

# ACTIVITY NEWS

Montana High School Association · 1 South Dakota Ave · Helena, Montana 59601 · 406-442-6010 · [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org)

October 2023

## EXECUTIVE CORNER

In my October article I like to take the opportunity to emphasize the value of participating in extracurricular activities and how relatively inexpensive it is for schools to provide these invaluable programs. I know quite a few of you have seen this information many times, however after looking through the Directory of Schools, we have several new administrators at our member schools this year. Hopefully this information can be shared again with the relevant groups by both our veteran and new administrators. Every day in Montana, thousands of high school students are practicing and competing in various high school activities. This fall we have students practicing/participating in football, volleyball, cross country, golf, speech and debate, music (band, orchestra and chorus, soccer and cheerleading/dance (spirit). We all realize the value of participating in these activities, however it wouldn't hurt to share the many specific positive reasons for participation with parents, school board members, community members, the media, etc. Comments are sometimes made that we are spending too much on high school sports/activities, but it is more important than ever to share the value of these activities for our students. In Montana, high school activities expenditures, on average, amount to about 2% of a high school budget. We continue to realize how important participation in high school activities is for the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of our student activity participants.

Previously I have shared information from "The Case for High School Activities" published by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) on the value of high school activities. Click Here to access this information. Click Here for a synopsis from an Indiana State University Study on the impact of Athletic Participation on GPA and Graduation Rates. The study referenced numerous other studies and the following is excellent information reinforcing the value of extracurricular activities in our schools.

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 things I would like to mention before winter activities begin. Stockman Bank is our title sponsorship for the successful sportsmanship program that has been provided for our member schools and their communities. 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 Ryan Richards in the MHSa office ([Ryan.Richards@playfly.com](mailto:Ryan.Richards@playfly.com)) 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 - Continuing in partnership, the MHSa and the NFHS Network are excited to build on the success of the past school years of high school post season broadcasts. 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](http://www.mhsa.org).

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  
Executive Director

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## 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](http://www.mhsa.org). **November 1** is the planned launch date for the basketball, wrestling, and swimming clinics. Coaches must view the clinics prior to **December 1st** 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. 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.

### PASSES FOR ADMISSION TO MHSa EVENTS

Starting 2023-24 postseason, the MHSa Executive Board passed the following price changes for MHSa postseason events:

**Football: General Admission:** Adults \$10.00. Students \$8.00.  
Reserved: \$10.00.

**Soccer: General Admission:** Adults \$ 10.00 Students \$8.00

### Volleyball: State Tournaments

General Admission	Adult	Student
All-Session	\$36.00	\$25.00
Thursday or Friday – All Day Pass	\$16.00	\$11.00
Thursday or Friday – After 5:00 pm	\$10.00	\$8.00
Saturday – All Day Pass	\$10.00	\$8.00

### DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please select the SCHOOLS tab on the MHSa homepage ([www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org)) for important directory updates. You will find a link to our new program, Final Forms. If you have updates throughout the year, please login to Final Forms and update your schools contact information.

### MHSa HANDBOOK PRINTING

MHSa Handbooks were mailed to schools last month. Each school contact received two copies and each superintendent received a copy.

If you need additional handbooks, please email Jenise Cockhill at [jcockhill@mhsa.org](mailto:jcockhill@mhsa.org).

### **UNIVERSAL AWARD CALENDARS - MAILED IN SEPTEMBER**

We are excited to announce that Kory Loberg from Universal Awards in Billings is once again providing the MHSA Activity Calendars. This popular wall calendar was sent to each member school under separate cover 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 20<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30 a.m. at the Helena Public Schools District office. The board meeting will continue Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> if business has not been completed.

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 Bozeman in January. The MHSA Executive Board, during their meeting on November 20-21, 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 23-24 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 BOZEMAN**

The next MHSA Annual Meeting will be held in Bozeman on January 15, 2024. The Best Western Plus GranTree Inn is the host facility. Reservations can be made by contacting Melissa Kostelecky at [grantreesales@montana.com](mailto:grantreesales@montana.com) or calling 406-556-6213. The block code is 2949 with a rate of \$119/night. If you do online registration you can use the link below to book directly online. [Room Reservations](#)

## **BASKETBALL**

### **2023-24 MHSA BASKETBALL SEASON**

Thursday, November 16, 2023, is the first date for basketball practice. Friday, December 1, 2023, is the first date a basketball game is permitted under the MHSA rules.

