



**A Montana High School Association Publication**  
**1 South Dakota Avenue**  
**Helena, MT 59601**  
**(406) 442-6010 (406) 442-8250 fax**  
[www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org)  
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## EXECUTIVE CORNER

### BITS AND PIECES

Fall activities are under way! We are experiencing higher temperatures than usual for this time of the year and there were reports of smoke-filled air in some areas of the state at the beginning of fall practice. This past weekend we experienced more lightning delays and cancellations than I can ever remember. I believe the information we sent out to schools earlier that week was helpful especially reinforcing the lightning policy and understanding the process where game officials, coaches and administration work together regarding suspending and resuming play. We did have some concern expressed, though, with the procedure. If you don't have the technology available such as Weather Bug, Coach Smart or a lightning meter, you must use the NFHS policy of waiting thirty minutes between visible strikes. If you have Weather Bug or Coach Smart, you have to check what sites those programs use for reporting from your area. For example, you may be in Dutton or Fairfield but the program uses the Great Falls Airport as the reporting station and in those cases you must revert back to NFHS policy. A lightning meter is the most accurate for being able to provide precise information to make your decisions. With that said, removing teams from the field seemed to work well but many administrators were concerned that fans did not leave the stadiums during these delays. It is imperative you announce that play has been suspended and the facility needs to be evacuated. Brian Michelotti emailed sample announcements to use last week. It is the administration's responsibility to make sure the players and students have been evacuated to safe areas, but if fans do not leave it becomes their own individual responsibility for ignoring the evacuation announcements after being notified by game administration of the risk.

In the September Quick Bits I like to reemphasize the importance of reviewing the eligibility of each of your student participants, whether transfer students, foreign exchange students or established students. The areas that have to be monitored closely for all students' eligibility are age, academics, and semesters. Remember that students who are academically ineligible are not eligible to compete at any level of play (sub varsity or varsity) for the entire semester. If they establish academic eligibility at the end of the semester they become eligible the Monday morning following the week the semester ends.

Transfer student issues continue to surface and the following are important points that must be reviewed before declaring a student varsity-eligible after a transfer **(There have been more attempts by parents this year to try to gain varsity eligibility for their son or daughter by establishing two residences):**

1. First, as stated above, they must be academically eligible, age eligible and semester eligible.
2. Transfer students have to be checked for residency – **A change of residence is the actual physical relocation by the parents or legal guardians (guardianship must be established one year before the transfer) 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. Mom or dad cannot establish a second residence (for whatever reason) for transfer eligibility. By MHSAA By-Laws it is the responsibility of the principal to verify and validate residency.**

3. Is it a parent-to-parent move? – A parent-to-parent move can only be from parent to parent, not parent-to-grandparent or parent-to-aunt/uncle or parent-to-legal guardian etc. Also it must be the first parent-to-parent move in the student's high school career for him/her to be varsity eligible.
4. A transfer can occur to a legal guardian but for the student to be varsity eligible that guardianship must have been established one year before the transfer.
5. Transfer – Return to Parent (new two years ago) - A student who has attended high school and resides in a district other than where the student's parent(s) resides, and who subsequently returns to live with the student's parents becomes immediately transfer eligible for varsity competition in the parent's district. This can be applied only one time during the student's career. The new Return to Parent Form must be completed.
6. Foreign Exchange students are transfer students and must meet all eligibility requirements except that these students will be living with a host family in your attendance area. Foreign Exchange students cannot have graduated from a high school in their country and they must be placed through a CSJET approved program.
7. Also, the membership, by two-thirds majority vote at the 2008 Annual Meeting, eliminated the transfer exception for court orders, ward of the court and ward of the state designations. Now, if a transfer student has been court ordered to a school's attendance area a hardship petition could be filed if the court order was a protection order and not because of criminal or bad behavior by the student in question.
8. Hardship Petitions – A request to waive the transfer rule can be filed for a student whose transfer was not a bona fide family move if the transfer was absolutely necessary, not athletically motivated and beyond the student's control (again no drug or alcohol use, criminal behavior or attempting to avoid a penalty).
9. Reminder – there is no provision for an emancipated 18 year old student to be varsity eligible –Transfer Rule Interpretation # 6 states - For the purpose of these rules a student cannot establish a residence apart from his/her parents. If he/she habitually makes his/her home with a relative and the student changes schools because the relative changes residence, the student will lose eligibility time in accordance with the transfer rule. A student, both of whose parents are deceased and who has no legal guardian, may change high schools without loss of eligibility time. However, a student may not change school systems within a city or school district.

