

FOOTBALL

First Round Playoffs

Classes AA, A, B, Eight-Player and Six-Player October 27-28

Quarter Final Playoffs

Classes AA, A, B, Eight-Player and Six-Player November 3-4

Semi-final Playoffs

Classes AA, A, B, Eight-Player and Six-Player November 10-11

State Championship Games

Classes AA, A, B, Eight-Player and Six-Player November 17-18

I - GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (1) There shall be no spring football for classes of schools.
- (2) It is mandatory that a stretcher be a part of the regular football field equipment for every football game.
- (3) It is recommended that the home team be responsible for seeing that a doctor is available on the football field for all season football games.
- (4) The Montana High School Association Executive Board shall establish the starting date for practice and the first allowable date when any contests may be played. No individual shall play in any Association contest until he/she has a minimum of ten (10) days of football practice of at least one practice session per day on ten different days (no practice permitted on Sunday), prior to the date of the first allowable game.

The initial ten (10) practices for each individual must be completed as a comprehensive, regularly scheduled team practice with the full coaching staff.

When determining what constitutes a MHSA practice that satisfies the language above in (4), the following criteria must be applied:

1. Practice must be at least one (1) hour long.
2. At least one full squad (varsity team/J.V. team/C squad) and their coaching staff must be present.
3. The athlete must participate in the entire practice.
4. Practice should include the majority of drills and conditioning that are the norm for that team or squad.
5. A practice the day of a game does not count (unless an athlete is practicing with another squad that does not have a game that day, i.e. a varsity team member who stays home and practices with the JV team that does not have a game that day).
6. Warm-ups or walk-throughs with the team prior to a game does not constitute a practice.

If a student begins his/her initial ten (10) days of required practices and that period of days is interrupted by sickness, injury, academic ineligibility or any other reason for a period of two weeks, then the student shall be required to practice an additional five (5) days and in cases of sickness or injury to produce a doctor's release.

Athletes participating on teams competing in MHSA post season play, which overlaps the beginning of the next MHSA sanctioned activity starting practice date, may be credited for practices during the overlap period toward meeting the minimum practice requirement of the overlapped activity season.

If a student transfers to a new school after completing the required days of preseason practices for their sport or activity, the student must complete an additional number of practices (equal to half the # of required practices for that sport or activity) at their new school.

- (5) Ten (10) football games will be the maximum limit for all football classifications exclusive of Association-sponsored playoffs.
- (6) The first three days of football practice will be a period of acclimation with no contact and no pads. The only football

equipment to be used is shoes and helmets. Non-contact is defined as no student-to-student contact. However, participants may contact dummies/shields held by others. [Also see Specialized Camp Rule, Rules & Regulations, Section (8)].

- (7) No football player shall be allowed to participate in more than eight (8) quarters per week (Sunday to Sunday) nor in more than two (2) games within a 48-hour period.

INTERPRETATION

Participation in one play in a game would constitute one (1) quarter.

1. Club team participation – During the MHSA football season, no more than five (5) participants in 11-player, no more than four (4) in 8-player or no more than three (3) in 6-player can compete in an outside football event on the same team.

- (8) Contact limitations: during the regular season and post season, football practice per team shall not exceed more than ninety (90) minutes of contact practice per week. During the initial **ten** practices (first two weeks of practice only) one intra-squad scrimmage is exempt from the ninety (90) minutes of contact.

Levels of Contact Defined:

The following levels do not count toward the 90-minute limit:

- A. Air – players run a drill unopposed without contact.
- B. Bags – drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface.
- C. Control – drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is predetermined the “winner” by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet.

The following levels count toward the 90-minute limit:

- D. Thud – drill is run at assigned speed through the moment of contact; no predetermined “winner.” Contact remains above the waist, players stay on their feet and a quick whistle end the drill.
- E. Live Action – drill is run in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground.

INTERPRETATION

A team may continue to dress in full pads for practice, but may only participate in “thud” drills, “live action” drills and game-like simulations no more than ninety minutes per team per week. It is assumed that when players are in shells (shorts, shoulder pads and helmets) no contact or simulations will occur. A team may participate in “air”, “bags” and “control drills and simulations at any point.

- (9) The football season officially ends with the last regularly scheduled game or the state championship game of each respective classification.
- (10) Contests interrupted because of events beyond the control of the responsible school administrative authority shall be continued from the point of interruption, unless the teams agree to terminate the contest with the existing score. Regular season contests continued from the point of interruption must be rescheduled before playoff competition begins. Playoff contests continued from the point of interruption must be rescheduled before the next playoff contest. Schools unable to mutually agree on contest dates must contact the MHSA office for a determination.
- (11) The playing rules as adopted and published by the National Federation of State High School Associations for the current year shall be followed for all games. By state association adoption the coin toss shall occur three (3) minutes prior to the game.
- (12) Halftime will be twelve (12) minutes with a mandatory additional three (3) minute warm-up period. The only exceptions to this rule are homecoming games, parents' nights etc.
- (13) Schools shall purchase sideline clips for chain crews and officials to use during games.

