

ACTIVITY NEWS

Montana High School Association · 1 South Dakota Ave · Helena, Montana 59601 · 406-442-6010 · www.mhsa.org

August 2022



MHSA PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Hello to Everyone!! As the month of August begins, so too does an exciting time of year for administrators, coaches, parents and student-athletes. New positions, schools, revamped goals and adjusted expectations all lead to heightened excitement and a bit of anxiety as we begin the 2022-23 school year. Those same things can be said for the Montana High School Association office staff.

It has been my privilege to serve as the Class "A" representative on the MHSA Executive Board for the past three years. This position has allowed me an opportunity to meet many new administrators across the great state of Montana and gain a greater appreciation for the efforts put forth to guarantee our student-athletes both outstanding regular and postseason events.

There have been some significant adjustments in the MHSA offices in Helena. Brian Michelotti has been hired as the new Executive Director Of the Montana High School Association, replacing Mark Beckman who retired in July. Brian brings a wealth of knowledge of the MHSA and both Regional and National experience on committees and the contacts that come from that experience. The Executive Board was highly impressed with Brian's interview and his vision and goals for the MHSA. This hiring created a shuffling in the office: Kip Ryan was promoted to Senior Associate Director, Scott Wilson to Associate Director and after an extensive interview process Amy Bartels and Greta Buehler were hired as Assistant Directors. The final hire in this process was Anna Doran who will fill a variety of roles in the MHSA office. With this change, assignments may be adjusted but just know the office personnel will continue to do great work for each school and our student athletes!

This year we will see the addition of baseball as a MHSA activity. We are excited to provide another opportunity for our student-athletes and one more exciting Spring championship.

Each year there are challenges we face and this year will be no different. While attending both a regional and national conference there was much discussion on sportsmanship or the lack of sportsmanship at events. My hope is that in Montana we can strive to maintain a high level of sportsmanship and competition across all our activities. Student-athletes follow the lead of parents, coaches and administrators: We all need to do our part.

I hope that you have an exciting and successful year and I look forward to meeting many more of you over the next year!

Jim Hawbaker - Executive Board President and Assistant Principal at Billings Central Catholic High School

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We are very excited about the new school year! I am starting my first year as the Executive Director and am truly fortunate to be able to lead our outstanding organization. I had the opportunity to speak at a few conferences this summer and saw a ton of old friends and also met some great new administrators.

The greatest resource in the MHSA is our people. The MHSA is comprised of our staff, administrators, coaches, participants and officials. The MHSA staff includes five individuals (six if you include me). Since April, we have made many adjustments in our office. Each staff member participated in high school sports and/or activities (a long time ago!) and understands the values, commitment and benefits of being a team player. Here is a breakdown of our staff and the major responsibilities of each person:

- Brian Michelotti – MHSA Executive Director and MOA Commissioner – budget/finances, MHSA personnel, legal issues, eligibility/foreign exchange/hardships and golf liaison.
- Kip Ryan – Senior Associate Director – volleyball, swimming, cross-country and track & field, athletic committee, athletes' Hall of Fame, awards and MHSA publications (Activity News and Quick Bits).
- Scott Wilson – Associate Director – football, wrestling, baseball, AIM Higher, NFHS Network, Coaches Education reporting, NFHS participation survey, Executive Board meeting agendas and materials.
- Amy Bartels – Assistant Director – soccer, softball, spirit, speech & drama, music, gender equity officer, MOA oversight and Regional Directors, MOA Hall of Fame, Social Media coordinator.
- Greta Buehler – Assistant Director – basketball, tennis, business manager, membership dues/catastrophic insurance, cooperative sponsorships, accounts payable/accounts receivable.
- Anna Doran – Administrative assistant – assists with all staff, assists with MOA membership: dues, reciprocity, deposits, study club and rules clinic attendance, ratings, correspondence, exams, rules book distribution, tournament preparation.

As we begin a new year of high school sports and activities across the state of Montana, we want to create an open culture with the following commitments:

- To listen to you as administrators;
- To ensure each staff member will be an excellent resource;
- To be present at your meetings and events;
- To develop state-of-the-art technology (website/app);
- To on-time delivery of all MHSA resources;
- To have every MHSA Committee meet yearly and provide more direction to MHSA staff, the Executive Board and the membership;

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact any one of us. We are here to assist and we will be a resource that will allow you to grow student activity participation in your community.

As I mentioned above, the MHSA is made up of YOU– the administrators, coaches, officials and participants across the state. We have outstanding people in our membership and we encourage everyone to step forward and take an active role in your MHSA. We can accomplish incredible things when we come together.

