

Quick Bits

A Montana High School Association Publication
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EXECUTIVE BOARD ITEMS

BOARD MEETING ON APRIL 10-11

The regular meeting of the MHSА Executive Board will be held in Helena on Monday and Tuesday, April 10-11, 2017.

At this regularly scheduled meeting, the Executive Board members addressed the following agenda items:

1. Financial reports of winter sports season's culminating events.
2. Board and staff reports of winter season's activities final events.
3. MHSА standing committees' appointments.
4. Election of 2017-18 officers.
5. Bids for State sites for 2018-2019 and remaining sites for 2017-2018.

A summary of action items will be sent to member schools and posted on the MHSА website.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

MHSА DUES & CATASTROPHIC/CONCUSSION INSURANCE

Each member school contact and business clerk will be sent, via email, applications for MHSА membership dues, catastrophic insurance and concussion insurance. Annual dues and catastrophic insurance premiums are payable and due on **JULY 15** of each year. Any school failing to pay its annual dues and catastrophic insurance premiums on or before that date shall be ineligible from **August 1** until such fees are paid and shall be required to pay a penalty of \$50 in addition to the regular dues before reinstatement can occur. (See Article 1, Section (2) of the MHSА By-laws). Please make certain that the dues form has the appropriate signatures and that the **original** form is submitted to the MHSА office. You may also access these forms by going to the MHSА website (mhsa.org).

MANDATORY COACHES' EDUCATION REPORT DUE

Attached to this publication you will find a Coaches' Education Program Certification Report form. Please complete it per the directions and return it to the MHSА office on or before **May 15, 2017**. **This report is mandatory**. Please contact Jo Austin at the MHSА office if you need assistance with the certification report.

2017-2018 MATERIALS ORDER FORM

Enclosed with this *Quick Bits* is the materials order form for the 2017-2018 school year. This form is provided for each school to order miscellaneous supplies such as extra rules books, score books, etc. from the MHSА.

NFHS PARTICIPATION SURVEYS

In a separate email, you will soon receive instructions for establishing a user profile for your school district and completing the annual National Federation Survey for Athletic and Non-Athletic Student Participation via the MHSА website. In the past, schools were required to complete this information for the use of MHSА and the NFHS. However, the process is now also required by the Office of Public Instruction.

The MHSА and the OPI have worked collaboratively to build a simple, online tool for high schools to report their participation counts for athletics and activities, as well as career and technical student organizations. This collection will occur in spring along the same timeline that MHSА has followed in the past. School personnel will access the online tool from the Montana High School Association website, select their school(s) from a drop down list, enter their participation counts and submit their data.

The MHSА will use the data for reporting NFHS participation figures. The Office of Public Instruction will use the data to report the total number of students that participate in extracurricular activities as required by 20-7-104, MCA.

School contacts will receive the email in the next few days. Responses for the MHSА participation figures are due by May 15, 2017.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD PROGRAM

Along with this *Quick Bits* you will find NorthWestern Energy's Academic Excellence Award reporting form.

Please review the material and make plans to enter your school's students in the 2016-2017 competition. The award is very prestigious, and the interest in the award continues to grow. The deadline for returning the form is **July 1**.

ANNUAL MEETING IN BOZEMAN

The next MHSА Annual Meeting will be held in Bozeman on January 15, 2018. The Best Western GranTree Inn is the host facility. Reservations may be made by calling 406-587-5261 and asking for group code *MHSА Annual Meeting*.

SOFTBALL

NOTES FOR 2017 SEASON

Recently, the following information for this year's softball season was mailed to softball coaches and emailed to softball school contacts: Softball Rules Book, Softball Rules Changes and Major Editorial Revisions, Points of Emphasis, General Rules and Regulations from the MHSА Handbook, MHSА/MOА Softball Rules Clinic Information, 2017 NFHS Softball Rules Interpretations and information on Illegal Pitches. If you have any questions on this information please contact Mark Beckman at the MHSА office.

GOLF

CLASS C GOLF

This year the MHSА will change the procedure for reporting scores in Class C Golf. Class C tournament managers or coaches are required to complete a form and send it to Brian Michelotti at the MHSА verifying that a golfer shot a qualifying score and had a marker present. The form is linked with this mailing and also is located on the golf forms page of the MHSА website at www.mhsa.org. Schools no longer report their scores on Varvee.



