

FOOTBALL

First Round Playoffs

Classes A, B, and C October 27

Quarter Final Playoffs

Class AA November 2 or 3

Classes A, B and C November 3

Semi-final Playoffs

Class AA November 9 or 10

Classes A, B, C and C Six Player November 10

State Championship Games

Class AA November 16 or 17

Classes A, B, and C November 17

I - GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (1) There shall be no spring football for classes of schools.
- (2) It is mandatory that a stretcher be a part of the regular football field equipment for every football game.
- (3) It is recommended that the home team be responsible for seeing that a doctor is available on the football field for all season football games.
- (4) The Montana High School Association Executive Board shall establish the starting date for practice and the first allowable date when any contests may be played. No individual shall play in any association contest until he/she has a minimum of twelve (12) days of football practice and at least one practice session per day on twelve (12) different days (no practice permitted on Sunday), prior to the date of the first allowable game.

If a student begins his/her twelve days of required practices and that period of days is interrupted by sickness, injury, academic ineligibility or for any other reason for a period of two weeks, then the student shall be required to practice an additional **five (5)** days and in cases of sickness or injury to produce a doctor's release.

- (5) Ten (10) football games will be the maximum limit for all football classifications exclusive of Association-sponsored playoffs.
- (6) The first three days of football practice will be a period of acclimation with no contact and no pads. The only football equipment to be used is shoes and helmets. Non-contact is defined as no student-to-student contact. However, participants may contact dummies/shields held by others. [Also see Specialized Camp Rule, Rules & Regulations, Section (7)].
- (7) No football player shall be allowed to participate in more than ten (10) quarters per week (Sunday to Sunday) nor in more than two (2) games within a 48 hour period.

INTERPRETATION

Participation in one play in a game would constitute one (1) quarter.

- (8) The football season officially ends with the last regularly scheduled game or the state championship game of each respective classification.
- (9) Contests interrupted because of events beyond the control of the responsible school administrative authority shall be continued from the point of interruption, unless the

teams agree to terminate the contest with the existing score. Regular season contests continued from the point of interruption must be rescheduled before playoff competition begins. Playoff contests continued from the point of interruption must be rescheduled before the next playoff contest. Schools unable to mutually agree on contest dates must contact the MHSAs office for a determination.

- (10) The playing rules as adopted and published by the National Federation of State High School Associations for the current year shall be followed for all games. By state association adoption the coin toss shall be scheduled thirty (30) minutes or less prior to the starting time of the contest.
- (11) ***Halftime will be twelve (12) minutes with a mandatory additional three (3) minute warm-up period. The only exceptions to this rule are homecoming games, parents' nights etc.***
- (12) Schools shall purchase sideline clips for chain crews and officials to use during games.
- (13) When the teams of two schools have met during the football season in the past five years, the school whose team last played on the field of the other shall have prior claim to this particular season's game on its own field. By mutual agreement other arrangements may be made, but the terms of this mutual agreement should be set down in written contract and/or master schedule. Where no such written contract or master schedule can be shown, the Executive Board will award the game in question to the school which last played the other away from home. Where equally fair alternatives present themselves, the Executive Director shall flip a coin to determine the site of the game. The two schools abide by this determination and the penalty for failing to accept this result shall be forfeiture of the game under consideration by the school failing to comply.

The provision stated in the previous paragraph will not apply if the schools concerned reach a satisfactory agreement, or if the conference to which these schools belong has definite rules or a master schedule for season's play. For the purpose of this rule, forfeited games shall be considered as games played. A school that forfeits a football game shall lose the home field advantage of the following year to the school who received the forfeit.

- (14) Games between teams from different districts and divisions are permissible at any time, provided they do not interfere with necessary elimination games, but these games will not be considered in determining district or divisional champions. Should teams which have already met during the season become the champions of their respective district or division, it will be necessary for them, if paired, to play again to determine which one will advance toward the finals for the championship in their class.
- (15) If two teams end the second half of the regular playing time of any football game played in Montana with a tie score, the tie must be broken and a winner declared. The method used to break ties is published in the National Federation football rules.
- (16) Classes A, B and C: In the second half of any Class A, B or C (8 and 6 player) football game, any time the score differential reaches 35 points or more, the clock will not be stopped when:
 - A. The ball goes out-of-bounds.
 - B. A forward pass is incomplete.
 - C. A score occurs (unless it reduces the point spread to less than 35 points).
Note: the clock continues to run after a score through the next free kick.
 - D. A fair catch is made or awarded or
 - E. A touchback occurs.
 - F. A first down is declared.**

If the score differential falls below 35 points, normal timing procedures will be utilized.

The clock will continue to be stopped on all other situations as specified by National Federation Rule 3.4.4 (penalty, time out, end of period).