### **NEW REQUIRED PRACTICE RULE**

Basketball Rules and Regulations, Item (5), page 56 of the current MHSA Handbook provides that: No individual shall play in any Association basketball contest until that **individual** has a minimum of eight (8) days of practice of at least one practice session per day on eight (8) different days (no practice permitted on Sunday), prior to the

date of the first allowable game. The initial eight (8) practices for each individual must be completed as a comprehensive, regularly scheduled team practice with the full coaching staff.

### **SHOT CLOCK AND BACKBOARD LIGHTS**

LED lights located around the shot clock may be used, but the lights shall only be activated for a shot clock violation (2023-24 NFHS Basketball Rules Book, page 74). Red/LED lights on each backboard are permitted to signal that time has expired for a quarter or extra period (2023-24 NFHS Basketball Rule 1-14, page 16). Lights on the backboard are not to be used to indicate a shot clock violation.

## **VOLLEYBALL**

### **2023 STATE ALL-CLASS VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT**

The 2023 State All-Class Volleyball Tournament will be held at MSU-Bozeman's Brick Breeden Fieldhouse on November 9-11, 2023. The MHSA staff will be managing this tournament. The schedule for the tournament is as follows:

#### **Thursday and Friday, November 9-10**

All classes match times:

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

#### **Saturday, November 11**

\*All Classes match times:

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

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

For more information, please contact Kip Ryan at the MHSA 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 MHSA 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 per sport to that/those state's organization. Approval and dues for the MOA of \$20.00 must be paid to the MOA office 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.

### **Sideline Management – Restricting the amount of sideline passes**

As the playoffs approach, the MHSA office would like to remind schools that 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 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 they can be located during the game (see below).

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.

#### **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 half-time is expired. 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 half-times because of homecoming or parent's night, and officials should encourage this option for homecoming and parent's night. By NFHS rule, half times 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 MHSA - 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 MHSA. Rawlings has been the MHSA 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 MHSA has entered into a six-year contract with Wilson as the MHSA 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 MHSA. 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 MHSA 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 2023 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 9-14 - Play-in Game and First Round
- October 17-22 - Semi-Final Round
- October 27-29 - Championship Games

## **WRESTLING**

#### **2023-24 MHSA WRESTLING SEASON**

The first allowable MHSA date for wrestling practice this year will be November 16<sup>th</sup> and the first date for competition is December 1<sup>st</sup>. A wrestling match or meet will be permitted on this day only if the contestants participated in the required number of practice sessions.

#### **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. Emails from Track

Wrestling/Flo Sports will be sent to school contacts and coaches starting October 1<sup>st</sup> reminding schools to set up their accounts. Each school will enter their regular season schedule and then also the weights at each meet for all of the wrestlers that participated. If the school offers girls' wrestling, the school will be required to set up a separate boys and girls account.

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 122, #8).

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 122, #5).

National Federation Spirit Rules Book states on page 15, 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 51.

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 1<sup>st</sup>. That clinic is available on our website. If there are any questions, please contact Amy Bartels at [abartels@mhsa.org](mailto:abartels@mhsa.org).

## **AIM HIGHER**

#### **AIM HIGHER**

The MHSA is pleased to announce that the Montana Army National Guard is back as a valued MHSA corporate partner. Once again, they will be the title sponsor of the AIM Higher Program. The AIM Higher Program will continue to include sessions on leadership, mentoring, team captain training, hazing awareness, drug prevention and sportsmanship.

1. [James C. Haugen Meritorious Service Award, Service Citation Award and Mildred Adams Award Form](#)
2. [Annual Meeting Proposal Form](#)
3. [NFHS: The Case for High School Activities \(electronic copy only\)](#)
4. [Post Season Officials Selection Procedure](#)
5. [Indiana State University Study on the impact of Athletic Participation on GPA and Graduation Rates](#)
6. [AIM Higher Schedule/Registration Form](#)
7. [Sample Admission Pass Chart](#)

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Staff Members

Brian Michelotti, Executive Director

Kip Ryan, Senior Associate Director

Scott Wilson, Associate Director

Amy Bartels, Assistant Director

Greta Buehler, Assistant Director

Jenise Cockhill, Business Manager/Administrative Asst.

Ryan Richards, Playfly Account Executive



Executive Board Members

Steve Thennis, Principal, Helena High School (President)

Krystal Zentner, MTSBA Appointee, Bridger (Vice President)

Joe McElroy, State Superintendent's Appointee, Missoula

Kara Triplett, Activities Director, Richey-Lambert High School

Aric Harris, Activities Director, Whitefish High School

John Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Red Lodge High School

Jimmy Petelis, Governor's Appointee, Billings

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