

September Quick Bits

EXECUTIVE CORNER

BITS AND PIECES -

Fall activities are underway! This fall we have experienced some challenges with smoke, lightning and heat, but we appreciate the work of all administrators and coaches to ensure our student athletes are competing in safe conditions.

In the September Quick Bits I emphasize 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 Rule

I have been working closely with MHSA Administrators across the state regarding the transfer rule this year. Transfer questions continue to surface and the following are important points that need to be reviewed before declaring a student varsity-eligible after a transfer:

- 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 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) 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

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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.
- 10) Beginning in 2022-23, 8th graders are now allowed to participate on all high school teams if your school district allows. If you have an 8th grader that transfers into your school, you will need to list them on the Record of Transfer form and verify that they are transfer eligible. The transfer rule only applies to 8th graders that participate in a high school contest at their previous school. This is a new rule and does not apply to 8th graders that participated last school year.

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

On behalf of the MHSA Executive Board and MHSA Staff, we hope you have a great 2022-23 school year. Let us know how we can help you.

Brian Michelotti
Executive Director

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

2022-23 DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS

The MHSA Directory has been completed and has been mailed to each member school. If you have questions or updates, please contact Anna Doran in the MHSA office. Anna's email is adoran@mhsa.org.

MHSA HANDBOOK ON WEBSITE

The MHSA 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 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.

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 longtime athletic directors or principals who have made significant contributions to Montana student activities. This is a very prestigious award that presents the recipient with a lifetime pass that is valid at any MHSA contest or tournament.

Application forms for these recognition opportunities are attached.



CROSS COUNTRY

2022 STATE CROSS COUNTRY MEET IN MISSOULA

The 2022 State Cross Country Meet will be staged in MISSOULA on October 22nd. The competition will take place at the U of M Golf Course. Nate Laatsch, Activities Director of Missoula Hellgate School, is the meet director. Information will be emailed out with logistics concerning this meet. Mr. Laatsch can be reached at 728-2402 ext. 6080.

To view the 2022 MHSA State and NFHS Cross Country rules addressing uniform and sportsmanship items that all coaches and competitors will be expected to adhere to go to www.mhsa.org, click on "Cross Country" and then click on the rules and regulations.

The schedule for the 2022 State Cross Country Meet is as follows:

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

Entries must be entered online using Athletic.net by October 16 at 3:00 p.m.

AWARDS

TROPHIES AND AWARDS

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

1. Conference trophies are given in football (except for Class AA), Class A softball and Class A soccer (they are considered district or divisional trophies).
2. In other sports, if a conference would like to award a trophy (first place only) for their conference(s) champion it must be ordered through the MHSA office and must be paid for by the conference. The MHSA office staff does not automatically order conference trophies because some conferences choose not to award them.
3. MHSA will provide one trophy for each co-op team and schools can purchase additional trophies for the other school(s) in the co-op. Also, if there is a co-op conference champion or a co-conference champion the conference still needs to order those trophies through MHSA and pay for both.
4. Individual miniature trophies for first, second and third place MHSA state championship events may be purchased from the Association's award provider.

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

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

FOOTBALL

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, MHSA Rules and Regulations require 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 more easily, 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 those with passes 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 from the end zones.

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

Bands and Music playing during live ball

In the past we sent out information about band play at outdoor contests. We still are receiving questions and are providing further clarification on this rule. Here is a reminder regarding this rule:

The MHSA Executive Board approved the following rule change in regard to bands playing at outdoor contests:

At all outdoor contests bands will not be allowed to play during "live ball."

At MHSA football games, bands will only be allowed to play during the following (the same rules apply to recorded music played during the contest):

- Timeouts (both team and official's timeouts),
- Between quarters
- Halftime
- Anytime from after a touchdown is scored, through the extra point try and until both teams line up for the ensuing kickoff.
- Any change of possession (fumble, interception or punt)

Bands or PA music cannot play between plays while the same team maintains possession of the football, except during a timeout and after a touchdown and until the team's lineup for the ensuing kickoff. If a band or PA music starts to play and the timeout is shortened for any reason, the band or music must stop playing immediately. The only exception is after a touchdown.

If an official hears a band or music playing at any other time during the game (during live ball), he/she should notify the game administrator. The game administrator must notify the band director or PA announcer that playing during live ball is an MHSA rule violation and to stop playing immediately. This rule is an MHSA administrative rule and must be enforced by the school administration and not by MOA officials. If the problem persists after the communication with game administrators, the official does not have authority to terminate the game. After the conclusion of the game, officials must report the situation to the MHSA immediately and we will penalize the school

accordingly and also ensure the situation does not happen in that team's future games.

SPIRIT

SPIRIT COACHING REQUIREMENTS

Listed below are the three mandatory requirements for spirit (cheer and dance) coaches to complete: Requirements must be completed prior to practice and kept current when working with athletes.

- MHSA Spirit Rules Clinic 1 year certification. Opens August 1st each year.
- Cheer and Dance Safety Certification www.nfhslearn.com. This is completed only once every four years. Required for stunting in any capacity.
- MHSA Concussion Course 1 year certification. Must be completed June 1st or after each year.

Coaches are required to send all three certificates to their AD, or load it directly into a Dragonfly account. NFHS Rule Book and Spirit information was sent directly to the coach(s) the 1st of September.

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 Amy Bartels at abartels@mhsa.org.

Please note that your spirit coach(s) only needs to complete the MHSA Rules Clinic once per school year if that person coaches both fall and winter seasons.

All coaches and volunteers must have all certifications as needed.

The Board approved the following language for the 2022-23 Spirit section of the MHSA Handbook:

Eighth-grade students that have been approved to participate on the high school cheer or dance team may participate in stunting with approval from their school administration. No students younger than eighth grade may participate in stunting in any capacity.

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 2022-23 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 the 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 2022 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 postseason 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.

The MHSA Executive Board approved fining schools whose coaches do not turn in a postseason ballot.

AIM HIGHER

The AIM Higher Program is entering its 35th year! We will have six workshops this year across the state. 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 have developed an AIM Higher video covering these topics which is now available for all of our schools. The video was sent to schools and is currently available on the MHSA website. This allows every school to share this outstanding information with 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 21, 2022, at the MMEA Convention. Dusty Molyneaux, MHSA Music Committee Chair and Great Falls Public Schools Music Director will conduct the meeting.

Following the MMEA conference, each festival chair or district representative should follow up with the teachers in their districts.

ATTACHMENTS

[2022-23 AIM Higher Schedule](#)
[General Instructions for Football Line to Gain Crews and Clock Operators](#)