If you have any eligibility questions/concerns please feel free to contact me.

And finally, as our student-activity participants and our coaches take part in thousands of contests this fall activity season, we appreciate your continued efforts to stress good sporting behaviors by coaches and players. Important behaviors to promote include good character, loyalty, class and respect. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar once said, "A lot of young players don't really know much about the history of the game and a lot of them are missing out on what the game is all about, especially the whole concept of sportsmanship and teamwork." It should be part of our mission to make sure our young players understand and put into practice



these important life-long concepts. Please consider using the components of the MHSA / U.S. Bank Sportsmanship Program to assist in promoting and rewarding good sporting behaviors for student athletes, coaches and fans.

On behalf of the MHSA Executive Board and MHSA Staff, we hope for continued good days for fall activities at your school.

Mark Beckman  
Executive Director

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2013-14 DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS

Please note: the 2013-14 Directory of Schools has been sent to all MHSA member schools recently. Please review your school's entries and confirm their accuracy.

If you notice any errors, please contact the MHSA office. If some of your coaches have not yet been hired or if your administrative staff or coaching staff change, please call the MHSA office or e-mail [jholmes@mhsa.org](mailto:jholmes@mhsa.org) so we can update the Directory and our database.

### TOURNAMENT MANAGERS' WORKSHOP

Anyone who will be managing a MHSA Basketball, Golf, Softball, Tennis, Track & Field, Volleyball or Wrestling Post-Season Event during the 2013-14 school year is, by MHSA Executive Board action, required to view the on-line Tournament Managers' Workshop for their activity once every five (5) years. The workshop focuses on pre-tournament preparation, on-site procedures during the event and MHSA guidelines and regulations.

The Volleyball and Fall Golf Tournament Managers' Workshops are now available for viewing. Go to [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org); click on Tournament Managers' Workshop and read the instructions provided. Tournament Managers will be sent an e-mail reminder of this requirement.

If you have any questions or concerns about the workshop, please call Scott McDonald at the MHSA office or email him at [smcdonald@mhsa.org](mailto:smcdonald@mhsa.org).

### MIAAA ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Montana Interscholastic Administrators Association would like to encourage educators around the state to nominate deserving individuals for the MIAAA Activities Director of the Year Award. One award is given to each classification, as well as an All-Class Activities Director of the Year Award.

Also, the MIAAA is sponsoring a Gold Pass Award of Merit for long time athletic directors or principals who have made significant contributions to Montana student activities. This is a very prestigious award that presents the recipient with a lifetime pass that is valid at any MHSA contest or tournament.

Application forms for these recognition opportunities are attached.

### 2013 STATE CROSS COUNTRY MEET IN MISSOULA

The 2013 State Cross Country Meet will be staged in Missoula on October 26. The competition will take place at University of Montana Golf Course. Brian Fortmann, Activities Director of Missoula Big Sky High School, is the meet director. Information will be mailed shortly from his office with logistics concerning this meet. Mr. Fortmann can be reached at 728-2401.

To view the 2013 MHSA State and NFHS Cross Country rules addressing uniform and sportsmanship items that all coaches and competitors will be expected to adhere to go to [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org), click on "Cross Country" and then click on the "2013 State Cross Country Policies and Procedures and NFHS Rules" link.

The schedule for the 2013 State Cross Country meet is as follows:

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Class AA Boys  | 11:00 am |
| Class A Boys   | 11:30 am |
| Class AA Girls | 12:00 pm |
| Class A Girls  | 12:35 pm |
| Class B Boys   | 1:10 pm  |
| Class C Boys   | 1:40 pm  |
| Class B Girls  | 2:10 pm  |
| Class C Girls  | 2:45 pm  |

Entries must be entered online using Direct Athletics by October 22 by 4:00 p.m.

