



A Montana High School Association Publication
1 South Dakota Avenue
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 442-6010 (406) 442-8250 fax
www.mhsa.org
September 2015

EXECUTIVE CORNER

BITS AND PIECES

Fall activities are under way! I am very pleased to report that the MHSAA has signed the largest one-year corporate sponsorship agreement in the history of the Association. Montana Army National Guard has been a valued sponsor for many years, and this year they exponentially increased their yearly contribution to our Association. Their generous support will assist us in many ways including the following:

- Continuation of the Academic All Team Program
- Booth space at various events
- Sponsor of all MHSAA publications
- Provide a souvenir credential (pass) for players and coaches at all MHSAA state events (replacing sponsorship of state programs).
- Title sponsor of the AIM Higher Program – including providing the resources to produce a video for distribution to use by schools for their entire student body to share this outstanding information on leadership, mentoring, sportsmanship, hazing awareness and drug prevention.
- Assisting in the general support of all MHSAA activities

I want to express our appreciation to MTARNG for their support and commitment to high school activities. They definitely understand the value of activities as the “other half of education”.

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 – they can practice if the school allows) 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 the past few years 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 four 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 Return to Parent Form must be completed.
- 6) Foreign Exchange students (with a J-1 Visa and **now the F-1 is included**) 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. Simon Nguyen once said, “Victory is remembered at most for two decades; an act of good sportsmanship is remembered for a lifetime.” And my favorite sportsmanship quote is from Knute Rockne who said, “One man practicing good sportsmanship is far better than 50 others preaching it.” 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 MHSAA / U.S. Bank Sportsmanship Program to assist in promoting and rewarding good sporting behaviors for student athletes, coaches and fans.



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

Mark Beckman
Executive Director

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

2015-2016 DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS

Please note: the 2015-2016 Directory of Schools will be sent to all MHSА member schools in September. Please review your school's entries and confirm their accuracy.

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

MHSА HANDBOOK ON WEBSITE

The MHSА Handbook is available online. Visit our website at 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 MHSА 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.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLANNING GUIDE MAILED

Each school's activities director will be sent an Emergency Action Planning Guide. Included will be the printed guide with a training DVD inside the back cover. These guides are sponsored in part by the NFHS Foundation to aid high schools in developing emergency procedures for after-school practices and events.

TOURNAMENT MANAGERS' WORKSHOP

Anyone who will be managing a MHSА Basketball, Golf, Softball, Tennis, Track & Field, Volleyball or Wrestling Post-Season Event during the 2015-16 school year is, by MHSА 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 MHSА guidelines and regulations.

The Volleyball and Fall Golf Tournament Managers' Workshops are now available for viewing. Go to 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 done the Tournament Managers' Workshop in the last four years, please email Kip Ryan letting him know the year that you completed your workshop.

If you have any questions or concerns about the tournament managers' workshop, please call Kip Ryan at the MHSА office or email him at krayan@mhsa.org.

MIAAA ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Montana Interscholastic Athletic 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 MHSА contest or tournament.

Application forms for these recognition opportunities are attached.

2015 STATE CROSS COUNTRY MEET IN GREAT FALLS

The 2015 State Cross Country Meet will be staged in Great Falls on October 24. The competition will take place at Eagle Falls Golf Course. Gary DeGooyer, Activities Director of Great Falls Public Schools, is the meet director. Information will be mailed shortly from his office with logistics concerning this meet. Mr. DeGooyer can be reached at 268-6082.

To view the 2015 MHSА 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, click on "Cross Country" and then click on the "2015 State Cross Country Policies and Procedures and NFHS Rules" link.

The schedule for the 2015 State Cross Country Meet is as follows:

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

Entries must be entered online using Athletic.net by October 18 by 4:00 p.m.

AWARDS REMINDER

TROPHIES AND AWARDS

Because of questions received in the MHSА office concerning conference trophies, the following information from the MHSА 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 their conferences champion it must be ordered through the MHSА office and must be paid for by the conference. The MHSА office staff does not automatically order conference trophies because some conferences choose not to award them.
3. Trophies that are awarded by MHSА 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 MHSА and pay for both.
4. Individual miniature trophies for first, second and third place MHSА state championship events may be purchased from the Association's award provider.

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

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

FOOTBALL

Defenseless Player in Blocking Situations:

Questions from a coach - During the game this past Friday night, we were penalized on two of our punt returns for such blocks. The blocks were without a doubt "de-cleaters" but were against defenders who were in a position to make the tackle. My interpretation was that if a player is not involved with the play and is targeted, then that is when a penalty would and should be called but the blocks in question were not these types. We made an adjustment so that we would not put our kids in a position to be penalized any more but it certainly took away from what I saw as an opportunity for big returns.