OUT-OF-SEASON INFORMATION

OUT-OF-SEASON CONTESTS – COACHING REMINDER

For team sports, the coaching rule is in effect for out-of-season contests that are not held from June 1 - July 31 (the team coaching rule does not apply during this period of time). The head coach or any member of the coaching staff of one gender's team cannot coach any of the players who have participated/competed in their overall program unless the player is a senior and the sport season has concluded. Coaches of record (including assistant and volunteer coaches who actually coached during the season) cannot coach their own players during the off-season (except for the June 1 - July 31 period) even if the coach does not have a contract for the next season. If a coach resigns at the end of a season, he/she would be a coach of record and could not coach his or her players in the off-season. Coaches who coach one gender only can coach the other gender in that sport without penalty.

Also, for team sports, coaches can coach high school students on their teams from June 1 - July 31 in practice (cannot be required) or in invitational tournaments that are not sponsored by a school. Out of season contests cannot be sponsored in any way by schools or school groups (booster clubs) and rent must be paid according to school district policy. Also, anytime during the out-of-season (including June 1 - July 31) teams cannot scrimmage against each other without paying rental fee for the school district facility and must follow all other out-of-season regulations. Participants are not affiliated with your school for these events. The school is not (and cannot) be responsible for any aspect of out-of-season events (which include scrimmages) including funding, equity principles, etc. Participants are not covered by school insurance, MHSAs catastrophic or concussion insurance during out-of-season events.

Note: this clarification does not apply to cheer and dance.

OPEN GYM GUIDELINES

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

Open Gym/Field for **MHSA sanctioned sports** is an arrangement whereby the school's facilities are scheduled for volunteer play for all the student body grades 9-12 from your high school. **Any open gym that is conducted as a sport-specific offering, i.e. boys' basketball, is also considered gender-specific. Boys' and girls' open gyms cannot be conducted together.**

Open gyms do not violate MHSAs rules if they are conducted according to the following guidelines:

1. The open gym is open to any high school student (grades 9-12) from your high school who is interested in attending.
2. There is no instruction during the open gym, whether by a coach or anyone else.
3. Coaches may supervise open gyms, but they may not instruct, organize drills etc., or participate with the students.
4. There is no organized competition, such as established teams participating in round-robin competitions etc.

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

Please note:

There is no such thing as an open gym during a sport-specific season (i.e. no volleyball open gym during volleyball) or during the allowed coaching window of June 1 – July 31.

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

To use the school gym, during out of season except June 1-July 31 the team must be a legitimate AAU or traveling team, coached by a non – school coach and be able to provide a schedule of games. Also, they must follow the district policies for facility rental, insurance etc.

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

AWARD RULE - REMINDER

With all of the invitational tournaments and sports camps that occur during the spring and summer months, please review with your schools' coaches the award rule found on page 14 of the 2016-2017 *MHSA Handbook*. Item 15.1 of this rule states that no award exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00) in value shall be given per event in any MHSAs sanctioned sport or any MHSAs sanctioned interscholastic activity by a member school, by any person or by an organization to a student in recognition of that student's achievement or participation in any interscholastic activity. *An event is defined as a sports camp, an invitational tournament/meet, a post season recognition function (i.e. sports banquet) or a fundraiser or similar function.* Special awareness functions (i.e. pink week) are included as defined events with the following limitation: merchandise retained by students in conjunction with awareness events is restricted to disposable items such as basic t-shirts, socks, headbands/wristbands and similar items. Cash cannot be awarded. A single Association Contest is not considered an "event" for the purpose of this rule.

FINE ARTS

MUSIC FESTIVAL REMINDERS

All music festival forms are available online. At this time virtually all directors have visited mhsa.org to obtain the form templates for district music festivals. In addition, the State Solo & Ensemble forms are also available on the sites.

Reminder! Schools must follow all applicable copyright laws when performing at district and state festivals.

Also, music adjudicators prepare for the festivals by viewing the [online](#) adjudication clinic. Adjudicators view the online clinic prior to arriving at the festival site.

Festival Managers and music directors who have suggestions for future improvements to any festival procedure are welcome to send them to the MHSAs Music Committee in care of the MHSAs office.

AUDITIONS FOR ALL-STATE

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

Each director receives an audition code that corresponds to the band, chorus and orchestra programs. Any music director who plans to submit student auditions should contact the MHSAs office by emailing Jo Austin at jpaustin@mhsa.org if an email containing a code is not received prior to auditions.

MFEA NEWS

The Montana Forensics Educators Association held their annual convention on March 2-4, 2017, in Bozeman. From that meeting, a summary of recommended rules changes will be presented to the MHSAs Executive Board in April for their consideration.

A copy of the minutes of that meeting will be posted on the MHSAs website as soon as they are available.