### MHSA HANDBOOK ON WEBSITE

The MHSA Handbook is available online. Visit our website at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org) to view the Handbook in PDF format. We hope this will assist administrators, coaches, counselors, and fine arts directors in obtaining copies of MHSA information that is most useful to them. It's also a means of making information available to parents, especially the sections which include student eligibility and other participation information.

## AWARDS REMINDER

### TROPHIES AND AWARDS

Because of questions received in the MHSA office concerning conference trophies, the following information from the MHSA Handbook is offered:

1. Conference trophies are given in football (except for Class AA), Class A softball and Class A soccer (they are considered district or divisional trophies).
2. In other sports, if a conference would like to award a trophy (first place only) for its conference champion it must be ordered through the MHSA office and must be paid for by the conference. The MHSA office staff does not automatically order conference trophies because some conferences choose not to award them.
3. Trophies that are awarded by MHSA rule will be given to both schools if the activity is cooperatively sponsored, but the office will need to know which school was presented the trophy at the tournament. Also, if there is a co-op conference champion or a co-conference champion the conference still needs to order those trophies through MHSA and pay for both.
4. Individual miniature trophies for first, second and third place MHSA state championship events may be purchased from the Association's award provider.

Also, only one (1) trophy will be awarded at any MHSA meet or tournament when a maximum of five (5) teams are participating. However, the conference may elect to buy a second place trophy through MHSA if they so desire.

5. Divisions may purchase divisional medals beyond the first and second place medals provided by the MHSA in speech and drama, golf, tennis, track and field and wrestling. The medals must be ordered through the MHSA office ten (10) weeks before they will be needed.

## FOOTBALL

### 2013 MHSA POINT OF EMPHASIS – ELIMINATE HELMET TO HELMET CONTACTS

With the passage of the Dylan Stygers' Concussion Law in Montana, all coaches and officials must work to increase the safety of our youth in Montana. The NFHS Football Rules Committee has an excellent point of emphasis this year in regard to prohibition on contact to and with the helmet. We will be adopting this for our Montana Point of Emphasis as well. Please focus on this issue this year:

In an effort to minimize the risk of catastrophic head and neck injuries, the NFHS Football Rules Committee continues to urge KEEPING THE HEAD OUT OF FOOTBALL. While the wearing of a football helmet can never guarantee the elimination of head and neck injuries, all levels of football have increased their focus on reducing these types of injuries as much as possible. It is recognized that one of the biggest steps in that endeavor is to eliminate direct helmet-to-helmet contact and any other contact both with and to the helmet.

Direct helmet-to-helmet contact and any other contact both with and to the helmet must be eliminated from the sport of football at the interscholastic level! Using the helmet to inflict punishment on the opponent is dangerous and illegal. Coaches and game officials must be diligent in promoting the elimination of contact to and with the helmet, as follows:

- Coaches -- through consistent adherence to proper and legal coaching techniques.
- Game Officials -- through strict enforcement of pertinent playing rules and game administrations.

Coaches must insist that players play "heads-up" football by utilizing proper and safe techniques, - not only during games, but on the practice field as well. Coaches must shoulder the responsibility of consistently reinforcing with their players that using the top or face of the helmet goes against all tenets of the basic techniques of safe and legal blocking and tackling.

The no. 1 responsibility for game officials must be player safety. Any initiation of contact with the helmet is illegal; therefore, it must be penalized consistently and without warning. Player safety is really a matter of attitude, technique, attention and supervision. Football players will perform as they are taught; therefore, there must be a concentrated focus on consistently enforcing the existing rules. And contrary to most other rule enforcements, when in doubt, contact to and with the helmet should be ruled as a foul by game officials. Contact to and with the helmet may be considered a flagrant act and may be penalized by disqualification if a game official considers the foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury.

Consistent education, recognition and penalty enforcement of contact to and with the helmet must be adhered to throughout practice time and contests, regardless of the situation. Whether it is in the first practice, last practice, first quarter of the first game or overtime of the state championship, contact to and with the helmet must be discouraged and taken out of the game by coaches, players and game officials. It is hoped that this concentrated approach will be a positive step toward reinforcing player safety!