- (14) When the teams of two schools have met during the football season in the past five years, the school whose team last played on the field of the other shall have prior claim to this particular season's game on its own field. By mutual agreement other arrangements may be made, but the terms of this mutual agreement should be set down in written contract and/or master schedule. Where no such written contract or master schedule can be shown, the Executive Board will award the game in question to the school which last played the other away from home. Where equally fair alternatives present themselves, the Executive Director shall flip a coin to determine the site of the game. The two schools abide by this determination and the penalty for failing to accept this result shall be forfeiture of the game under consideration by the school failing to comply.

The provision stated in the previous paragraph will not apply if the schools concerned reach a satisfactory agreement, or if the conference to which these schools belong has definite rules or a master schedule for season's play. For the purpose of this rule, forfeited games shall be considered as games played. A school that forfeits a football game shall lose the home field advantage of the following year to the school who received the forfeit.

- (15) Games between teams from different districts and divisions are permissible at any time, provided they do not interfere with necessary elimination games, but these games will not be considered in determining district or divisional champions. Should teams which have already met during the season become the champions of their respective district or division, it will be necessary for them, if paired, to play again to determine which one will advance toward the finals for the championship in their class.
- (16) If two teams end the second half of the regular playing time of any football game played in Montana with a tie score, the tie must be broken, and a winner declared. The method used to break ties is published in the National Federation football rules.
- (17) Classes A, B and C: In A, B, Eight-Player or Six-Player football games, 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.
 - F. A score occurs, until the completion of the try. The clock will be stopped during the official's timeout between a score and the ensuing kickoff.

If the score differential falls below 35 points, normal timing procedures will be utilized.

In Class AA, this rule applies at the beginning of the **third** quarter in all games (varsity and sub varsity). If the score falls below 35 points, the running clock timing rules will continue to 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).

- (18) No school is required to take part in any contests or athletic events, but once entered, teams are obligated to participate in a contest or athletic event to its normal conclusion unless the contest is terminated by mutual consent of the school officials involved due to unusual weather or game conditions, or situations which could be hazardous to participants or spectators. Any coach is prohibited from unilaterally refusing to play.

If a school fails to complete contests or athletic events that they have entered, the violating school would be subject to penalties as deemed appropriate and necessary by the Executive Director.

No school is required to take part in any game or tournament, but when once entered under the plan outlined, schools shall carry out their part of the program in fairness to all other schools represented. Any team taking part in season play is automatically entered in to the first tournament held in that district or in that

division. That team shall not be allowed to withdraw from playing in such tournament without the specific approval of the Executive Director. The penalty for violation shall be as outlined under Penalties, Article VIII, Section (2).

- (19) Some schools schedule two games each season with another school. If both games are played within the time set for the completion of the conference season and if no signed agreement has been made regarding the bearing of these games on the championship, the first of these games shall count and the second game shall have no bearing on the conference standing. If schools want the second game to count, they should have a written agreement to that effect. If only one game is played within the time limit, it shall be decisive in determining the championship.

- (20) Games arranged to break a tie in the standings in any season will in no way affect the location of games in future rotating schedules.

- (21) Awards will follow the MHSAA standardized awards program.

- (22) All football playoff and state championship games will be conducted under the following financial arrangements and charges against the game receipts are to be paid in the order listed:

Class AA and B

A. Game officials' (referees') fees and expenses.

B. The visiting team's expenses to be paid the following schedules:

1. Mileage — \$2.50 per mile, for one round trip. (In computing the number of miles traveled, the shortest paved route open to travel, as listed on the current Official Montana Highway Map published by the Montana Department of Highways will be the mileage used.)
2. Per diem — One day per diem allowed @ \$45.00 for the persons specified when team stays overnight or one day per diem allowed @ \$20.00 for the persons specified when they do not stay overnight. No per diem is ever allowed for the day after the game.
3. If the visiting team must travel more than 200 miles one way to the game site and stays overnight two nights (including game day night), they will be allowed two days @ \$45.00 for the persons specified. If they do not stay over a second night they will be allowed one additional day @ \$20.00 for the persons specified. In Classes AA and A, if the visiting team must travel more than 400 miles one way and they stay overnight three nights (including game day night), they will be allowed three days @ \$45.00. If they stay over two nights before game day and don't stay over game day night, they will be allowed two days @ \$45.00 and one day @ \$20.00.
4. No expenses are paid for the day following the contest.
5. Number of persons to be paid expenses:
 - a. Class AA — 53 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.
 - b. Class B — 37 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.

C. Reasonable local expenses may be charged against the game. The host school is expected to furnish the football field already properly marked and equipped and in the best possible playing condition for the game without charge. However, because of snow removal conditions that require extra time and expense for field preparation, the host school may claim expenses up to a maximum of \$500.00 for field preparation. Schools will be required to itemize all charges. These itemizations and amounts charged are subject to review and approval.

D. If the game receipts are insufficient to pay the expenses listed in items a through c above, charges for local expenses in item c shall not be allowed and then the remaining loss shall be

shared 60 percent by the host school and 40 percent by the visiting school.