- (17) It is understood that competition for any football championship is not obligatory upon a school but is dependent upon the decision of each school. However, when a school has signified its intention to compete for a championship, then it is honor bound to accept in full the rules for that season and then play games as may be necessary under the rules to determine the championship for that year. There may arise conditions, such as epidemics of disease, which warrant the Executive Board granting an honorable release from the fulfillment of obligations, in which case such release may be given, except in Classes AA and A only where no postponements are allowed. (See Rule (2) under Class AA and Class A Football Programs.)

No school is required to take part in any game or tournament, but once entered under the plan outlined, schools shall carry out their part of the program in fairness to all other schools represented. Any team taking part in season play is automatically entered into the first tournament or playoff held in that district or in that division. That team shall not be allowed to withdraw from playing in such tournament or playoff without the specific approval of the Executive Director. The penalty for violation shall be as outlined under Penalties, Article VIII, Section (2).

- (18) Some schools schedule two games each season with another school. If both games are played within the time set for the completion of the conference season and if no signed agreement has been made regarding the bearing of these games on the championship, the first of these games shall count and the second game shall have no bearing on the conference standing. If schools want the second game to count, they should have a written agreement to that effect. If only one game is played within the time limit, it shall be decisive in determining championship.
- (19) Games arranged to break a tie in the standings in any season will in no way affect the location of games in future rotating schedules.
- (20) Awards will follow the MHSA standardized awards program.
- (21) All football playoff and state championship games will be conducted under the following financial arrangements and charges against the game receipts are to be paid in the order listed:
- A. Game officials' (referees') fees and expenses.
 - B. The visiting team's expenses to be paid the following schedules:
 - 1. Mileage — **\$2.50** per mile, for one round trip. (In computing the number of miles traveled, the shortest paved route open to travel, as listed on the current Official Montana Highway Map published by the Montana Department of Highways will be the mileage used.)
 - 2. Per diem — One day per diem allowed @ \$30.00 for the persons specified when team stays overnight or one day per diem allowed @ \$15.00 for the persons specified when they do not stay overnight. No per diem is ever allowed for the day after the game.
 - 3. If the visiting team must travel more than 200 miles one way to the game site and stays overnight two nights (including game day night), they will be allowed an two days @ \$30.00 for the persons specified. If they do not stay over a second night they will be allowed one additional

day @ \$15.00 for the persons specified. In Classes AA and A, if the visiting team must travel more than 400 miles one way and they stay overnight three nights (including game day night), they will be allowed three days @ \$30.00. If they stay over two nights before game day and don't stay over game day night, they will be allowed two days @ \$30.00 and one day @ \$15.00.

4. No expenses are paid for the day following the contest.
 5. Number of persons to be paid expenses:
 - a. Class AA — 53 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.
 - b. Class A — 45 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.
 - c. Class B — 37 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.
 - d. Class C — 28 persons including players, coaches, managers and administrators.
 - C. Reasonable local expenses may be charged against the game. The host school is expected to furnish the football field already properly marked and equipped and in the best possible playing condition for the game without charge. However, because of snow removal conditions that require extra time and expense for field preparation, the host school may claim expenses up to a maximum of \$500.00 for field preparation. Schools will be required to itemize all charges. These itemizations and amounts charged are subject to review and approval.
 - D. If the game receipts are insufficient to pay the expenses listed in items a through c above, charges for local expenses in item c shall not be allowed and then the remaining loss shall be shared 60 percent by the host school and 40 percent by the visiting school.
 - E. No guarantee is made that all teams will receive maximum expense allowance.
 - F. For distribution of profits from all playoffs and state championships refer to By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.
- (22) Each district and division in each classification **shall** determine their own ticket prices for each playoff game.
- Each classification may determine the ticket prices for their respective state championship games. If they choose not to or no decision is reached, then the following **minimum** ticket prices as established by the MHSA Executive Board will be used for all state championship games.
- General Admission: Adults \$6.00, Students \$5.00. Reserved: \$7.00.
- (23) A financial report showing a complete itemization of income and expenses for all playoff and state championship games must be submitted to the MHSA office, using the financial report form furnished, within fifteen (15) days following the conclusion of the event.
 - (24) Refer to the MOA section for number of officials required.
 - (25) Emergency matters not specifically covered by the football general rules will be decided by the Executive Board of the Montana High School Association.

- (26) Rawlings is the official football supplier of the Montana High School Association. The MHSA recommends the use of ST-5 game balls provided by the Rawlings Company for all football playoffs and state championship games. Rawlings furnishes the game balls with the understanding that the National Federation football rules allow each team to use a ball of its choice as long as it meets specifications as outlined in the rule book. This rule is not being waived. The game ball will be presented to the winning team.