#### Reminder for PA Announcers

The public address announcer at education-based athletic events plays a critical role in creating the proper atmosphere where high school sporting events can be enjoyed by all participants. Below are the MHSA Rules and Regulations in regard to PA Announcers:

#### Public Address Announcers

1. Announcers shall not attempt to be bigger than the game or event by doing play-by-play or by providing commentary in an effort to draw attention to themselves.
2. Announcers shall understand that because they have a tremendous influence on the crowd and that cheerleading or antics designed to incite the crowd for the purpose of gaining an advantage for their team is inappropriate.
3. Announcers shall promote good sportsmanship by what they say and how they say it.
4. Announcers shall treat the opponents and their fans as guests, not the enemy.
5. Announcers shall respect the individuals who are responsible for the conduct and administration of athletic games and events, such as coaches, officials and

administrators, and avoid making any comments that reflect positively or negatively on them.

6. Announcers shall respect the participants of all teams and remain neutral in regard to the outcome of plays or performances of the participants.
7. Announcers shall be competent. This means following approved announcing guidelines, expectations and policies, such as emergency procedures, provided by the administration or the host facility.
8. Announcers shall be prepared, such as being familiar with the correct pronunciations of the participants' names, knowing the rules of the sport, the officials' signals and how the game is played.
9. Announcers shall exhibit professional behavior and represent their school, organization or association with respect and dignity at all times by what they say, how they act and how they appear.
10. Announcers shall not use alcohol and tobacco products at the venue.

## MUSIC

### MUSIC COMMITTEE FALL MEETING

The MHSA Music Committee's annual fall meeting was held September 15-16, 2013 in Helena. Various items were reviewed including preparation for All-State Band, Chorus and Orchestra Festival.

## SPIRIT

### SPIRIT COACHING REQUIREMENTS

There is much confusion over whether or not spirit (cheer and dance) coaches are required to take the MHSA Coaches Education Program. Listed below are the only three mandatory requirements for spirit coaches to complete:

- MHSA Spirit Rules Clinic (available on mhsa.org must be completed before August 30<sup>th</sup>).
- AACCA Safety Certification (available on mhsa.org or nfhslearn.org. This is completed only once every four years.
- MHSA Concussion Course (available through nfhslearn.org).

If there are questions or concerns, please contact Janie Holmes at the MHSA Office.

## VOLLEYBALL

### VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS' PARTICIPATION LIMITS

Individual volleyball players shall be allowed to play in no more than two competition matches/levels (freshman, sophomore, junior varsity, varsity) in any school's dual match. Entering a contest for one live ball counts as participation in one match. The player limitation rule doesn't apply during invitational or dual tournament play. Montana volleyball teams will always follow the MHSA match limitation rule when playing in neighboring states.

### SUB-VARSITY PLAYERS STARTING IN THE VARSITY MATCH

Also from the Volleyball Section of the 2013-14 MHSA Handbook the following is the rule which addresses sub-varsity players starting in a varsity contest: The Association prohibits students of member schools from entering a preliminary contest and then starting in the varsity contest the same day, except Class C when there are insufficient non-varsity players to play a junior varsity contest, schools may, by mutual consent of the coaches involved, play no more than two (2) varsity starters in the j.v. contest. This rule is an MHSA Rule and MOA

Volleyball Officials are not required to enforce this rule. MOA Volleyball Officials will enforce NFHS Volleyball Rule (6-2-1) which states: a team shall consist of six players to begin the first set of the match. If a team has fewer than six players to begin the match, a forfeit shall be declared unless the MHSA has allowed a sub-varsity team to begin the match with 5 players. (See Rule 11-2-2 for time-outs.)

### **WARM-UPS DURING POST SEASON PLAY**

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.

### **BREAST CANCER AWARENESS EVENTS**

As recommended by the MHSA Committee, the MHSA Office will permit a school to modify the volleyball uniform from the school's colors for one (1) week during the regular volleyball season to be designated as Breast Cancer Awareness week. Schools must contact the MHSA Office for this approval. This interpretation will be applied to all sports.