- E. No guarantee is made that all teams will receive maximum expense allowance.
- F. For distribution of profits from all playoffs and state championships refer to By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.
- (23) The following ticket prices as established by the MHSА Executive Board will be used for all post season games, including state championships.
- General Admission: Adults \$10.00. Students \$8.00. Reserved: \$10.00.**
- (24) A financial report showing a complete itemization of income and expenses for all playoff and state championship games must be submitted to the MHSА office, using the financial report form furnished, within fifteen (15) days following the conclusion of the event.
- (25) Refer to the MOA section for number of officials required.
- (26) Emergency matters not specifically covered by the football general rules will be decided by the Executive Board of the Montana High School Association.
- (27) The Wilson WTF1003B GST will be the Official Football of the MHSА. Wilson footballs are required in the state playoffs and state championship games. Schools can use the Wilson WTF1003B GST Football or any other Wilson leather, composite leather or rubber football in all state playoffs and championships. Schools do not have to use the brand-new Wilson Football that is mailed to each site week.
- (28) The MHSА prohibits any use and/or possession of tobacco, alcohol or other mood-altering drugs during competition. Violation will cause the coach or participant to be disqualified from further participation in that event.
- (29) A school may participate in a jamboree, which shall involve three or more junior varsity, sophomore and/or freshman teams in the competition (varsity teams are not allowed to compete in any jamborees).

The following rules apply for jamborees:

- A. No varsity teams are allowed – even if a varsity team from a smaller classification wants to participate with sub varsity teams from a larger classification.
- B. Ten practices (on ten separate days after the first allowable practice date) are required for each individual player before they can compete in a jamboree.
- C. Season limits – The jamboree will count as one game towards each team's limit of ten games.
- D. Quarter Rules – For any player who participates in a jamboree, it will count as four quarters towards their weekly limit of eight quarters.
- E. The maximum number of plays per team is sixty offensive and sixty defensive plays per team per day.
- F. Up to four teams are allowed on the same field at the same time. Teams playing on each end of the football field are allowed.
- G. Coaches are not allowed to be in the huddle or on the field instructing. Coaches must be a member of the high school football coaching staff meeting all requirements set by the MHSА and school administration.
- H. The hiring of MOA officials is recommended. Jamborees must have the required number of officials per classification. Coaches are allowed to officiate but cannot on-field coach even when they are officiating.
- I. NFHS Football Rules apply (Examples of penalties that must be called: holding, illegal blocks; illegal formations; facemasks; horse collar tackles; pass interference; etc.)
- J. The 40-second play clock between plays must be followed.
- K. All players must be properly equipped.

- L. No kicking game is required, but it is allowed.
- M. The score and time are not required to be kept.

- (30) An Eleven-Player, Eight-Player or Six-Player school may participate in a triangular, which shall involve three junior varsity, sophomore and/or freshman teams in the competition (varsity teams are not allowed to compete in any triangular). A triangular is defined as three teams coming together at a common site with each team participating against the both of the other two teams for one half (two twelve-minute quarters in Eight-Player and two ten-minute quarters in Six-Player).

The following rules apply for a triangular:

- A. No varsity teams are allowed – even if a varsity team from a smaller classification wants to participate with sub varsity teams from a larger classification.
- B. Ten practices (on ten separate days after the first allowable practice date) are required for each individual player before they can compete in a triangular).
- C. Season Limits – The triangular will count as one game towards each team's season limit of ten games.
- D. Quarter Rules – For any player who participates in a triangular, it will count as four quarters towards their weekly limit of eight quarters.
- E. The maximum number of quarters per team per day is four quarters.
- F. Format – Using twelve-minute quarters for Eight-Player and ten-minute quarters for Six-Player, Team A plays Team B for two quarters; Team B plays Team C for two quarters; and finally, Team A plays Team C for two quarters.
- G. The hiring of MOA officials is recommended. Officials will be paid a game and a half sub varsity fee. A triangular must have the required number of officials per classification.
- H. All NFHS Football Rules apply.
- (31) Schools may use a visible 40-second play clock.

II - CONCESSIONS AND CORPORATE SPONSORS

- (1) The concession rights for any state championship must be approved by the Executive Director. Concession rights include but are not limited to t-shirts, other apparel, photos, buttons etc.
- (2) Corporate sponsorship of any post season event is the responsibility of the MHSА Executive Board and requires Board approval. Exceptions are: a) program advertisements and b) signage or announcements acknowledging the receipt of donated goods including food or beverages for the hospitality room, the use of tents at outdoor events, or the use of other equipment necessary for staging the event. Signage should be placed only in the appropriate areas; i.e. on the tents or in the hospitality room/area.

Established facility sponsorships are not affected provided that MHSА corporate sponsorship requirements are met.

III - COMPLIMENTARY PASS POLICY FOR POST-SEASON GAMES

The Association has established the following pass policy for football playoffs and state championship games which shall be adhered to by the host administrators. This applies to participating schools only.