TRACK AND FIELD

TRACK AND FIELD CLARIFICATIONS

Below are clarifications of some 2017 NFHS Track and Field Rules. Please share this information with your head track and field coach(es) and other appropriate personnel.

Jewelry Prohibited

By MHSAs Handbook guidelines, for the 2017 MHSAs track and field season, MHSAs member schools will follow the last year's NFHS track and field rules concerning jewelry. The wearing of jewelry by Track and Field competitors will not change; jewelry shall not be worn by competitors in any MHSAs 2017 track and field meet. Any jewelry violation shall only apply to the competitor. Without holding up competition, the competitor shall be required to remove the jewelry before any further competition and be issued a warning that another jewelry violation shall result in a disqualification from the event. If the jewelry can't be removed, the competitor should not compete until legal. The event judge or the observing meet official should write on a card the athlete's name, the event, time and date of the jewelry violation and a description of prohibited item and give this information to the meet referee. The meet referee shall notify or cause to be notified the head coach, of the offending school, of the competitor's violation and the warning that any further jewelry violation by the competitor shall result in disqualification of the competitor from the event. If the incident recurs, the competitor will be disqualified from further competition in the meet. The protocol for communication of the violation to the coach should be established by the officials before the meet begins. This protocol could be to ask the violating athlete where their head coach is located or have an announcement made to have the head coach to meet with the referee or use the announcement system to announce the violation.

Jewelry--Medical Alerts Medals

Medical alert medals are not considered jewelry. The alert should be visible because having the alert visible increases the efficiency by which the attending health-care professional may treat the student's injury/illness who has a special medical condition. There are several new styles of medical alert bracelets made of pliable materials such as cloth or rubber. These new styles and materials do not pose a risk of injury to the participant or others. These styles do not require being taped to the body but the new styles must indicate that they are a medical alert. When a medical alert medal is attached to: a bracelet made of **metal** or an **unyielding material**, it shall be **taped** to the body and if attached to a **necklace**, it shall be **taped** to the body.

Jewelry-Religious Medals

Religious medals are not considered jewelry but must be worn under the uniform and taped to the body.

Jewelry--Hair Control Devices

Hair control devices such as rubber bands, headbands or scrunchies used to control the hair are not considered jewelry and are legal to be used. Also, no headwear, except headbands, will be allowed unless inclement weather is encountered or in special circumstances such as health conditions or religious considerations. A headband is any item that goes around the head (including elastic strips/bands, pre-wrap, terry cloth etc). If worn, only one headband is permitted. Headbands may be a maximum of 5 inches wide and must be a single, solid color and be, non-abrasive and unadorned except for a single manufacturer's logo and/or a single school name or insignia as per NFHS rules. The headband shall have no jewelry attached. Unadorned devices, such as bobby pins, barrettes and hair clips, no longer than 5 inches, to be worn to control the competitor's hair, are legal and are not considered jewelry. It is the responsibility of the coach and athlete to be sure the hair control device, if worn, is legal. If the hair device is questionable, the contestant should check with the meet referee prior to competition.

Initiating a Field Event Trial

Within the rules for all throwing and jumping field events, it now clarifies that a competitor shall be charged with a foul if he/she does not initiate a trial within one minute (or other prescribed time limit) after the competitor's name has been called with completion of that trial allowed beyond the prescribed time. The rule change now states that the actual completion of the trial does not have to occur during the prescribed time limit.

Legal Implements in Warm-ups

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

STATE TRACK & FIELD PROCEDURE MANUALS SENT

The current year's State Track & Field Procedure Manual was sent to head coaches in the first week of April. Please review the entire manual, which includes the qualifying standards and procedures for all four classes. Also, for all post season track and field meets, please be advised of the following:

Track Stagers:

A two-curve stagger will be used in the 800 meter run, 1600 meter run and 3200 meter run. The 4 x 400 relay event will use a three-curve stagger.

NFHS Track and Field Rules--Disqualification from an event includes:

A competitor shall not compete while wearing an illegal uniform or using an illegal implement.

It is an unfair act when a competitor receives any assistance. Assistance includes:

- Interference with another competitor.
- Pacing by a teammate not in the race or persons not participating in the event.
- Competitors joining or grasping hands with each other during a race.
- Competitor using an aid during the race.
- Communicating with a competitor through the use of any device including electronically during a race or trial.
- Coaching a competitor from a restricted area.
- Competitor receiving assistance from another competitor to complete the race. Both competitors shall be disqualified unless a competitor is injured or becomes ill and an appropriate health-care professional is not available, only the injured/ill competitor is disqualified.