II - CONCESSIONS AND CORPORATE SPONSORS

- (1) The concession rights for any state championship must be approved by the Executive Director. Concession rights include but are not limited to t-shirts, other apparel, photos, buttons etc.
- (2) Corporate sponsorship of any post season event is the responsibility of the MHSA Executive Board and requires Board approval. Exceptions are: a) program advertisements and b) signage or announcements acknowledging the receipt of donated goods including food or beverages for the hospitality room, the use of tents at outdoor events, or the use of other equipment necessary for staging the event. Signage should be placed only in the appropriate areas; i.e. on the tents or in the hospitality room/area.

Established facility sponsorships are not affected provided that MHSA corporate sponsorship requirements are met.

III - COMPLIMENTARY PASS POLICY FOR POST-SEASON GAMES

The Association has established the following pass policy for football play-off and state championship games which shall be adhered to by the host administrators. This applies to participating schools only.

- (1) For school administrators - fourteen reserved seat (if available) tickets. If schools co-op the host school will receive the fourteen administrative tickets and the other school(s) in the co-op will each receive an additional four (4) administrative tickets. These complimentary tickets are to be distributed by the superintendent to the principal, coaches, band directors, school board chairpersons, bus drivers, cheerleading coaches, sponsors of half-time entertainment etc., and maybe spouses of some.
- (2) For cheerleaders — one pass for each varsity cheerleader who attends the game.
- (3) For radio — three passes to each station given permission to broadcast the game.
- (4) For press — one pass for Associated Press, two passes for daily news media and one pass for bona fide press from participating communities. Members of the press will be required to show their Montana Newspaper Association press credentials when picking up their passes.
- (5) For bands and performing groups — they will be allowed free admission at playoff and state championship games when they play or perform.

These are the only complimentary passes that shall be allowed and others from non-participating schools must purchase tickets.

III - CLASS AA FOOTBALL PROGRAM

- (1) The following **fifteen (15)** schools **comprising fourteen (14) teams** will be classified as Class AA for football. The schools are aligned in one division:

Class AA

Billings Senior	*Great Falls/MSDB
Billings Skyview	Great Falls CMR
Billings West	Helena Capital
Bozeman	Helena High
Butte	Missoula Big Sky
Flathead (Kalispell)	Missoula Hellgate
Glacier (Kalispell)	Missoula Sentinel

*Cooperative Sponsorship

- (2) The Class AA school will be charged with the responsibility of determining the number of conference games each school shall play and for organizing the season's schedule.

Football games must be played as scheduled — that is, in the specific week. Games cannot be postponed beyond the specific week regardless of reason. There will not be any extension of the season and a team not able to play in the specific week scheduled will automatically forfeit the game to the opponent.

- (3) The breaking of ties in final standings shall be responsibility of the Class AA conference.
- (4) The sites for the Class AA football playoffs and state championship games will be determined as follows:
- A. The higher seeded team will host. Highest seeded team will host lowest seeded team.
 - B. Single elimination.
 - C. First playoff games will be week eleven of the season, the second round games will be week twelve, and the championship game will be week thirteen.
 - D. Teams will be reseeded after the first round, highest seed playing lowest seed. In the second round, the highest seed remaining will host the lowest seed remaining for one semi-final and the next highest seed remaining will host the next lowest seed remaining in the other semi-final.
 - E. Date and time of each game will be determined by mutual consent of teams involved (games to be scheduled on Fridays or Saturdays of respective weeks).
 - F. Ticket prices at playoff games will be in accordance with MHSAA guidelines.

First Round Playoffs:

8th seed at 1st seed's site
7th seed at 2nd seed's site
6th seed at 3rd seed's site
5th seed at 4th seed's site

Second Round (semi-finals): teams will be reseeded according to item D above.

- (5) The host school will stage the game under the finance plan as found in the By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.
- (6) If a school which has won the right to play for the state championship withdraws without competing, unless such withdrawal is considered honorable and unavoidable by the Executive Board, the school so withdrawing shall be subject to certain penalties. If it withdraws at such a time that it is possible to substitute the next school in standing, there may be no money penalty but the offending school shall be barred from all participation in Montana High School Association contests for a period of one year. If the withdrawal comes at a time when the management of the championship

game, the other school and officials of the Montana High School Association have already spent money in direct connection with the championship game, (if, in other words, the game cannot be played at the appointed time because of this withdrawal) then the school so withdrawing shall pay all such costs with the added provision that suspension in any case may not be for a period of less than one year.

IV - CLASS A FOOTBALL PROGRAM

- (1) **Twenty-four (24)** schools are classified as Class A and aligned in four divisions as follows:

Northwest

Bigfork
Columbia Falls
Libby
Polson
Ronan
Whitefish

Southwest

Anaconda
Beaverhead Co. (Dillon)
Corvallis
Frenchtown
Hamilton
Stevensville

Central

Belgrade
Browning
Butte Central
Fergus (Lewistown)
Havre
Park (Livingston)

Eastern

Billings Central
Custer Co. (Miles City)
Dawson Co. (Glendive)
Hardin
Laurel
Sidney

- (2) The Class A schools in each division will be charged with the responsibility for determining the number of conference games each school shall play and for organizing the season's schedule for the division, to be presented to the Executive Board for approval each year.