- (1) For school administrators - fourteen reserved seat (if available) tickets. If school's co-op, the host school will receive the fourteen administrative tickets and the other school(s) in the co-op will each receive an additional four (4) administrative tickets. These complimentary tickets are to be distributed by the superintendent to the principal, coaches, band directors, school board chairpersons, bus drivers, cheerleading coaches, sponsors of half-time entertainment etc., and maybe spouses of some.
- (2) For cheerleaders — one pass for each varsity cheerleader who attends the game.

- (3) For radio — three passes to each station given permission to broadcast the game.
- (4) For media other than radio
- Print news media - one pass for Associated Press and passes for working staff of local newspapers of teams in the tournament or newspapers in the marketing area of those teams. Members of the print media are required to show their Montana Newspaper Association press credentials when picking up their passes.
 - Television news media - passes for working staff of local stations of teams in the tournament or stations in the marketing area of those teams.
 - Commercial photography or broadcast - passes for working staff as contracted by the event manager or MHSA.
 - Passes will not be issued for spouses or children who attend the event with working members of the media.

- (5) For bands and performing groups — they will be allowed free admission at playoff and state championship games when they play or perform.

These are the only complimentary passes that shall be allowed and others from non-participating schools must purchase tickets.

IV - CLASS AA FOOTBALL PROGRAM

- (1) Sixteen (16) schools comprising of sixteen (16) teams are classified as Class AA. The schools are aligned in two divisions as follows:

Eastern Division

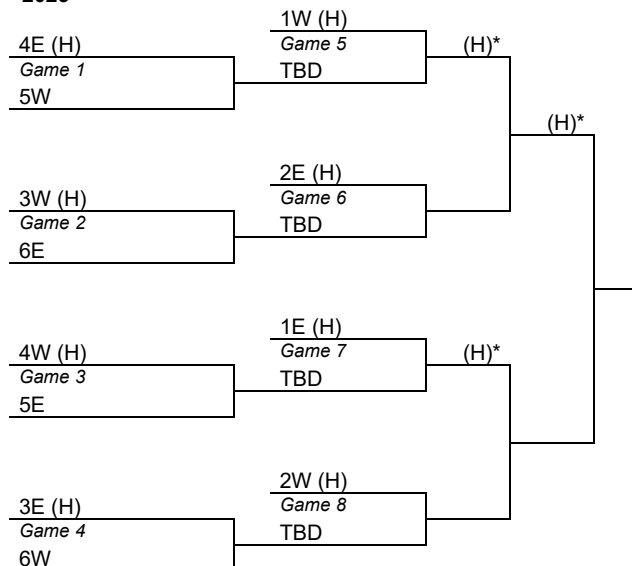
Belgrade
Billings Senior
Billings Skyview
Billings West
Bozeman
Gallatin (Bozeman)
Great Falls
Great Falls CMR

Western Division

Butte
Flathead (Kalispell)
Glacier (Kalispell)
Helena
Helena Capital
Missoula Big Sky
Missoula Hellgate
Missoula Sentinel

- (2) The Class AA school will be charged with the responsibility of determining the number of conference games each school shall play and for organizing the season's schedule. Football games must be played as scheduled — that is, in the specific week.
- (3) The breaking of ties in final standings shall be the responsibility of the Class AA conference.
- (4) The sites for the Class AA football playoffs and state championship games will be determined by the Class AA conference:

2023



*Higher Seed will be the home team

- Twelve (12) teams will qualify for the playoffs.
- Single elimination.
- Pairings will be available on the football postseason page at www.mhsa.org
- Date and time of each game will be determined by mutual consent of teams involved (games to be scheduled on Fridays or Saturdays of respective weeks).
- Ticket prices for playoff games will be in accordance with MHSA guidelines.

- (5) The host school will stage the game under the finance plan as found in the By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.

V - CLASS A FOOTBALL PROGRAM

- (1) **Twenty-six (26)** schools comprising of **Twenty-four (24)** teams are classified as Class A. The schools are aligned in four conferences as follows:

WESTERN DIVISION

Southwest Conference

Beaverhead Co. (Dillon)
Butte Central
Corvallis
Frenchtown
Hamilton
Stevensville

EASTERN DIVISION

Northeast Conference

Custer Co. (Miles City)
Dawson Co. (Glendive)
*Fergus (Lewistown)/Winnett/
Grass Range
Havre
Sidney

