

October 2022

EXECUTIVE CORNER

October has arrived and the MHSA office is busy getting ready for the post season for fall sports. This will be my first official championship as the MHSA Executive Director and I wanted to take this opportunity to share a few items as I travel the state helping lead our association. I have a unique perspective as I lead from my role as Executive Director as my son Joey is a senior this year participating in football:

1 – We have so many outstanding administrators across the state who work so hard to ensure our participants are provided excellent opportunities each day. The administrative teams never get enough credit for the work they do each day! From checking eligibility, providing leadership in their schools, scheduling and administering games – in addition to running their school: we cannot thank you enough and thank you for all of your work!

2 – The MOA officials across our state continue to be an amazing group of people. Yes, we do have a growing shortage of officials across Montana and nationally, but our officials in Montana are 100 percent committed to our participants. Officials commit a large amount of time to their avocation and when you have a chance, thank, recruit and support our officials across Montana. As we have said in the past, without officials, it is just recess!

3 – The commitment of our coaches is second to none. The amount of time high school coaches commit to making our kids better people is incredible. Coaches are teachers first, who work hard to mold our students into fine young men/women. Thank you for your efforts and commitment to showing the importance of participating in high school sports and activities in Montana.

4 – Participants work hard each day keeping their grades up in school, practicing to get better and learning to balance their day. We know that one day they will look back and recognize the importance of participation.

5 – The MHSA Staff works hard daily to ensure that all of these activities are coordinated and administered to perfection, so everyone (administrator, coaches, officials, parents and students) has an enjoyable experience. In our office, we have 7 immediate family members who are high school participants (Joey Michelotti; Colter, Jarrett and Trent Wilson; Austin and Brett Buehler; Finn Doran). We also have 2 high school coaches (Anna Doran and Kayla Ryan) connected to this office so we have a vested interest in the success of all aspects of the MHSA.

To summarize, we understand the importance of high school sports and activities. When all five of these entities come together as a team, we will accomplish our goals! Thank you for the opportunity to work together and let's keep this great thing we call high school activities going! Thanks for all you do and let us know how we can help.

Post season play began with the recently concluded State AA and State A golf meets. Thousands of participants, their coaches, parents, and supporters are preparing for post season play in football, volleyball, cross country and soccer. I know our tournament managers and playoff/festival hosts will work very hard to assure great

experiences for all those involved. Also, we hope the weather will cooperate, and with any luck, we will experience pleasant fall weather for the remainder of our post season tournaments and meets.

A few reminders we would like to mention before winter activities begin:

- The first date for all winter sport practices (swimming, wrestling and basketball) this year will be on Thursday, November 17th.
- The MHSA rules clinics for basketball, wrestling, and spirit will once again be presented online. It is required that all head coaches and all assistant coaches in basketball, wrestling, swimming, and spirit view the clinic for their specific sport/activity. The clinics will be available on November 1st and the clinics need to be viewed by December 2nd. Once again, all clinics are located at www.nfhslearn.com, which are easy to view and also check for your completion.
- Stockman Bank is our title sponsorship for the successful sportsmanship program that has been provided for our member schools and their communities. This is the fifteenth year of this very popular initiative, and the MHSA is very fortunate to have Stockman Bank as a partner providing the valuable components of this program. The MHSA/Stockman Bank Sportsmanship Program will provide many resources for member schools to use in promoting and rewarding good sporting behaviors by players, coaches, and spectators at interscholastic activities. Information regarding all the components of this program was emailed to school administrators recently. Please contact Brian Michelotti to participate in the program or for more information.
- Also included is information on how officials are selected for playoffs, district and divisional and state tournaments and championships. Please share this information with your head coaches.

NFHS Network – The NFHS network has settled in this year and we are excited about our future with the Network. Fall contests viewership is up and the commitment to service from the Network is second to none. Service has moved to a higher level and soon you will see additional opportunities such as:

- Rotating banner ads
- In game opportunities to sell local ads at quarters and halftime
- More opportunities for local radio stations to add voice over of local talent to the broadcast.

Continuing in partnership, the MHSA and the NFHS Network are excited to build on the success of the past six school years of high school post season broadcasts. For the seventh year now, the NFHS Network will video stream live MHSA state championship games/meets in various sports throughout the entire year. The games will be available by subscription pay and can be accessed through www.mhsa.org.

We are here to support you and if anyone has questions moving forward about the NFHS Network, please contact Scott Wilson in the MHSA Office.

And, as we wrap up the fall activity season and begin to prepare for winter activities, please contact the MHSA office with any questions or comments you may have.