Football games must be played as scheduled — that is, in the specific week. Games cannot be postponed beyond the specific week regardless of reason. There will not be any extension of the season and a team not able to play in the specific week scheduled will automatically forfeit the game to the opponent.

- (3) The playoff series leading to the state championship games will be as follows:

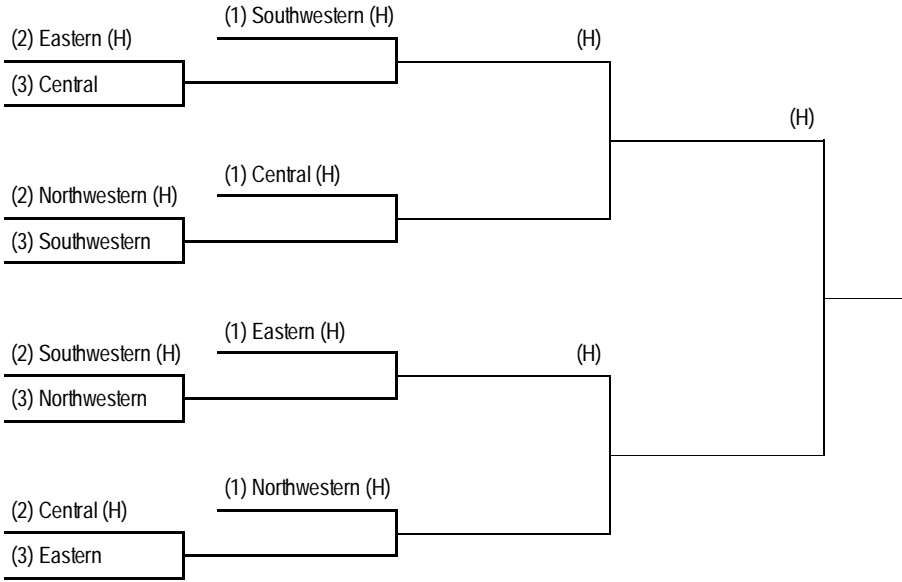
The #1 seeds from each division are placed in the bracket on a yearly rotation, which consists of the conference which is on the top and has the home field throughout the playoff rotates to the bottom and all the other conference winners rotate up one slot on the bracket.

First Round Playoffs:

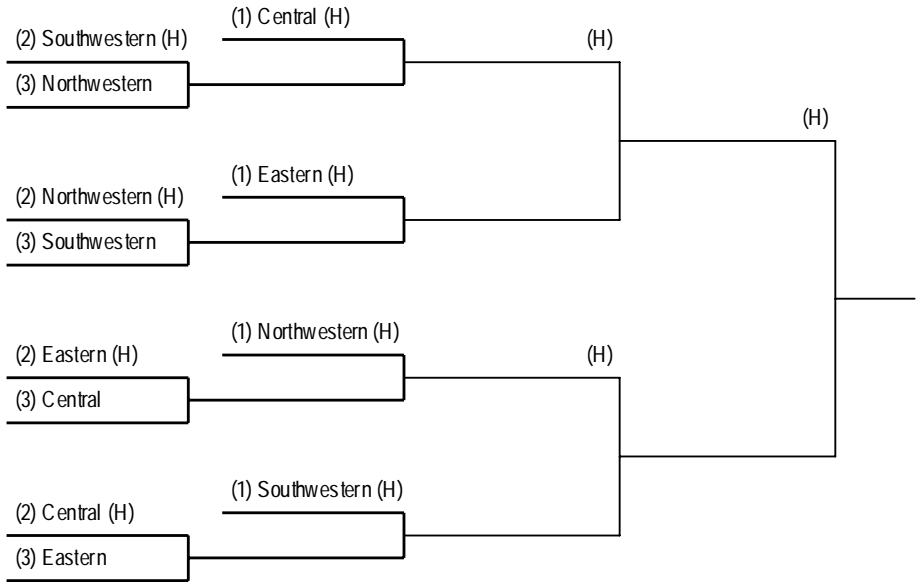
#2 and #3 seeds from the Northwestern and Southwestern are always bracketed with the conference winners from the Central and East. These matchups will rotate every year.

#2 and #3 seeds from the Central and Eastern will always be bracketed with the conference winners from the Southwestern and Northwestern. These matchups will rotate every year.

