

# Quick Bits

## EXECUTIVE CORNER

### BITS AND PIECES

Fall activities are under way!

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. According to the MHSA 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 - 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 CSIET 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.

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- 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. As I have stated many times before, my favorite sportsmanship quote is from Knute Rockne who said, "One man practicing good sportsmanship is far better than 50 others preaching it." As a person who attempts to play the game of golf, I like Mark Twain's quote also, "It's good sportsmanship to not pick up lost golf balls while they are still rolling!" 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

### 2016-2017 DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS

Please note: the 2016-2017 Directory of Schools have been sent to all MHSA member schools in September. 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 and/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.

### 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.



## **2016 STATE CROSS COUNTRY MEET IN KALISPELL**

The 2016 State Cross Country Meet will be staged in Kalispell on October 22. The competition will take place at Rebecca Farm. Bryce Wilson, Activities Director of Flathead High School, is the meet director. Information will be mailed shortly from his office with logistics concerning this meet. Mr. Wilson can be reached at 751-3477.

To view the 2016 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](http://www.mhsa.org), click on "Cross Country" and then click on the rules and regulations.

The schedule for the 2016 State Cross Country Meet is as follows:

Class B Girls	11:00 am
Class C Girls	11:35 am
Class B Boys	12:10 pm
Class C Boys	12:40 pm
Class AA Girls	1:10 pm
Class A Girls	1:45 pm
Class AA Boys	2:20 pm
Class A Boys	2:50 pm

**Entries must be entered online using Athletic.net by October 16 by 3:00 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 conference 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, MHSА 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.

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.

#### **Football Pants – Must be appropriate length**

I received several calls from officials about players wearing pants that do not cover their knees. This memo was sent from Bob Colgate, the NFHS Football Rules Interpreter:

The NFHS has continued to tell and inform ALL football pant manufacturers and dealers across the country that the current NFHS Football Rules require that the pants must completely cover the knees, thigh guards and knee pads and any portion of any knee brace that does not extend below the pants. Also, that the knee pads which

are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production, which are worn over the knee and under the pants and shall be at least 1/2 inch thick or 3/8 inch thick if made of shock absorbing material.

The NFHS Football Rules Committee and the NFHS SMAC both support this current NFHS Football Rule from a risk minimization perspective that both knees be covered and padded according to rule.

## 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](http://www.nfhslearn.com). This is completed only once every four years.
- MHSA Concussion Course (available through [nfhslearn.com](http://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](mailto: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 2016-17 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 2016 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 26<sup>th</sup> year! In the past we have had four workshops; however because of the partnership with the Montana Army National Guard we have added an additional three workshops in more areas of the state. The 2016-17 AIM Higher program will be kicked off with a workshop in Kalispell at Glacier High School on September 21.

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 21st at the MMEA Convention. Erik Engebretson, MHSA Music Committee Chair and Band Director from Malta High School, will conduct the meeting.

## ATTACHMENTS

[2016-17 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](#)