Brian Michelotti - Executive Director

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONLINE CLINICS

The MHSA/MOA rules clinics for all activities are presented exclusively online. The basketball, wrestling, spirit and swimming clinics will be posted on our main website at www.mhsa.org. Enclosed please find an instruction sheet that details the procedure for accessing the clinics. **November 1** is the planned launch date for the basketball, wrestling, and swimming clinics. Coaches must view the clinics prior to **December 2nd** to receive credit. Also, cheer coaches who have not previously viewed the spirit rules clinic because they coach only squads who cheer for basketball will also need to complete their online clinic.

PASSES FOR ADMISSION TO MHSA EVENTS

Enclosed is the MHSA Pass Chart. The passes illustrated on the chart are those distributed by the Montana High School Association Executive Board. **Please note there is an additional pass approved by the Executive Board. The pass is for retired coaches and officials who have forty years or more of service.** The individuals receiving the passes are admitted to all MHSA regular season and post season events free of charge. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. If you need more copies of the chart for your school, please contact the MHSA office.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please select the SCHOOLS tab on the MHSA homepage (www.mhsa.org) for important directory updates. Please notify the MHSA with any changes to your school's directory contact information.

MHSA HANDBOOK PRINTING

MHSA Handbooks will be mailed to schools early in the month of October. Each school contact will receive two copies and each superintendent will receive a copy. If you need additional handbooks, please email Greta Buehler at gbuehler@mhsa.org to place your order.

UNIVERSAL AWARD CALENDARS - MAILED IN OCTOBER

Once again this year, Kory Loberg from Universal Awards in Billings is the sponsor / producer of the MHSA Activity Calendars. This poplar wall calendar (formerly produced by Joosten's) was sent to each member school under separate mailing in September. We ask that you express appreciation to Universal Award when you have the opportunity.

EXECUTIVE BOARD ITEMS

NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

The next regular meeting of the MHSA Executive Board will be held in Helena beginning on Monday, November 21, at 8:30 a.m. in the MHSA office. The board meeting will continue Tuesday, November 22, if business has not been completed.

Major Agenda Items for Executive Board Meeting:

1. Adoption of proposed 2023-2024 budget.
2. Plans for Annual Meeting (Missoula).
3. Meritorious Service, Service Citation and Mildred Adams Awards.
4. Act on rules and regulations proposals from member schools.
5. Realignment requests. *Final action on any realignment (not reclassification) requests for 2023-2024 will be taken during this meeting.*

***Reclassification is a two-year process and the Board will determine what schools will be reclassified beginning in the 2025-2026 school year during their April 2024 meeting.*

Anyone wishing to be on the agenda must contact the MHSA office at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

MHSA AWARDS TO BE PRESENTED

The MHSA will honor deserving individuals at the Annual Meeting to be held in Butte in January. The MHSA Executive Board, during their meeting on November 21-22, will consider the nominees for the following awards:

1. **James C. Haugen Meritorious Service Award:** Presented for "Outstanding Contributions to the MHSA Activities." This is the highest award given by the MHSA.
2. **Service Citation Award:** Presented for "Significant Contribution to the MHSA", and.
3. **Mildred Adams Award:** Presented to school support staff personnel who work with activities.

SUBMIT ANNUAL MEETING PROPOSALS

Remember that the deadlines are approaching for presenting proposed amendments to the MHSA By-Laws and/or Rules and Regulations.

1. Proposed changes by member schools for any of the Rules and Regulations of the MHSA Handbook, must first be presented to the MHSA Executive Board at its November 21-22 meeting. Proposals must be received ten days prior to the meeting.
2. Schools may submit proposed changes in the By-Laws (pages 7 - 20) to the Executive Director by December 1. By-Law changes do not need to be presented to the Executive Board for approval.

No proposal can be presented from the floor that has not been received by the deadline. Proposals must carry a fiscal note if there are financial implications **to the Association** and proposals will be separated by the Resolution Committee to be considered by affected classifications.

ANNUAL MEETING IN Missoula

The next MHSA Annual Meeting will be held in Missoula on January 16, 2023. The Holiday Inn Downtown is the host facility. Reservations can be made by contacting David Anderson at david.anderson@himissoula.com or calling 406-532-2058.

BASKETBALL

BASKETBALL RULE REVISIONS ENCLOSED

Enclosed are the basketball rule revisions for the 2022-2023 season. Please give these to your basketball staff for their review.