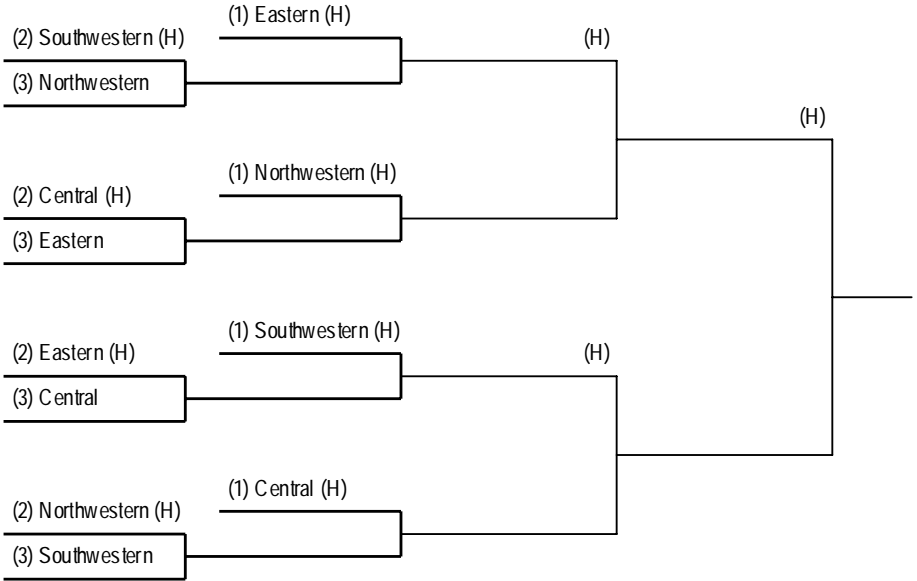
2007-2008



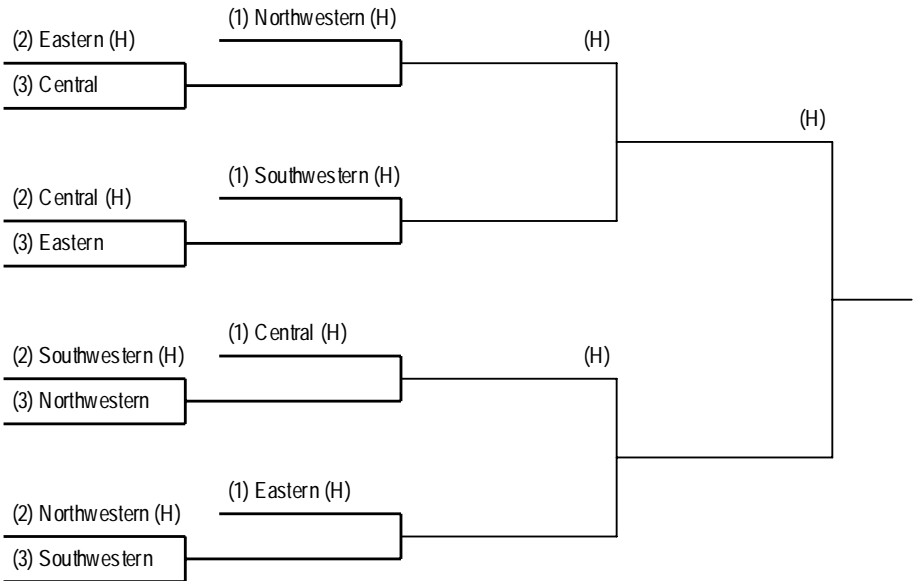
2008-2009



2009-2010



2010-2011



If the two teams in the playoff series or the state championship game are from the same division, then the team that finished higher in the conference standings would host the game. Any ties would be broken by the division tie-breaking procedure.

- (4) Financial arrangements for playoff games and the state tournament game are found in the By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.
- (5) It shall be the responsibility of the host school to furnish the field properly equipped, game football, yardage chain, sideline clip, and down marker crew and electric field clock operator and staff to handle crowd, etc.
- (6) All Class A Football Playoffs and the State Championship will be played on Saturday unless another time is mutually agreed by the two schools involved.

V - CLASS B FOOTBALL PROGRAM

- (1) For the purpose of the Class B competition in football the member Class B schools playing football will be divided into four divisions with 53 schools comprising 41 teams that will compete.

Northern Division

<u>District 1B</u>	<u>District 2B</u>
Choteau	*Glasgow/Hinsdale/Nashua
Conrad	*Malta/Whitewater/Saco
Cut Bank	*Plentywood/Westby
*Harlem/Dodson	**Poplar
Shelby	*Wolf Point/Lustre Christian

Eastern Division

<u>District 3B</u>	<u>District 4B</u>
*Baker/Plevna	Columbus
Colstrip	Huntley Project (Worden)
Forsyth	Red Lodge
Lodge Grass	Roundup
Powder River Co. (Broadus)	Shepherd
**St. Labre Indian Catholic (Ashland)	

Southcentral Division

<u>District 5B</u>	<u>District 6B</u>
*Ennis/Harrison	Broadwater (Townsend)
*Manhattan/Manhattan	Cascade
Christian	Fairfield
Sweetgrass Co. (Big Timber)	Fort Benton
* Three Forks/Willow Creek	Jefferson (Boulder)
Whitehall	