Throughout this entire *Activity News*, you will see a significant amount of information that will assist you in the startup of your school year. We have posted all of the fall rules clinics and will have additional administrative clinics available in the near future. These additional clinics include Eligibility, Equity and Sportsmanship. Stay tuned for the release of those administrative clinics.

The importance of closely checking the eligibility of all student activity participants is very important. We have information on our website including the Fundamentals of Athletic Regulations which covers many scenarios including:

- Eligibility
 - A "Quick Check" for sports eligibility
 - The new 8th grade participation rules
 - Information on home school and nonpublic school participation
- Fundraising
- Gender equity
- In-season and out-of-season regulations
- Coaching rules, camps and invitationals
- Much more!

I would like to close the article with this story. We were at an administrators meeting this summer and one of our administrators, who is also an MOA official, made a comment that I believe is worth sharing. He asked, "When are administrators, coaches and officials finally going to realize that we are all on the same team?" The official shortage is well documented, but we have also lost many great administrators and coaches for similar reasons. Let's get on the same team— we will accomplish big things.

Have a great school year. We look forward to hearing from you!

Brian Michelotti, Executive Director

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE REQUIREMENT

This is a reminder that the initial required amount of practices (ten for football, basketball, tennis, soccer, cross country, track and field, softball, volleyball, wrestling, swimming and spirit, two for golf) for each individual must be completed as a comprehensive, regularly scheduled team practice with the full coaching staff present. Also, here is the rule in regard to determining what constitutes/satisfies an initial MHSa practice mentioned above. 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.

MHSa HANDBOOK TO BE PUBLISHED

The MHSa Handbook will be printed soon and mailed to each member school in September. One copy will be sent to each school contact and one copy will be sent to each superintendent. Additional copies are available through the MHSa office for \$10 each. The Handbook is also posted on the MHSa website (www.mhsa.org) where all coaches and staff can access the information.

2022 - 2023 DIRECTORY INFORMATION REQUESTED

The 2022 - 2023 Roster of School Personnel will still need to be filled out and verified by each school. We will use this information to update our popular directory and verify that schools have filled out contact information in Dragonfly. This information will be sent out and completed in August. All schools must input all of their school administration, coaches and contact information in the appropriate fields in both platforms. The directory cannot be printed until information is input from

ALL MHSa member schools, so please pay close attention when you see our correspondence.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORM

The updated MHSa pre-participation physical examination form is enclosed. A few changes that have been added the past few years are COVID-19 symptom questions, a recommendation from the State of Montana Health Department regarding vaccinations and the student's signature was moved to the last page with other signatures.

This is a reminder to all member schools that physical exams are mandated for all students who are going to participate in MHSa sanctioned sports. These exams must be completed before they practice and must have been performed after May 1, 2022. Examinations must be certified by a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice for the current 2022-23 school year. Schools must use the MHSa standardized pre-participation exam form.

The MHSa is committed to the safety and health of our student activity participants and believe this form will facilitate that objective. You may access this form any time at mhsa.org. Please feel free to copy the form and distribute it appropriately. Please contact the MHSa office if you have any questions or direct any questions from physicians. According to HIPPA, schools should note that these physical forms must be kept in confidential private files.

PROCEDURE FOR ACTIVITY NEWS/QUICK BITS MAILINGS

MHSa distributes monthly publications in two formats: *Activity News* and *Quick Bits*.

Activity News and *Quick Bits* are electronic publications, which will be emailed to all administrative emails. *Activity News* editions are distributed in August, October, December and January. *Quick Bits* publications are distributed in September, November, January, March/April and May.

NFHS Rule books or other relevant publications will be mailed to member schools via USPS. This mailing will be sent directly to the Principal at each member high school.

All of these publications, including most enclosures, will be posted at www.mhsa.org.

RULES CLINICS MANDATORY FOR ALL COACHES

The MHSa/MOA rules clinics are presented in an online format for coaches and officials. **All coaches, including the head coach and all assistant coaches and all school-approved volunteer coaches, are required to view the sport-specific rules clinic(s).** The information sheet is available on our website, www.mhsa.org, under the clinics tab. If you have any questions, please contact the MHSa office.

RECORDS OF TRANSFER MANDATORY

Any student who transfers to your school and desires to participate in athletics at any level of competition has to be reported to the MHSa office on a Record of Transfer Form. This form and other related forms are available on our website. We are requiring schools to report home school and nonpublic school participants on the record of transfer form. They cannot transfer and are not considered transfers however having one form to report transfers and home school and nonpublic school participants hopefully is easier for schools. This helps the school verify eligibility for the home school and nonpublic school participants also.