### **AVAILABILITY OF ELIGIBLE OFFICIALS FOR POST SEASON ASSIGNMENT**

For the 2013 Volleyball Season, Volleyball Official 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 MOA 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.

## **BASKETBALL**

Please give the following items, which are specific to basketball competitions, to the appropriate personnel in your school.

### **QUARTER ELIGIBILITY FOR ALL CLASSES**

The Association prohibits all students of member schools from entering more than five (5) quarters of basketball in any one day [Class C-six (6) quarters]. Should a non-varsity contest be played using a variation in the length of quarters or the number of quarters played, one of the approved variations shown on the basketball page of the MHSA website must be used. The applicable game limit interpretations are also included on the website ([www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org)).

### **COACHING BOX**

For MHSA regular and post-season play, a twelve-foot coaching box will be used. The coaching box shall be outlined outside the side of the court on which the scorer's and timer's table and team benches are located. The area shall be bounded by a line 28 feet from the end line towards the half court line and a line no more than twelve feet from the 28-foot line back towards the end line and team bench. These lines shall be located off the court and be two (2) inches wide.

### **SCORER'S SHIRT**

For MHSA regular and post-season play it is mandatory that the official scorer wear a black and white striped shirt and that his/her location be clearly marked by an "X" twelve (12) inches long and two (2) inches wide that shall be placed on the floor out-of-bounds directly in front of the official scorer to help substitutes and officials with the proper location of the scorer.

### **MHSA BASKETBALL MERCY RULE**

For the 2013-14 Basketball Season, the Basketball Mercy Rule will again be used by all MHSA member schools.

It will be used for all levels of play, (Varsity, JV, Sophomore and Frosh) in the second half only, once a team has a forty (40) point or better lead against their opponent, a running clock will ensue until the end of the game even if the difference in the score drops below the forty point margin. The only time the clock will stop will be between quarters, time outs, and when replacing an injured or disqualified player.

In the second half of a basketball game, the official scorer and timer will be responsible for running the clock continuously except for the following situations, once a team has a forty (40) point or better lead against their opponent.

1. Once the clock signals the end of a quarter or overtime period, the clock will be stopped until play is started for the next quarter or overtime period.
2. Once an official signals for a called time-out, the clock will be stopped until play is started following the time-out.
3. Once an official beckons or bench personnel come onto the floor to attend to an injured player, the clock will be stopped until play is started again.
4. Once an official informs the head coach that a player has been disqualified from further participation in the game, the clock will be stopped until play is started again.

The clock will be restarted when:

1. The ball touches or is touched by a player on the court.
2. If play is resumed by a throw-in, the clock shall be started when the ball touches, or is legally touched by, a player on the court after it is released by the thrower.

Game management must inform the official scorer and timer of this MHSA Basketball Mercy Rule and the provisions of the rule.

If you have questions about the above issues, please call Scott McDonald in the MHSA Office.

## **AIM HIGHER**

### **AIM HIGHER CONTINUES**

We will continue the program this year, but the number of workshops offered during 2013-14 will be scaled back. Until sponsorship is secured, workshops have been scheduled in four central areas. We may add a 5<sup>th</sup> workshop in the spring. If we are able to add a corporate sponsor during this school year, additional workshops will be incorporated during the spring.

The AIM Higher Program will continue to include sessions on leadership, mentoring, team captain training, hazing awareness, drug prevention and sportsmanship. The 2013-14 AIM Higher schedule is included with this month's Quick Bits. The cost of the workshop will continue to be \$10 per participant, which has been the cost since 1992-93. Please consider registering your school for one of the scheduled dates as soon as possible for this worthwhile opportunity for your students.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

[MIAAA Forms](#)  
[2013-14 AIM Higher Schedule](#)  
[General Instructions for Football Line to Gain Crews and Clock Operators](#)  
[Football Pre-Game Information - 80 yards](#)  
[Football Pre-Game Information - Regulation Field](#)  
[Basketball Court Diagram](#)