Western Division

<u>District 7B</u>	<u>District 8B</u>
Darby	Lincoln Co. (Eureka)
Florence-Carlton	*Plains/Hot Springs
Loyola Sacred Heart (Missoula)	St. Ignatius
Powell Co. (Deer Lodge)	Thompson Falls
Seeley-Swan	Troy

*Cooperative Sponsorship

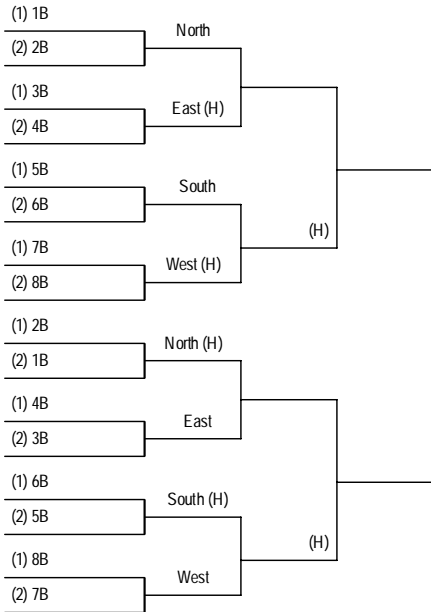
**J.V. only

- (2) The Class B schools in each district will be charged with the responsibility for determining the number of conference games each school shall play and for organizing

the season's schedule for the district, to be presented to the Executive Board for approval each year. Each district will be responsible for determining its district champion and runner-up.

- (3) There shall be a State Class B Championship Football Game each year. The state champion shall be determined by the following plan:

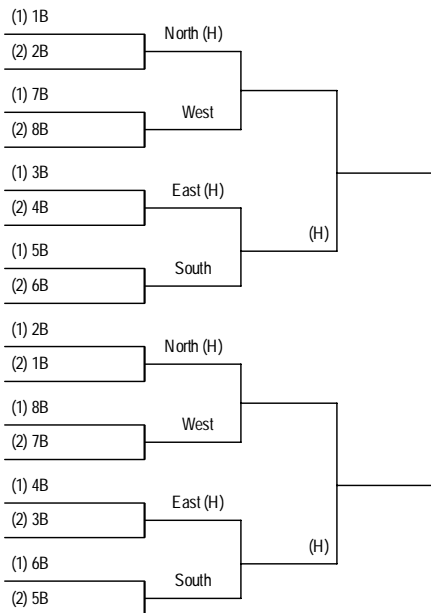
2007-2008



2008-2009



2009-2010



- A. The higher placing team will have the home site in the 1st round games.
 - B. Quarter final, semi-finals and championship games will switch home sites each year. Refer to D. below for criteria for state championship game.
 - C. The team with the higher seed in conference play will have the home site after the first round of the playoffs. If two teams have the same position in conference play, then the home site will be determined by the MHSА playoff bracket.
 - D. Criteria for hosting state championship game:
 - 1. Highest seed hosts game.
 - 2. If there is a tie for highest seed, the following criteria will be used in this order:
 - a. If one of the teams hosted the state game in the previous year, the game will be hosted by the other team.
 - b. If one of the teams did not host a semi-final game in the current playoffs, they will host the championship game.
 - c. Percentage of wins – entire year record.
 - d. Coin flip by MHSА Executive Director.
- (4) All Class B football district, divisional and state championship playoffs will be played on Saturday unless another time is mutually agreed upon by the two schools involved.
- (5) Financial arrangements for divisional playoff, interdivisional playoffs and state championship games are found in the By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.
- (6) Divisions are expected to abide by the General Football Rules stated in this handbook.

VI - CLASS C FOOTBALL PROGRAM (EIGHT PLAYER)

- (1) For the purpose of Class C competition in football the member Class C schools playing 8-player football will be divided into four divisions with **57** schools comprising **45** teams that will compete.

Northern Division

Belt
 Big Sandy
 Centerville
 Chester-Joplin-Inverness
 Chinook
 **Great Falls Central
 Hays-Lodgepole
 *Power/Dutton-Brady
 Rocky Boy
Simms
 Sunburst

Western Division

Alberton
Arlee
 Charlo
 Drummond
 Granite (Philipsburg)
 Lincoln
 Noxon
 **Saint Regis
 Sheridan
Superior
 Twin Bridges
 Victor

* Cooperative Sponsorship

Southern Division

Absarokee
 Bridger
***Broadview/Lavina**
 Denton
 Gardiner
 Harlowton
 *Hobson/Moore/Judith Gap
 Joliet
 Park City
 *Roy/Grass Range/Winnett
 Shields Valley (Clyde Park)
 Stanford
 White Sulphur Springs
 Winifred

