



Quick Bits

A Montana High School Association Publication
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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPRING RULE CLINICS

The MHSA/MOA rules clinics for all activities are presented exclusively online. The softball, track and field, tennis and golf clinics are posted on our main website at www.mhsa.org. Enclosed please find an instruction sheet that details the procedure for accessing the clinics. The clinics were launched on **March 1**. Coaches must view the clinics prior to **March 14 for golf and prior to March 22 for softball, track and field and tennis** to receive credit.

All coaches, including the head coach and all assistant coaches and all school-approved volunteer coaches, are required to view the clinic. If you have any questions, please contact the MHSA office.

OUT-OF-SEASON CONTEST GUIDELINES

This is the time of year when many out-of-season tournaments and contests take place. The Fundamentals of Athletic/Activity Regulations is attached. Please share this information with the appropriate administrators, coaches and student participants.

From June 1 – July 31 teams can use their own gym for practices but they cannot host games in the gyms unless rent is paid and all other out-of-season contest guidelines are followed. If you have any questions, please contact the MHSA office.

OPEN GYM GUIDELINES

Montana High School Association rules allow schools to conduct "open gyms" or "open fields" in any activity. Coaches and schools cannot be involved in out-of-season practice for athletes (except from June 1 to July 31).

However, open gyms do not violate MHSA rules if they are conducted according to the following guidelines:

1. The open gym is open to any youngster that is interested in attending.
2. There is no instruction during the open gym, whether by a coach or anyone else.
3. Coaches may supervise open gyms, but they may not instruct, organize drills etc., or participate with the students.
4. There is no organized competition, such as established teams participating in round-robin competitions etc.

The philosophy for the open gym is that youngsters may attend, for wholesome recreation, or for purposes of improving their skills, but it is something they do on their own. It would be a violation of MHSA rules to mandate attendance at open gyms or to limit participation based on athletic status.

Please note: District school gyms cannot be used for out-of-season team practices, even though coached by a non-school coach, if the team consists of a majority of the school's players. This would be a circumvention of the open gym rule.

To use the school gym, during out of season except June 1-July 31 the team must be a legitimate AAU or traveling team,

coached by a non – school coach and be able to provide a schedule of games. Also, they must follow the district policies for facility rental, insurance etc.

Reminder: From June 1 – July 31 teams can use their own gym for practices but they cannot host games in the gyms unless rent is paid and all other out-of-season contest guidelines are followed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD ITEMS

BOARD TO MEET APRIL 15-16

The next regular meeting of the MHSA Executive Board will be held in Helena beginning on Monday, April 15, 2013, at 8:30 a.m. The Board meeting will continue Tuesday, April 16 if business has not been completed.

At this regularly scheduled meeting, the Executive Board members will be focusing on the following agenda items:

1. Financial reports of winter sports season's culminating events.
2. Board and staff reports of winter season's activities final events.
3. MHSA standing committees' appointments.
4. Election of 2013-14 officers.
5. Bids for State sites for 2014-2015 and remaining sites for 2013-2014.

SOFTBALL

NOTES FOR 2013 SEASON

In February, the following information for this year's softball season was mailed to softball coaches and emailed to softball school contacts - Softball Rules Book, Softball Rules Changes and Major Editorial Revisions, Points of Emphasis, General Rules and Regulations from the MHSA Handbook, MHSA/MOA Softball Rules Clinic Information, 2013 NFHS Softball Rules Interpretations and information on Illegal Pitches. If you have any questions on this information please contact Mark Beckman at the MHSA office.

MUSIC

AUDITIONS FOR ALL-STATE

The 2013 MHSA All-State Band, Chorus and Orchestra Festival auditions will be conducted using online submissions. The All-State information has been emailed to all schools, and it can also be accessed on the music page of the MHSA website.

Each director has been sent a unique audition code that corresponds to the individual band, chorus and orchestra programs. Any music director who plans to submit student auditions but did not receive a code should contact the MHSA office by emailing Jo Austin at jpAustin@mhsa.org.



GOLF

CLASS C GOLF

This year the MHSAA will continue the procedure for reporting scores that was implemented last spring. Class C schools will report all of their scores (qualifying and non-qualifying) on Varvee, the official statistics program of the MHSAA. Also, in addition to entering all scores in VarVee, Class C tournament managers will also be required to complete a form and send it to Brian Michelotti at the MHSAA verifying that any golfer who shot a qualifying score had a marker present. The form is linked with this mailing and also is located on the golf page of the MHSAA website at www.mhsaa.org.

If you have any questions, please contact Brian at the MHSAA office.

TRACK & FIELD

TRACK AND FIELD CLARIFICATIONS

Below are clarifications of some 2013 NFHS Track and Field Rules. Please share this information with your head track and field coach(es) and other appropriate personnel.

Crossbars

Effective January 1, 2013, the high jump and pole vault crossbar shall be circular (square with beveled edges or triangular crossbars shall no longer be legal for competition after that date). Crossbars are now being manufactured as circular cross bars and are the most commonly used crossbars.