Northwest Conference

Bigfork

Browning
Columbia Falls
Libby
Polson
Ronan
Whitefish

Southeast Conference

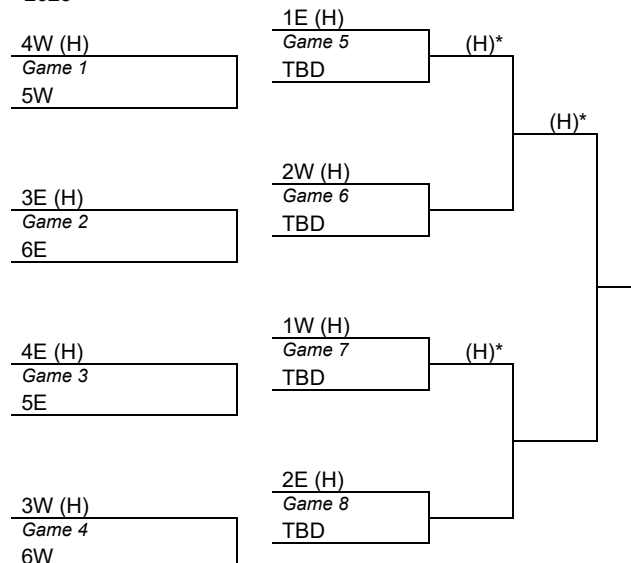
Billings Central

East Helena
Hardin
Laurel
Lockwood (Billings)
Park (Livingston)

*Cooperative Sponsorship

- (2) The Class A schools in each division will be charged with the responsibility for determining the number of conference games each school shall play and for organizing the season's schedule for the division, to be presented to the Executive Board for approval each year. Football games must be played as scheduled, i.e. in the specific week.
- (3) The playoff series leading to the state championship games will be as follows:

2023



*Higher Seed will be the home team in the first two rounds. Class A will determine home team in semi-finals and championship games.

Future brackets are available on the football page at www.mhsa.org.

The sites for the Class A football playoffs and state championship will be determined in the bracket and as follows – the highest remaining seeded team will host the lowest remaining seeded team in the semi-finals and championship game.

- (4) Financial arrangements for playoff games and the state tournament game are found in the By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.

- (5) All Class A football playoffs and championship games will be conducted under the following financial arrangements and charges against the game receipts are to be paid in the order listed. Financial reports on all playoffs and championship games must be filed with the MHSa.

A. Game Officials' (referees') fees and expenses.

B. Normal administrative expenses. (Printing tickets, scorebook, advertising, signs, postage, telephone, clerical, scorers and timers.)

C. Use of facility charges (rental), shall include all charges, if any, for the following: extra field preparation/maintenance, utilities, ticket sales, ticket takers, police/security, entrance guards, ushers, parking attendants, first aid room and towel service.

D. The visiting team's expenses to be paid the following schedules:

1. Mileage — \$2.50 per mile, for one round trip. (In computing the number of miles traveled, the shortest paved route open to travel, as listed on the current Official Montana Highway Map published by the Montana Department of Highways will be the mileage used.)
2. Per diem — One day per diem allowed @ \$45.00 for the persons specified when team stays overnight or one day per diem allowed @ \$20.00 for the persons specified when they do not stay overnight. No per diem is ever allowed for the day after the game.
3. If the visiting team must travel more than 200 miles one way to the game site and stays overnight two nights (including game day night), they will be allowed two days @ \$45.00 for the persons specified. If they do not stay over a second night they will be allowed one additional day @ \$20.00 for the persons specified. In Classes AA and A, if the visiting team must travel more than 400 miles one way and they stay overnight three nights (including game day night), they will be allowed three days @ \$45.00. If they stay over two nights before game day and don't stay over game day night, they will be allowed two days @ \$45.00 and one day @ \$20.00

4. No expenses are paid for the day following the contest.

5. Number of persons to be paid expenses: 45 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.

E. Reasonable local expenses may be charged against the game. The host school is expected to furnish the football field already properly marked and equipped and in the best possible playing condition for the game without charge. However, because of snow removal conditions that require extra time and expense for field preparation, the host school may claim expenses up to a maximum of \$500.00 for field preparation. Schools will be required to itemize all charges. These itemizations and amounts charged are subject to review and approval.

F. No guarantee is made that all teams will receive maximum expense allowance.

G. For distribution of profits from all playoffs and state championships refer to By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.

- (6) It shall be the responsibility of the host school to furnish the field properly equipped, game football, yardage chain, sideline clip, and down marker crew and electric field clock operator and staff to handle crowd, etc.

- (7) All Class A Football Playoffs and the State Championship will be played on Saturday unless another time is mutually agreed by the two schools involved.

VI - CLASS B FOOTBALL PROGRAM

- (1) **Thirty-seven (37)** schools comprising **twenty-six (26)** teams are classified as Class B. The schools are aligned in three divisions and seven districts as follows:

Northern Division

Conrad
Cut Bank
*Fairfield/Augusta
*Glasgow/Hinsdale/
Nashua
*Malta/Whitewater/Saco/
Dodson
*Wolf Point/Frazer/Lustre
Christian

Eastern Division

Baker
Colstrip
Huntley Project
Joliet
***Red Lodge/Roberts/Belfry**
Roundup
Shepherd

Western Division

Anaconda
Florence-Carlton
Lincoln Co (Eureka)
Loyola Sacred Heart
(Missoula)
Thompson Falls
***Whitehall/Harrison**