NOTES:

- The use of an atomizer during competition containing a prescription drug designed to alleviate the asthmatic condition is not considered to be an illegal aid as long as a physician's statement documenting the need of the athlete to use the prescription is presented to the meet director/referee prior to the beginning of the meet.
- The use of a watch worn around the wrist is not considered an aid for racing.
- A coach may instruct a competitor provided the coach is positioned in a designated coach's box or an unrestricted area.

POLE VAULT COMPETITORS VERIFICATION FORM

Track and Field Rule 6-5-3 on page 48 of the NFHS Track and Field Rulebook requires that **prior to competition** the coach must verify that each of their school's pole vault competitor's weight shall be at or below the manufacturer's pole rating. Available on our website is a Pole Vault Competitors' Event Verification Form that is recommended for use in meeting this rule prior to competition and thereby reduces coaches' liability. The form can be found on the MHSAs website under Track and Field.

Should you have any questions about the above, please do not hesitate to contact the MHSAs office.

FOOTBALL

FOOTBALL HELMET RECONDITIONING

The National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association members will not recondition/recertify any football helmet ten years of age or older. The National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association's (NAERA) policy is attached. The ten years shall be determined by the

manufacturer's date as required by NOCSAE. For example at the end of the upcoming 2017 football season, any helmet dated 2008 or older will not be reconditioned / recertified.

For more information, please visit the football page of the MHSAs website at www.mhsa.org.

SPIRIT

MCA CLINIC

As in the past several years the **Montana Coaches Association** offers courses for spirit coaches during the MCA clinic held in Great Falls each August. Registration sheets for the MCA clinic are not sent from the MHSAs office but will come from MCA. Please have your spirit coaches watch for information from MCA.

VOLLEYBALL

REMINDER: VOLLEYBALL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS THAT CHANGED IN 2016

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules Committee approved new uniform requirements that will take effect in 2016. The revised rule will require the libero or her teammates to wear a uniform top that is immediately recognized from all angles as being in clear contrast to and distinct from the other members of the team. The libero or her teammates shall wear a solid-colored uniform top. The solid-colored uniform top shall clearly contrast from the predominant primary color(s) of the libero or her teammates' uniform top, with the predominant color(s) being the color(s) appearing on approximately half of the uniform.

Other requirements of the solid-colored top are 1) the sleeves shall be the same color as the body of the uniform top; 2) piping/trim no wider than 1 inch in total at its widest point may be placed along the seams and may be a different color(s) than the uniform top; 3) lettering and collars may be different color(s) than the uniform top; and 4) numbers shall be a contrasting color to the uniform top and meet all other specifications in Rule 4-2-4.

Some uniforms were affecting the officials' ability to identify the libero and determine legal playing action," said Becky Oakes, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Volleyball Rules Committee. "The tradition is

that volleyball is a sport with colorful uniforms. Because there has been increasing difficulty identifying the libero because of uniform design, the rules needed to make sure the libero was easily identified."

The rule took effect July 1, 2016, which gave uniform manufacturers time to make the necessary changes and allow high schools to make uniform changes in their normal budgeting process and not incur additional expense, according to Oakes.

On the MHSAs website (mhsa.org), under the Volleyball Section, please find the power point presentation "Volleyball Solid Color Jersey Change—Effective July 1, 2016" that will explain and give examples of this new volleyball uniform requirement. If you have any questions about this issue, please call Kip Ryan at the MHSAs Office.

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 24	First date for competition in softball, track & field and tennis (all classes)
March 28	District Music Festival – 9 (large groups only)
April 3	District Music Festivals – 9 (solos and ensembles only)
April 6-7	District Music Festival – 6
April 7-8	District Music Festivals – 2, 7, 11, 13
April 10-11	MHSAs Executive Board Meeting – Helena
April 16	Easter
April 20-22	District Music Festivals – 4, 5
April 21-22	District Music Festivals – 1, 8, 10, 12
May 5-6	State Solo & Ensemble Festivals

ATTACHMENTS

[PV #2-Pole Vault Event Verification Form](#)
[2016-2017 Coaches' Education Verification Form](#)
[2016-2017 Academic Excellence Award Program](#)
[2017-2018 Materials Order Form](#)
[2017-2018 MOA Fees](#)
[2017- 2018 NFHS Football Rules Changes Press Release](#)
[Ball Contract Summary](#)
[2017 Track & Field and Cross Country Rules Interpretations](#)
[2017 Volleyball Rules Changes](#)
[Class C Golf Qualifying Score Reporting Form](#)
[Fundamentals of Athletic/Activity Regulations](#)