Answer – Great question! Here is the proper way to officiate and a teaching opportunity for coaches on this issue in Montana:

- If in the judgment of the official there is an unnecessary block against a defenseless player (regardless where the opponent is on the field), by rule a personal foul should be called without hesitation.
- Coaches concerned about the judgment call by the officials in these situations should instruct players to avoid applying questionably excessive blocks on all of their opponents, and should be taught appropriate blocking techniques in these situations. An opponent can always be blocked effectively without "de-cleating".

The NFHS Point of Emphasis (POE) this year is risk minimization and one section is dedicated to "What is Excessive?" The last statement in this POE states the following:

While a contact may be legal, analysis and sound judgment must also determine whether the hit was unnecessary or excessive. Coaches and game officials must work together to minimize risk to players from unnecessary and excessive contact by proper coaching from coaches and assessment of penalties by game officials.

Over the past years, we have seen a major cultural change in football across the country and we must ensure that everyone involved uses different methods to minimization risk.

Sideline Management – Restricting the amount of sideline passes

Officials and coaches have had challenges lately with too many individuals located in the sideline area during their football games. Spectators realize that this is the best seat in the stadium and with more individuals migrating close to the field and watching the game directly on the sideline, it has created a problem. Allowing unauthorized spectators close to the field of play is a safety risk to players and coaches and can become a huge liability issue for schools and a game management issue for officials.

We have a variety of football facilities across the state. Many times a fence or a track separates the spectators from the field area, but regardless, MHSAs Rules and Regulations requires that schools erect sideline barriers for all football contests. These barriers provide a clearly defined area where spectators must not enter. School administration should create sideline passes that only allow authorized school personnel or legitimate media members to be in the sideline area during games. Also, in order to manage the sideline easier, these people should be given a pass that is on a lanyard which is easily seen by game administration. It also provides the opportunity for game administration when distributing the pass to reinforce the areas where they will be located during the game (see below).

These authorized personnel and media should never be allowed inside restraining lines (dotted line 2 yards around the perimeter of the field) or in the team box area (25 yard line to 25 yard line on all fields) and should not be watching in the end zones.

By cleaning up the sideline area, this will help everyone involved with managing the game.

MHSA Mercy Rule Reminder

We had several questions about the MHSA Mercy Rule. The rule states - Classes A, B and C: In any Class A, B or C (8 and 6 player) football game, if at any time the score differential reaches 35 points or more, the clock will **not be stopped** when:

- A. The ball goes out-of-bounds.
- B. A forward pass is incomplete.
- C. A fair catch is made or awarded.
- D. A touchback occurs.
- E. A first down is declared.

If the score differential falls below 35 points, normal timing procedures will be utilized. The clock will continue to be stopped on all other situations as specified by National Federation Rule 3.4.4 (penalty, time out, end of period).

The clock must be stopped after a score occurs and may not resume until the ensuing kickoff occurs.

SPIRIT

SPIRIT COACHING REQUIREMENTS

Listed below are the three mandatory requirements for spirit (cheer and dance) coaches to complete:

- MHSA Spirit Rules Clinic.
- AACCA Safety Certification on www.nfhslearn.com. This is completed only once every four years.
- MHSA Concussion Course (available through nfhslearn.com).

If your school will not be fielding a spirit team until the winter season and you have not previously informed the MHSA office, please contact Janie Holmes at jholmes@mhsa.org.

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 2015-16 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.)

AVAILABILITY OF ELIGIBLE OFFICIALS FOR POST SEASON

For the 2015 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.

AIM HIGHER

The AIM Higher Program is entering its 25th year! We originally had four workshops scheduled for 2015-16; however we are excited to announce that Montana Army National Guard has signed on to be the title sponsor of this excellent program. The Montana Army National Guard's generous support will allow us to add additional workshops this spring.

The AIM Higher Program will continue to include sessions on leadership, mentoring, team captain training, hazing awareness, drug prevention and sportsmanship. In addition to the workshops, we are developing an AIM Higher video that will be made available for all of our schools covering these topics. This will allow every school to share this outstanding information with you your entire student body.

The 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 fee 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.

MUSIC

MUSIC REMINDERS

The following requirements apply to all schools with music programs:

Each school shall send a representative to the district rules and procedures meeting. The festival chair shall call a meeting following the annual MMEA festival chairs clinic held in conjunction with the MMEA conference.

The festival chair or a district representative shall attend the Festival Rules Clinic held in conjunction with the MMEA conference each fall. The Festival Chairs' Meeting will be held on Friday, October 16th at the MMEA Convention. Erik Engebretson, MHSA Music Committee Chair and Band Director from Malta High School, will conduct the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

[MIAAA Forms](#)

[2015-16 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](#)