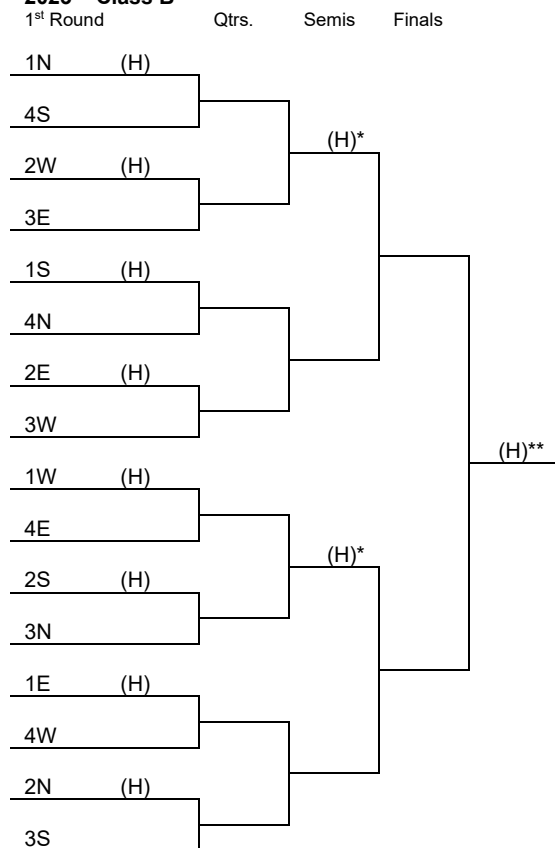
Southern Division

Broadwater (Townsend)
Columbus
Jefferson (Boulder)
Manhattan
Sweet Grass Co (Big Timber)
Three Forks/Willow Creek

*Cooperative Sponsorship

- (2) No football cooperative contracts may exceed the maximum Class B enrollment ranges and criteria when two or more schools are combined. New applications must be filed with MHSa by February 1st of each year. The enrollment count will meet or exceed this number for two consecutive years in order to be mandated that the cooperative contract will no longer be allowed.
- (3) The Class B schools in each district will be charged with the responsibility for determining the number of conference games each school shall play and for organizing the season's schedule for the district, to be presented to the Executive Board for approval each year. Each district will be responsible for determining its district champion and runner-up.
- (4) There shall be a State Class B Championship Football Game each year. The state champion shall be determined by the following plan:

2023 – Class B



The higher seed will host in rounds 1 and 2.

*Semi-final round is noted in the bracket when like-seeds play; otherwise higher seed will host.

**Championship criteria for hosting:

- Highest seed hosts.
- Like-seed tiebreakers:
 - Head-to-Head in current season (excluding #1 seeds)**
 - Did not host previous year's championship
 - Did not host semi-final in current playoffs
 - Bracket (H)

Future brackets are available on the football page at www.mhsa.org.

- All Class B football district, divisional and state championship playoffs will be played on Saturday unless another time is mutually agreed upon by the two schools involved.
- Financial arrangements for divisional playoff, interdivisional playoffs and state championship games are found in the By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.
- Divisions are expected to abide by the General Football Rules stated in this handbook.

VII – EIGHT-PLAYER FOOTBALL PROGRAM

- Forty-three (43) schools comprising forty (40) teams** participate in Eight-Player Football. The schools are aligned in four divisions as follows:

Eastern Division

Circle
Culbertson
Fairview
Plentywood
Poplar
*Scobey/Opheim
Wibaux

Northern Division

Belt
Chinook
Fort Benton
*Harlem/Turner
**Hays Lodgepole
Rocky Boy
Shelby

Southeast Division

Carter Co. (Ekalaka)
Forsyth
**Lame Deer
Lodge Grass
Park City
Powder River Co (Broadus)
Saint Labre (Ashland)

Western Division

Arlee
Charlo
Darby
Plains
Saint Ignatius
Superior
Troy
Valley Christian
Victor

South Central

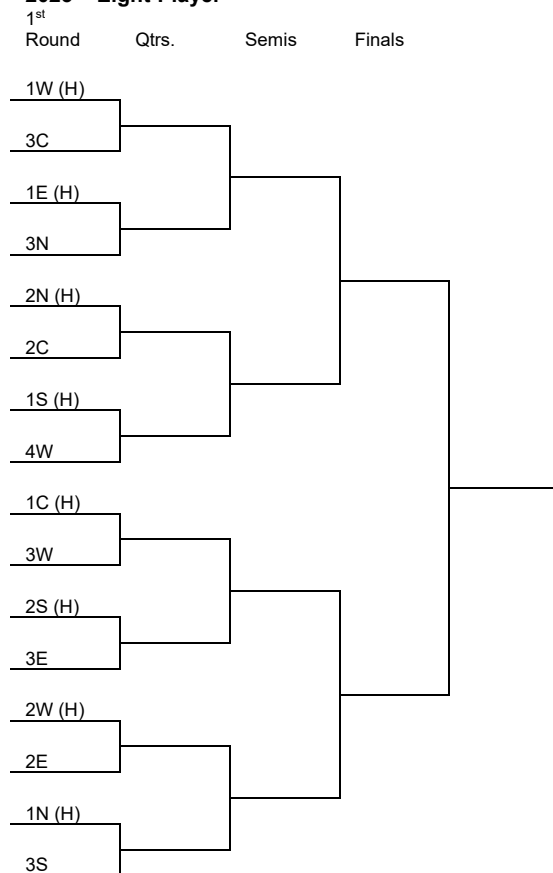
Cascade
Choteau
*Drummond/
Granite (Phillipsburg)
Ennis
Lone Peak (Big Sky)
Manhattan Christian
Powell Co. (Deer Lodge)
Seeley-Swan
Sheridan
Simms