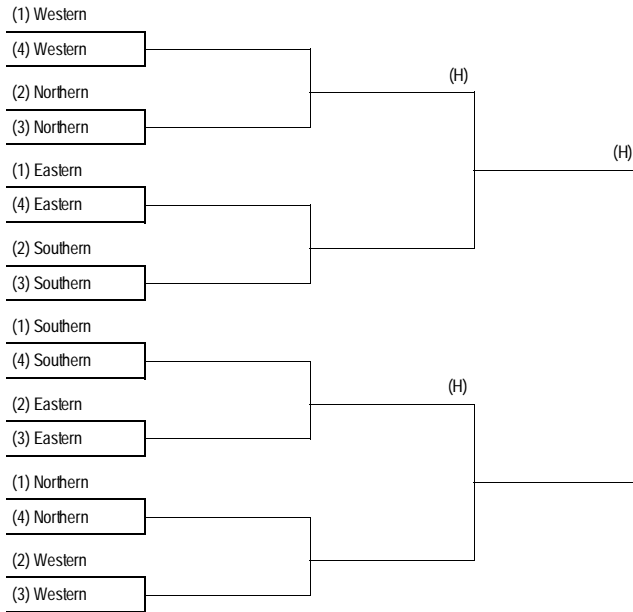
Eastern Division

*Bainville/Culbertson
 Carter Co. (Ekalaka)
 *Circle/Richey
 Fairview
 *Froid/Medicine Lake/Grenora
 Garfield Co. (Jordan)
 *Scobey/Peerless/Opheim
 Wibaux

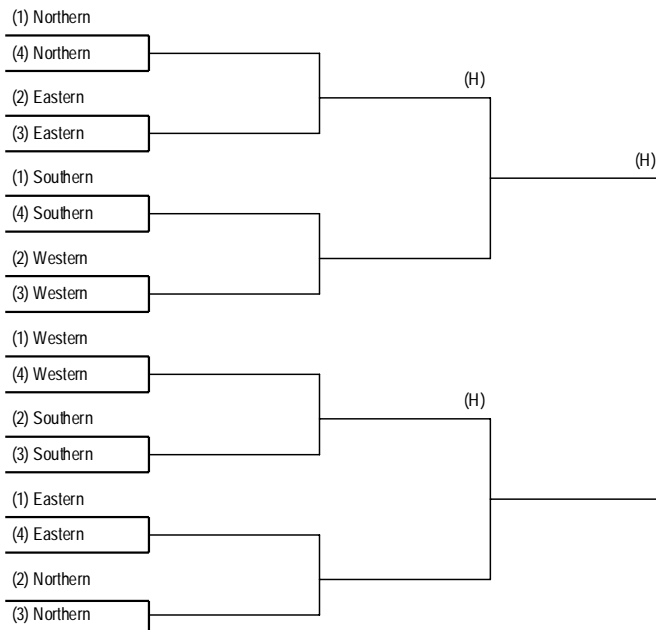
**J.V. Only

- (2) Class C football will play an eight (8) week regular season schedule. Playoffs will start on the ninth week.
- (3) There shall be a State Class C Championship Football Game each year. The playoff series leading to the State Championship Game will be as follows:

2007-2008



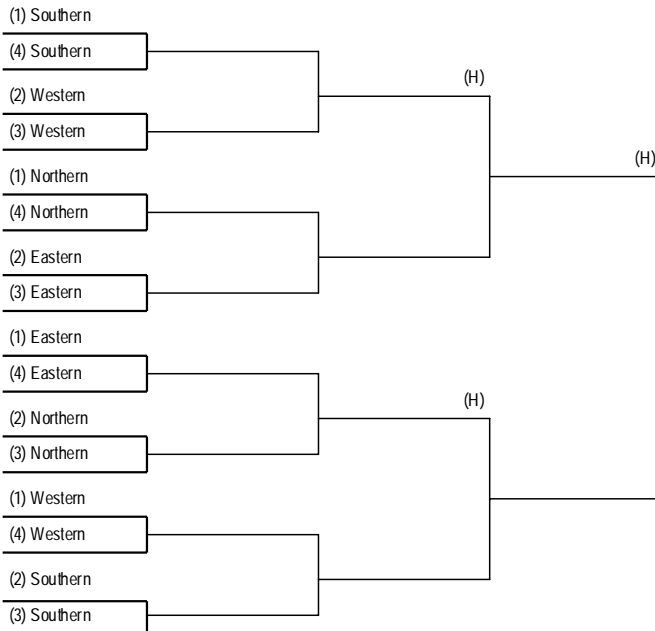
2008-2009



2009-2010



2010-2011



The higher placing team will have the home site in first round and quarterfinal games.

