and post season contests.
- Launching the Respect Officials Campaign.

Basketball

- Approved additions and deletions to the expense reimbursements for post season basketball tournaments.

Volleyball

- Approved limiting volleyball players' participation to two levels in dual matches.
- Approved the pre-match conference and coin toss will occur at minute sixteen (16) of the twenty (20) minute warm-up.

Football

- Approved Class C-6 player and Class C-8 player sub varsity teams to compete in a triangular.
- Approved aligning the start date and first contest date for Class B football with the Class AA, Class A and Class C-8 player corresponding dates.

Soccer

- Approved additional penalties for conduct misbehavior in all MHSAA soccer contests.

Golf

- Approved that only two golfers from the same team may play in a group on the second day of post-season play.
- The Board approved changing the Class B divisional golf tournaments back one week earlier than this year's dates to May 10-17, 2014. These dates revert back to the date used previously for many years. [There is no divisional golf competition in Class C.]
- The Board approved reverting back to the previous dates for Classes B and C state golf tournaments that are one week earlier. The week for the state tournaments in 2013-14 will be May 19-24, 2014.

Music Items

- Several amendments were made to the music rules and regulations including a requirement to ensure compliance with US copyright laws. To receive a complete copy of the changes, please email jpaustin@mhsa.org.

Speech and Drama Items

- As recommended by the MFEA, various amendments to speech, debate and drama rules were approved. To receive a complete copy of the changes, please email jpaustin@mhsa.org.

Spirit Items

- Approved various changes to the spirit section of the MHSAA Handbook. To receive a complete copy of the changes, please email jholmes@mhsa.org.

Tennis Items

- Approved the use of two options for inclement weather at divisional and state tournaments.
- Approved match limitations per day for Class B/C divisional and state tournaments.
- Approved changes to the language for substitutes at state tennis meets.

Wrestling

- Approved allowing weigh-ins the night before for regular season invitational two-day tournaments with administrator verification.