* Cooperative Sponsorship

**Jv Only

- To be eligible to participate in Eight-Player football, schools must have an enrollment range between 65 and 130. In order for Class B schools to petition to participate in Eight-Player Football, schools must have an enrollment below 140. The Executive Board will apply the following **four** criteria when considering the petition:
 - Current enrollment and estimated enrollment projections cannot exceed 140 to petition (Unless the school can demonstrate the criteria b and c, listed below, can be met) and/or criteria d is met.
 - Roster size for the past several years must be near or under the average for Eight-Player football
 - Success factor in the current placement
 - Success factor (including win/loss record and other relevant information) in the current placement for the past five years.
- No football cooperative contracts may exceed the Eight-Player enrollment ranges and criteria when two or more participating member schools are combined. New applications must be filed with MHSa by February 1st of each year. The enrollment count will meet or exceed this number for two consecutive years in order to be mandated that the cooperative contract will no longer be allowed.
- There shall be a State Eight-Player Championship Football Game each year. The playoff series leading to the State Championship Game will be as follows:

2023 – Eight-Player



The higher seed would host each playoff game. If like seeds play each other, the following teams will host: West, North, East, South, Central – West hosts N, E, S, C. North hosts E, S, C. East hosts S or C. South hosts Central.

Future brackets are available on the football page at www.mhsa.org.

- (5) The Eight-Player schools in each division will be charged with the responsibility for determining the number of season games each school shall play and for drawing up the season schedule for the division. Each division will be responsible for determining its division champion and the four teams that advance to the post season playoffs.
- (6) All teams playing in a Eight-Player division must comply with one or the other of these two conditions: (a) The schools within any division have the right to establish their own plan for districting the division to determine a division or champion to represent them in the inter-division playoff game. This plan must include the scheduling of games in all districts and must come within the time limits established for division play. (b) If no such plan is arranged by the schools concerned and no statements are filed with the Executive Director, then the teams in an Eight-Player division must play every other team within their division on the master schedule. Refusal to play another team or to iron out conflicts in dates shall constitute a forfeit of all claims to consideration for a championship. Games with teams outside the division must be canceled, if necessary, to make way for a necessary game within the division involved.
- (7) All Eight-Player football playoff and state championship games will be played on Saturday afternoon unless another time is mutually agreed upon by the two schools involved.
- (8) Divisions are expected to abide by the General Football Rules stated in the Handbook.

- (9) **Eight-Player Football Rule Differences:** Eleven-player rules are used for eight-player football with modifications found in the National Federation Football Rule Book.
- (10) All Eight-Player football playoff and championship games will be conducted under the following financial arrangements and charges against the game receipts are to be paid in the order listed. Financial reports on all playoffs and championship games must be filed with the MHSa.
 - A. Game officials (referees) fees and expenses.
 - B. The visiting team's expenses to be paid the following schedules:
 1. Mileage — \$2.50 per mile, for one round trip. (In computing the number of miles traveled, the shortest paved route open to travel, as listed on the current Official Montana Highway Map published by the Montana Department of Highways will be the mileage used.)
 2. Per diem
 - a) One day per diem allowed @\$10.00 if round trip mileage does not exceed 500 miles.
 - b) One day per diem allowed @ \$15.00 for the persons specified when they do not stay overnight, and the round-trip mileage exceeds 500 miles.
 - c) One day per diem allowed @ \$30.00 for the persons specified when team stays overnight, and round-trip mileage exceeds 500 miles.
 - d) If the visiting team travel exceeds round trip mileage of 1000 miles, expenses allowed include:
 - 1) One day per diem allowed up to two days @ \$30.00
 - 2) If they do not wish to stay over a second night, they will be allowed one additional day @ \$15.00 per diem.
 3. No expenses are paid for the day following the contest.
 4. Number of persons to be paid in eight-player football – expenses — 28 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.
 - C. It will be the home team's responsibility to pay the officials. The expenses paid to schools will be paid as gate receipts allow. No school will be required to pay expenses beyond the income from the gate receipts.
 - D. Host team may retain a maximum of \$500.00 from game income to cover costs for paying clock keeper, gate/ticket personnel, chain crew, snow removal or any other costs incurred by the host team.

Any game income received beyond sections A, B, C and including monies not used from section D will be sent to the MHSa and distributed to eight-player football schools as per By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3. No guarantee is made that all teams will receive maximum expense allowance.