BASKETBALL TO START

Thursday, November 17, 2022, is the first date for basketball practice. Friday, December 2, 2022, is the first date a basketball game is permitted under the MHSA rules. Basketball Rules and Regulations, Item (4), page 51 of the current MHSA Handbook provides that: No individual shall play in any Association basketball contest until that **individual** has a minimum of ten (10) days of practice of at least one practice session per day on 10 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.

Quarter eligibility for all classes:

The Association prohibits all students of member schools from entering more than five (5) quarters of basketball in any one day, except Class C that has a six (6) quarter limit. Class A and B subvarsity players have six (6) quarters of eligibility, unless suited up for varsity, then the limit is five (5) quarters. Should a non-varsity contest be played using a variation in the length of quarters or the number of quarters played, one of the approved variations shown on the basketball page of the MHSA website must be used. The applicable game limit interpretations are also included on the website (www.mhsa.org). Montana basketball teams will always follow the MHSA game limitation rule when playing in neighboring states. This MHSA quarter rule is not a NFHS rule and basketball officials will not regulate or administer the quarter rule.

Players starting a Game:

NFHS Basketball rules state: Each team consists of five players, one of whom is the captain. A team must start all games (varsity or sub-varsity) with five players. If because of an insufficient number of sub-varsity players, a team can't start a sub-varsity game with five players, the school must request permission to start a sub-varsity game with fewer than five players from Brian Michelotti, the MSHA Executive Director. Remember that by MSHA rules, the Association prohibits students of member schools from playing in a preliminary contest and starting in the varsity contest on the same day. Coaches must ensure that this MSHA rule is not violated. Because this is a MSHA rule, MOA basketball officials will follow NFHS rules requiring a varsity team to start with 5 players even if some of the players have played in a sub-varsity contest.

VOLLEYBALL

2022 STATE ALL-CLASS VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

The 2022 State All-Class Volleyball Tournament will be held at MSU-Bozeman's Brick Breeden Fieldhouse on November 10-12, 2022. The MSHA staff will be managing this tournament. The schedule for the tournament is as follows:

Thursday and Friday, November 10-11

All classes match times:

10 am, 12 pm, 2 pm, 4 pm, 6 pm and 8 pm

Saturday, November 12

*All Classes match times:

10 am, 12 pm – Championships (2 pm if necessary)

**Note that again this year all championships will begin at the same time, which differs from previous years.*

Doors will open for ticket sales Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 9 am.

For more information, please contact Kip Ryan at the MSHA office.

FOOTBALL

Reciprocity for officials

Any Montana High School Association varsity contest (including football games held in Grenora, ND) must be officiated by MOA certified officials or by a member of the North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and/or Idaho officials' association who has paid reciprocity dues to the MOA.

Also, each MOA or non-MOA official who works MSHA contests (varsity or sub varsity – including football games in Grenora, ND) must complete the NFHS Concussion in Sports course each year.

XII. RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIP IN BORDERING STATES

Members of the MOA can join as members of the official's association in the bordering states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and/or Idaho by paying dues of \$10.00 per sport to that/those particular state's organization. Dues must be paid before the official works a contest. This five-state agreement entitles members of each respective organization to officiate in any state(s) in which they maintain membership. Reciprocal arrangements with non-bordering states must be approved by the MOA office. Contact Amy Bartels for more information on how a reciprocal official may register to officiate.

Halftime Intermission – Homecoming and Parents' Night

Remember, football coaches must be back on the field or be on their way to the field before the twelve-minute halftime period expires. It is important to communicate that game management should notify both teams when there are three minutes left in the intermission.

Schools, however, do have the option of using longer halftimes because of homecoming or parents' night, and officials should encourage this option for homecoming and parents' night. By NFHS rule, halftimes can be extended up to twenty minutes, provided the opposing coaches have been notified five minutes prior to the game. Remember, the additional three-minute warm-up period is always mandatory.

Official Football of the MSHA - Wilson WTF1003B GST

The Montana High School Association has agreed to a new multi-year contract with Wilson to be the Official Football of the MSHA. Rawlings has been the MSHA official football for the Montana High School Association for many years, but after reviewing coaches' and schools' input on product and after examining each proposal carefully, the MSHA has entered into a six-year contract with Wilson as the MSHA official football provider. Wilson will provide a game ball to be used for all post season football contests during the contract.

The Wilson WTF1003B GST will be the Official Football of the MSHA. This is one of the most highly rated footballs available on the market today. Per the contract, one of these footballs will be shipped to each post season football game.

Football Requirements – 2020-2024 - Beginning in 2020, a Wilson football will be required in all MSHA state playoffs and championship contests. Schools MUST 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 weekly. Game officials will only allow Wilson footballs during the 2022 postseason.