The Record of Transfer form is required in reporting transfer students (and **now 8th graders that participated in high school**, home school and nonpublic school participants) and certifying in writing to the MHSa office that the transfer student and home school and nonpublic school participant meets the MHSa eligibility requirements stated in Article II of the Association By-Laws. These forms **must be filed before** the student participates on **any** high school athletic team in any, sub-varsity or varsity, Association contest. The forms can be emailed (if signed) or faxed without hard copies having to be mailed. If you have any questions regarding transfer students, please contact Brian Michelotti.

AWARENESS EVENTS

When requested, the MHSa permits a school to modify certain uniform/apparel from the NFHS Rules and/or school colors for one (1)

week during the regular season to be designated for charitable awareness events, such as Breast Cancer Awareness week. This interpretation will be applied to all sports. **The school must request permission from the MHSAA to conduct these events.** Should you have questions, please contact the MHSAA staff liaison for the particular sport.

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

The MHSAA respects each individual's first amendment rights; however, any form of statement/protest cannot disrupt the start of or progression of a contest and all MHSAA and NFHS rules must be followed for the contest (uniforms rules, etc.).

COACHES' EDUCATION

COACHES' EDUCATION UPDATE

Please refer to the website for information regarding the three MHSAA Coaches' Education requirements, including instructions on MHSAA Rules Clinics, NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching and NFHS Concussion in Sport. Once these courses are viewed, the requirement is met for the particular school year and the certificate must be uploaded to Dragonfly. Users may review the course again at any time, but after 90 days users may be required to "order" the course again to access the content.

If you have any questions about the Coaches' Education program, please contact Scott Wilson at the MHSAA office.

EXECUTIVE BOARD ITEMS

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

The next regular meeting of the MHSAA Executive Board will be held in Helena beginning on Monday, September 12, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. The Board meeting will continue Tuesday, September 13, if business has not been completed.

If any member school administrator wishes to have an item placed on the agenda for the Board to consider at this meeting, he/she must send the request to the Association office **ten (10) days** prior to the meeting. If any member school wishes to meet with the Executive Board concerning any items, requests for appointments must be made in advance.

MEETING DATES SET FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD

The MHSAA Executive Board has established dates for their regular meetings for the 2022-23 school year. While the Board is required by MHSAA By-Laws to hold a minimum of four (4) meetings, they can also hold special meetings in person, or the Board can conduct business by conference phone calls or electronic format such as Zoom.

2022-23 Board Meeting Dates

September 12, 2022 - Helena
November 21-22, 2022 - Helena
January 14 & 16, 2023 - Missoula
April 17-18, 2023 - Helena
June 22, 2023 - Zoom

ANNUAL MEETING IN MISSOULA

The next MHSAA Annual Meeting will be held in Missoula on January 16, 2023. The Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown is the host facility. Reservations may be made by calling 406-721-8550 and asking for group code: MH1 or online using the following link [MHSAA - Annual Conference 2023](#) and group code MH1. Reservations must be made by December 14, 2022, for the conference rate.

CROSS COUNTRY

CROSS COUNTRY MATERIALS FOUND IN THE ENCLOSURES

For the 2022 season, we have listed the major NFHS and MHSAA rule changes and also some other important MHSAA cross country information. Please contact Kip Ryan in the MHSAA office if you have any questions.

VOLLEYBALL

VOLLEYBALL MATERIALS FOUND IN THE ENCLOSURES

For the 2022 season, we have listed the major NFHS and MHSAA rule changes and also some other important MHSAA volleyball information. Please contact Kip Ryan in the MHSAA office if you have any questions.

FOOTBALL

MAJOR FOOTBALL REVISIONS FOR 2022

There are several changes to MHSAA and NFHS rules that will go into effect for the football season, including new alignments for each classification, NFHS rule changes and other important MHSAA football safety issues. Please review the football information and distribute it to all affected personnel. Please feel free to contact Scott Wilson if you have questions on the football materials.

MOA

THE HIRING OF OFFICIALS

ATTENTION: All administrators and coaches — please make sure all officials whom you hire for varsity contests are members in good standing with the Montana Officials' Association. Per MHSAA/MOA rules, schools must go through the local official's pool when hiring officials unless the official is not in a pool (an approved non-pool affiliated official). To be a member in good standing, officials must have passed the qualifying exam for the respective sport or pay to take the exam that will be given at the start of the season. We had a few non-MOA's work varsity contests in the past few years which is a serious violation of MHSAA/MOA rules and schools will be penalized accordingly for any violations.

In compliance with the Dylan Steigers' Protection of Youth Athletes Act, any sports' official working an athletic contest in your district must have completed concussion education. This includes all varsity contests (for which MOA officials must be used) and any other contests, including sub-varsity, middle school, and elementary. The local district is responsible for ensuring that officials who are not MOA members working athletic contests have completed concussion education, unless the MOA pool has assigned those officials.