VII - SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL

- (1) **Fifty-six (56) schools** comprising **forty-two (42) teams** participate in Six-Player Football. The schools are aligned in five divisions as follows:

Eastern Division

Bainville
Brockton
 *Froid/Medicine Lake
 Garfield Co (Jordan)
 *Lambert/Richey

Plevna

Savage
Terry
 *Westby/Grenora

Central Division

Centerville
 *Denton/ Stanford/Geyser/
 Geraldine

Great Falls Central

*Harlowton/Ryegate
 Highwood
 *Hobson/Moore
 *Roy/Winifred

Northern Division

Big Sandy
 Box Elder
Chester-Joplin-Inverness
 Heart Butte
 North Star (Rudyard)
 *Power/Dutton-Brady
 Sunburst (North Toole Co.)
 Valier

Southern Division

Absarokee
 Bridger
 *Broadview/Lavina
 *Custer/Hysham/Melstone
 *Fromberg
 **Northern Cheyenne
 **Plenty Coups
 *Reed Point/Rapelje
 Shields Valley

Western Division

Alberton
 Gardiner
 Hot Springs
 Lima
 Lincoln
 Noxon
 Twin Bridges
 West Yellowstone
 White Sulphur Springs

*Cooperative Sponsorship

**JV only

- (2) To be eligible to participate in Six-Player football, schools must be Class C and have a high school enrollment at or below 65 students. In order for Eight-Player schools to petition to participate in Six-Player Football, schools must have an enrollment below 70. The Executive Board will apply the following four criteria when considering the petition:

- Current enrollment and estimated enrollment projections cannot exceed 70 to petition. (Unless the school can demonstrate the criteria b and c, listed below, can be met) and/or criteria d is met.
- Roster size for the past several years must be near or under the average for Six-Player football.
- Success factor in their current placement.
- Success factor (including win/loss record and other relevant information) in the current placement for the past five years.

- (3) No football cooperative contracts may exceed the Class C Six-Player enrollment ranges and criteria when two or more participating member schools are combined. New applications must be filed with MHSa by November 15th of each year. The enrollment count will meet or exceed this number for two consecutive years in order to be mandated to switch to Eight-Player football.

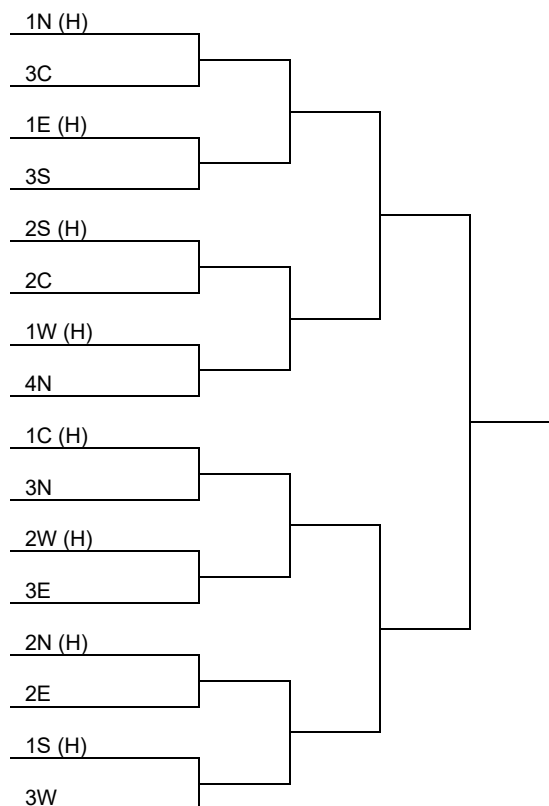
- (4) Six-Player football rules as outlined in the National Federation Football Rule Book will be used. Six-Player football rules differences:

A. Four officials are required for six-player varsity football.

- (5) There will be a state Class C Six-Player championship football game each year. The playoff series leading to the state championship will be as follows:

2023 – Six-Player

1st Round Qtrs Semis Finals



The higher seed will host each playoff game. If like seeds play each other, the plan for which teams hosts is as follows:

North, South, East, West, Central--North hosts S, E, W, C. South hosts E, W, C. East hosts W or C. West hosts Central.

Future brackets are available on the football page at www.mhsa.org.

- (6) All Class C six-player football playoff and state championship games will be played on Saturday afternoon unless another time is mutually agreed upon by the two schools involved.

- (7) All six-player football playoff and championship games will be conducted under the following financial arrangements and charges against the game receipts are to be paid in the order listed. Financial reports on all playoffs and championship games must be filed with the MHSa.

- Game officials (referees) fees and expenses.
- Mileage - \$2.50 per mile, for one round trip.
- It will be the home team's responsibility to pay the officials. The mileage to schools will be paid as gate receipts allow. No school will be required to pay mileage beyond the income from the gate receipts.
- Host team may retain a maximum of \$100.00 from game income to cover costs for paying clock keeper, gate/ticket personnel, chain crew or any other costs incurred by the host team.

Any game income received beyond sections A, B, C and including monies not used from section D will be sent to the MHSa and distributed to six-player football schools as per By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.