SOCCER

SOCCER SEASON – PREPARING FOR PLAYOFFS / STATE

The playoff structure for Class AA and A will be held this month with the championship games the last weekend in October. Specific information is listed by classification below:

Class AA Playoff Structure

- October 18 – First Round
- October 22 – Quarter-Final Round
- October 25 – Semi-Final Round
- October 29 – Championship Games

Class A Playoff Structure

- October 10-15 - First Round
- October 17-22 - Semi-Final Round
- October 27-29 - Championship Games

WRESTLING

2022-23 MSHA WRESTLING SEASON

The first allowable MSHA date for wrestling practice this year will be November 17 and the first date for competition is December 2. A wrestling match or meet will be permitted on this day only if the contestants participated in the required number of practice sessions.

50% Rule Clarifications:

The MSHA has added clarifications to the weight control section of the MSHA Handbook regarding the 50% rule. For the purpose of the 50% rule, a valid weigh-in must comply with the following:

- a) The wrestler must weigh-in and compete, i.e., a decision is reached (win, loss or forfeit because of injury or illness).
- b) Weigh-ins for the purpose of the 50% rule can only occur at meets that have been scheduled before the season or rescheduled during the season because of extenuating circumstances with approval of the MSHA office. Each school must submit a regular season schedule (varsity and junior varsity) to the MSHA office prior to the first scheduled competition of the season.
- c) A wrestler eliminated on the first day of a tournament cannot weigh-in the second day for the same tournament. Varsity and junior-varsity tournaments are considered separate events and if there is a corresponding junior-varsity tournament, then wrestlers would be allowed to weigh-in and wrestle the second day for the junior-varsity tournament.
- d) For mixers, if a wrestler does not have anyone to wrestle during that event, this weigh-in will count, but this must be approved by the MSHA office.

Electronic Weight Management for MHSA

Again, this school year, the MHSA will require that each school use the weight management portal through the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) to track the 50% rule. Each school will enter their regular season schedule and then also the weights at each meet for all of the wrestlers that participated.

At each divisional site, managers will be able to print a report detailing the weight that each wrestler qualified for based on the MHSA 50 % Rule.

We will be sending more information to all wrestling schools before the beginning of the season.

SPIRIT

SAFETY AWARENESS FOR SPIRIT

MHSA believes it is extremely important to reduce the risk of injury due to cheerleading participation by increasing safety awareness. Here are a few rules worth mentioning:

Practice sessions must be held in a location suitable for spirit activities, i.e., appropriate surface/area, reasonably free of obstructions and excessive noise.

The formation of "rally lines" or "player run throughs" by spectators, fans/ and or students on or near the playing field/floor during the introduction of players or at any other time before, during or after a game is prohibited. Cheerleaders are the only group that can hold a run through for the players to enter the floor and they must not stunt while holding the run through. (MHSA Handbook, page 118, #7).

Anyone associated with an Association contest (regular season or post season) is prohibited from throwing any type of object into or from the spectator section. We heard of several instances where this happened during the past sports season and in order to protect the cheerleaders as well as the spectators, this is not to be allowed. (MHSA Handbook, page 118, #4).

The National Federation Spirit Rules Book states on page 16, Rule 2-1 Art.16 "Spirit participants shall stand outside the free-throw lane lines extended towards the sidelines throughout a basketball game. An Illustration is provided on page 52..

If your school fields only a winter cheer and/or dance team, and if your cheer and/or dance coach has NOT yet completed the mandatory Spirit Rules Clinic, they will need to do that before December 1st. That clinic is available on our website. If there are any questions, please contact Amy Bartels at abartels@mhsa.org.

AIM HIGHER

AIM HIGHER CONTINUES

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.

ENCLOSURES—hardcopies are not included in this mailing, but links are included in the digital version which was emailed and posted online at www.mhsa.org.

1. [James C. Haugen Meritorious Service Award, Service Citation Award and Mildred Adams Award Form](#)
2. [Annual Meeting Proposal Form](#)
3. [Post Season Officials Selection Procedure](#)
4. [2022-23 NFHS Basketball Rule Changes](#)
5. [Basketball Officials' Signals \(Electronic Copy Only\)](#)
6. [2022-23 NFHS Basketball Poster](#)
7. [Basketball Timer & Scorer Instructions \(Electronic Copy Only\)](#)
8. [Basketball Rule Books \(2\)](#)
9. [2022-23 NFHS Wrestling Rule Changes](#)
10. [Sample Admission Pass Chart](#)

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