Also, please remember to be on hand to greet officials, assist the crew at half-time and to ensure that security and locker rooms etc. are provided for them from the time they arrive until the time they leave the premises. The 2022-2023 MOA Officiating Fees for the regular season have been updated and available in the attachments section below. If there are any questions, please contact Amy Bartels at 406-442-6010 or abartels@mhsaa.org.

SPIRIT

SPIRIT REMINDERS

National Federation Spirit Rules Books and a copy of the Spirit Section of the MHSAA Handbook **will be sent to cheer and dance coaches who have turned in their certifications to Amy Bartels at abartels@mhsaa.org.** Please note that National Federation Spirit Rules and rules found in the MHSAA Handbook's Spirit Section are to be followed during all spirit related activities. Violations of the rules are subject to penalties as found in the By-Laws under General Penalties.

If your school will field cheerleaders only during the fall, winter or both of the seasons, or if your school will not be fielding a cheer team at all during this school year, please advise Amy Bartels at abartels@mhsaa.org as soon as possible with the name and information of each coach.

Also, remember **all** cheer and dance coaches must complete or be current with an approved Cheer and Dance Safety Certification Safety Certification course if their squad does any stunting. The Cheer and Dance (formerly known as AACCAs) Safety Certification is offered online through the National Federation's website and directions to access that course are included in the rules book mailing.

Concussion management is a primary area of emphasis for schools. Each coach (spirit and dance) must also take the online NFHS Concussion Course, for your use in adhering to MHSA rules as well as Montana's concussion legislation.

The MHSA Spirit Rules Clinic must be completed each year and opened on August 1st.

All three certificates for the NFHS Concussion in Sport, NFHS Cheer and Dance and the MHSA Spirit Rules Clinic must be sent to Amy Bartels at abartels@mhsa.org each year prior to the first day of practice.

FINE ARTS

MUSIC COMMITTEE FALL MEETING will be held August 13-14, to discuss the upcoming school year and potential changes to the Music Handbook. Member schools are required to ensure that all music teachers, festival managers and administrators who oversee their school's music program must complete the Understanding Copyright and Compliance online course available at nfhslearn.com. Each individual will be required to complete the course once during their high school tenure. For current teachers, festival managers and administrators, the course must be completed before the start of the 2022-2023 school year. For more information contact Amy Bartels at 406-442-6010 or abartels@mhsa.org

FORENSICS & DRAMA BOOKLET UNDER PRODUCTION

The Speech & Drama booklets will be available to schools in September. Each coach will receive a copy.

Also, administrators are asked to encourage their speech & drama coaches to utilize the information on the MHSA website. All ballots and the tentative schedule are currently posted. If your school has not verified the date of your speech meet, please do so as soon as possible. Whenever possible our mailings will be sent to coaches electronically.

SOCCER

SOCCER MATERIALS SENT SEPARATELY

Coaches will be receiving a separate envelope with soccer rule books and pre-season guides. Please ensure that the materials are received.

ATTACHMENTS

[2022-2023 Events Calendar](#)
[2023-2024 Events Calendar](#)
[2022-2023 Ready Reference Activity Dates](#)
[2022-2023 National Testing Dates](#)
[2022-2023 MHSA & NFHS Cross Country Information](#)
[2022-2023 MOA Officiating Fees - Regular Season](#)
[2022 Football Rules Book – Included in Mailing](#)
[2022-23 NFHS Football Rule Changes](#)
[NFHS Football Rules Poster – Included in Mailing](#)
[MHSA and NFHS Football Changes and Information](#)
[NFHS Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention Statement](#)
[2022 Volleyball Rules Book \(1\) – Included in Mailing](#)
[2022-23 MHSA & NFHS Volleyball Information](#)
[2022-23 NFHS Volleyball Rule Revisions](#)
[NFHS Volleyball Rules Poster – Included in Mailing](#)
[Athletic Pre-Participation Physical Exam Form](#)
[Coaches' Education Handout](#)

Staff Members

Brian Michelotti, Executive Director
Kip Ryan, Senior Associate Director
Scott Wilson, Associate Director
Amy Bartels, Assistant Director
Greta Buehler, Assistant Director
Anna Doran, Administrative Assistant



Executive Board Members

Jim Hawbaker, Vice Principal, Billings Central High School
(President)
Doug Reisig, State Superintendent's Appointee, Missoula
(Vice-President)
Luke Kloker, Principal, Fairview High School
Steve Thennis, Principal, Helena High School
John Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Red Lodge High School
Krystal Zentner, MTSBA Appointee, Bridger
Jimmy Petelis, Governor's Appointee, Billings