- (4) The Class C schools in each division will be charged with the responsibility for determining the number of season games each school shall play and for drawing up the season schedule for the division. Each division will be responsible for determining its division champion and the four teams that advance to the post season playoffs.
- (5) All teams playing in a Class C division must comply with one or the other of these two conditions: (a) The schools within any division have the right to establish their own plan for districting the division to determine a division or champion to represent them in the inter-division playoff game. This plan must include the scheduling of games in all districts and must come within the time limits established for division play. (b) If no such plan is arranged by the schools concerned and no statements are filed with the Executive Director, then the teams in a Class C division must play every other team within their division on the master schedule. Refusal to play another team or to iron out conflicts in dates shall constitute a forfeit of all claims to consideration for a championship. Games with teams outside the division must be canceled, if necessary, to make way for a necessary game within the division involved.
- (6) All Class C football play off and state championship games will be played on Saturday afternoon unless another time is mutually agreed upon by the two schools involved.
- (7) Financial arrangements for division and interdivision playoff and state championship games are found in the By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.
- (8) Divisions are expected to abide by the General Football Rules stated in the Handbook.
- (9) **Eight-Player Football Rule Differences:** Eleven-player rules are used for eight-player football with modifications found in the National Federation Football Rule Book.

VII - SIX-PLAYER FOOTBALL

- (1) To be eligible to participate in six-player football, schools must be Class C and comply with all eligibility rules related to six-player football.
- (2) Six-player football rules as outlined in the National Federation Football Rule Book will be used. Six-player football rules differences:
 - A. Four officials are required for six-player football.
- (3) For the purpose of Class C competition in football the member Class C schools playing 6-player football will be divided into four divisions with **28** schools comprising **26** teams that will compete.

Northern
 Augusta
 Box Elder
 Geraldine
 Highwood
North Star
Valier

Western
 Clark Co. (Dubois, ID)
 Geyser
Leadore, ID
 Lima
 *Reed Point/Rapelje
 West Yellowstone

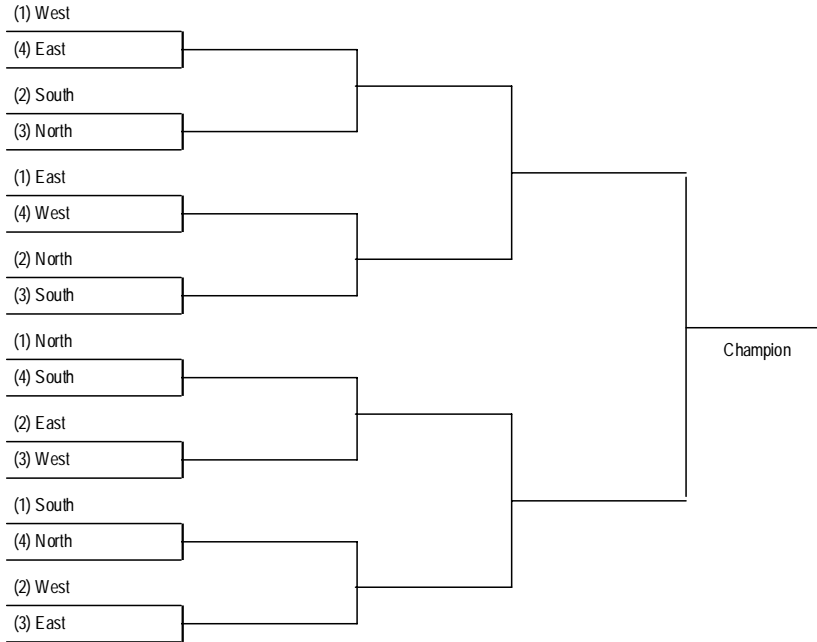
Eastern
 Brockton
Frazer
 Hysham
 Lambert
 Rosebud
Savage
Terry

Southern
 Belfry
***Custer/Melstone**
 **Fromberg
 Meeteetse (WY)
 Roberts
Ryegate
 **Ten Sleep, WY

*Cooperative Sponsorship
 **JV only

- (4) Class C six-player football will play an eight (8) week regular schedule. Playoffs will begin on the ninth week.
- (5) There will be a state Class C six-player championship football game each year. The playoff series leading to the state championship will be as follows:

2007-2008



The higher seed will host each playoff game. If like seeds play each other, the plan for which team hosts is as follows:

2007: South, East, West, North - South hosts E, W, and N. East hosts W or N. West host N.

- (6) All six-player football playoff and championship games will be conducted under the following financial arrangements and charges against the game receipts are to be paid in the order listed. Financial reports on all playoffs and championship games must be filed with the MHSA.
 - A. Game officials (referees) fees and expenses.
 - B. Mileage - **\$2.50** per mile, for one round trip.
 - C. It will be the home team's responsibility to pay the officials. The mileage to schools will be paid as gate receipts allow. No school will be required to pay mileage beyond the income from the gate receipts.
 - D. Host team may retain a maximum of \$100.00 from game income to cover costs for paying clock keeper, gate/ticket personnel, chain crew or any other costs incurred by the host team.

Any game income received beyond sections A, B, C and including monies not used from section D will be sent to the MHSA and distributed to six-player football schools as per By-Laws, Article I, Section 2.3.