Risk Minimization in Throwing Events

The nature of the sport has many events taking place concurrently. Due to implements being thrown adjacent to the running track and field event venues located inside the track, it is very important for meet management to make every effort in creating an environment which minimizes risk of injury for all parties involved at a track and field meet. In throwing events the landing sector should be marked off for safety with ropes, flags or other visible means which are placed well outside the sector lines to enhance the safety of spectators and athletes. Spectators and non-throwing competitors must be restricted to a safe area.

During both practice and competition, implements shall be carried outside the throwing sectors and returned to the throwing area. Implements shall never be thrown back. Following competition, all implements shall be removed from the competition area. Once competition begins there shall be no further practice in any area. Head event judges should declare how the event will be conducted and cover safety rules for the event. Competitors violating safety rules shall receive a warning, and for a second offense, shall be disqualified from the event. Spectators violating safety rules at the site should be warned once and for a second violation shall be removed from the competition area.

Illegal Uniform Penalty

The wearing of an illegal uniform is prohibited. The penalty for wearing an illegal uniform has been changed to a competitor warning and then disqualification from the event if the rule is violated a second time. The NFHS Track and Field Committee felt it was a more appropriate penalty for the severity of the actual violation. For the first illegal uniform violation, the competitor will be issued a warning and told that another uniform violation shall result in a disqualification from the event. Without holding up competition, the competitor shall be required to make the uniform legal before any further competition. The event judge or the observing meet official should write on a card the athlete's name, the event, time and date of the uniform violation and give this information to the meet referee. The meet referee shall notify or cause to be notified, by way of a designee or various means of communication, the head coach of the offending school of the competitor's violation and warning or disqualification. The protocol for communication of the violation to the coach should be established by the officials before the meet begins. The responsibility remains with the coach to have athletes in legal uniforms for competition. Preventative

officiating, along with the coach and athlete being accountable to show up in a legal uniform, are paramount. Remember, should a competitor need to change the uniform, such action should take place in an appropriate area and not cause a delay in the progress of the meet.

Positioning of Pole Vault Crossbar

Rule 7-5-19 has been changed to state that the range for the position of the standards will be 18 inches (45.7cm) measured beyond the vertical plane of the top of the stopboard, zero (0) point, up to a maximum distance of 31.5 inches (80cm) in the direction of the landing surface. The change in range provides for better placement of the crossbar for purposes of risk minimization.

Legal Implements in Warm-ups

To reduce the likelihood of illegal implements being used in competition, only legal implements are allowed in warm-ups. By permitting only the use of legal implements in warm-ups as well as competition, the risk of injury is reduced and likewise, the risk of using an illegal implement in error during competition is very unlikely.

Relay Baton Exchanges

New language in Rule 5-10-7 Note clarifies that the baton shall be handed from the incoming runner to the outgoing runner within the exchange zone. The incoming and outgoing runners shall not simultaneously touch the baton outside the 20-meter exchange zone, including the acceleration zone or beyond the end of the exchange zone. The baton is the point of reference to determine when and where the exchange commences and is completed.

WRESTLING

STATE TOURNAMENT COMPLETED

The 2013 State All-Class Wrestling Tournament was held at MetraPark in Billings on February 9-10, 2013. On Saturday, the championship matches began at 4:00 p.m. instead of having the championships begin at the traditional 6:00 p.m. start time. The MHSAA was able to move this time up because the consolation championships were wrestled on twelve mats instead of six mats. This change was well received and allowed traveling schools to drive home sooner, or if teams were staying overnight in Billings, they were able to eat at a reasonable hour. If you have any suggestions or concerns in regard to the earlier start time, please contact Brian at the MHSAA Office.

The MHSAA appreciates all tournament personnel, including the numerous volunteers, for ensuring the success of this All-Class event over the years. Everyone involved will continue to work on making the next State All-Class Wrestling Tournament even better for wrestlers, coaches and fans.

VOLLEYBALL

SOLID WHITE VOLLEYBALL TO BE USED IN THE 2013 VOLLEYBALL SEASON

For 2013 MHSAA 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 MHSAA post season play, the Mikasa® VQ2000 volleyball shall be used. Please share this information with your volleyball coaches and other appropriate personnel. Should you have any questions or concerns about the above, please do not hesitate to contact Scott McDonald at the MHSAA Office.

UNIFORM REMINDER

Beginning July 1, 2016, the volleyball uniform rule will be changed. It will state that either the libero or her teammates shall wear a solid-colored uniform top and which shall meet the following guidelines:

- the solid-colored uniform top shall clearly contrast from the predominant color(s) of the teammates' uniform top. Predominant color(s) is the color(s) appearing on approximately half of the uniform.
- Sleeves shall be the same color as the body of the uniform top.

- c. Piping/trim not exceeding 1 inch in total at its widest point may be placed along the seams and may be a different color(s) than the uniform top.
- d. Lettering and collars may be different color(s) than the uniform top.
- e. Numbers shall be a contrasting color to the uniform top and meet all other specifications in Rule 4-2-4.

The rationale for this change is when both the libero and her teammates are in multi-colored uniforms of the same color combinations, it can be very difficult to discern the libero's legality when playing the ball. Requiring either the libero or the other team members to be in a solid colored uniform of contrasting color will assist the referees in determining legal playing actions.

Schools should plan now for this new uniform requirement. There are several options as to the use of the solid-colored uniform top by the individual team: The team may choose to have only the libero wear the solid-color top and thus purchase special uniforms. The team may choose to have one set of solid-colored uniforms opposite a second set of contrast.

On the MHSa website (www.mhsa.org) under the Volleyball Section, you will find a power point presentation called "Volleyball Solid Color Jersey Change—Effective July 1, 2016" that will explain and give examples of this new volleyball uniform requirement. If you have any question about this uniform rule change, please call Scott McDonald at the MHSa Office.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- March 11** First date for practice in softball, track & field, tennis and Classes B & C golf
- March 11** MOA Qualifying Exam for softball opens
- March 14** First date for competition in golf (Classes B and C)
- March 22** First date for competition in softball, track & field and tennis (all classes)
- March 26** District Music Festival – 9 (large groups only)
- March 31** Easter
- April 8** District Music Festivals – 9 (solos and ensembles only)
- April 12-13** District Music Festival – 5, 7, 8, 11, 12
- April 15-16** MHSa Executive Board Meeting - Helena
- April 18-19** District Music Festival 6
- April 19-20** District Music Festivals – 1, 2, 4, 10, 13

SAT/ACT

eKnowledge

eKnowledge, a leading provider of educational material, continues its program of distributing free SAT and ACT test prep programs to schools and students in NFHS member state associations.

The SAT or ACT Power Prep™ program, which contains more than 170 video lessons, hundreds of practice questions and detailed explanations, 18 quizzes and more than 40 hours of class work, has a retail price of \$200. However, this package is offered for free by the eKnowledge Alliance Partnership. There is a nominal charge for shipping and handling for each program donated. In the past seven years, the Alliance Partnership has donated more than 200,000 programs valued at more than \$39 million and continues to grow each year to help more students and families. With the help of a free SAT or ACT Power Prep™ program, students can prepare for the spring and summer ACT and SAT test dates. Please help support this valuable program by alerting your students and, most importantly, parents. Orders can be placed online at www.eknowledge.com/NFHS or by phone at 951-256-4076 (reference NFHS).

The MHSa and NFHS are pleased to help make this valuable resource available to the high school students we serve. If you have any questions regarding this program, please feel free to contact Lori Caputo, eKnowledge, via e-mail at loricaputo@eknowledge.com.

SPOTLIGHT TEAM OF THE WEEK

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The MHSa/Montana Ford Stores "Spotlight Team of the Week" Program continues to recognize teams from member high schools who exemplify the values of participating in high school activities. Teams are recognized who go above and beyond what is expected of them during practices, games and performances, modeling behaviors in other areas including community service, championing local and national causes/initiatives, and/or exhibiting courageous or visionary acts.

Information regarding the Montana Ford Stores "Spotlight Team of the Week" Program can be found on the MHSa website (www.mhsa.org) including the form to use to nominate a team(s).

The Montana High School Association is excited to announce the next recipient of the MHSa / Montana Ford Stores Spotlight Team of the Week. On March 18th the award was given to the North Toole County High School Boys' and Girls' Basketball Teams.

The North Toole County High School Boys' and Girls' Basketball Teams' school support goes above and beyond in the following ways:

On December 22, 2012, the Sunburst Refiners basketball teams were scheduled to play in Simms, which required a scheduled departure time of 12:15. Instead, the teams boarded a bus in Sunburst at 7:30 AM en route to Great Falls. A couple of days prior to this, these teams were encouraged to think about ways that they could 'give back' or in the terms of the theme for this year's Youth Group, 'pay it forward'. Because of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings, the students' mission was to attempt 26 random acts of kindness, but in reality there were many more than that completed this day. Here are some examples of what was done:

- Some students committed to buying dog and cat food and donating it to the animal shelter.
- Others committed to helping at the rescue mission in the following weeks, and various students will coordinate with local middle school students to donate tie-blankets to the children's receiving home.
- Other actions during the day were completely random and spur of the moment such as:
 - Someone paid for a tank of gas
 - Some gave food to the homeless
 - Some approached members of the military and thanked them for their service
 - Some donated toys and games to the children in the hospital
 - Some passed out bottled water to a band playing Christmas music at Wal-Mart.

High school sports and activities have the greatest number of participants of any types of outside school activities in the nation. Lessons learned by participating in high school activities go beyond developing sport/activity specific skills to include team work, dedication, service to others etc. North Toole County High School Boys' and Girls' Basketball teams, through their shining example of school spirit and community support, are very deserving to be recognized as the next "spotlight" teams.

ATTACHMENTS

- [2013 Track & Field and Cross Country Rules Interpretations](#)
- [2013 Volleyball Rules Changes](#)
- [2013 Golf, Softball, Tennis, Track & Field Rules Clinic Instructions](#)
- [2013 Class C Golf Qualifying Scores Report Form](#)
- [MHSa/Your Local Ford Stores Spotlight Team of the Week Nomination Form](#)
- [Fundamentals of Athletic/Activity Regulations](#)
- [April Calendar](#)