

Executive Director's Update August 2011



Info from Mark Beckman

Greetings from the MHSAA office. We hope your fall activity seasons are off to a great start.

NEW ELIGIBILITY BY-LAWS

Please note the following new By-Law additions passed by the member schools during the 2011 MHSAA Annual Meeting:

Attendance Eligibility - A student must be enrolled *in twenty hours per week* and in regular attendance *ten* hours per week at the school where the student participates. **Regular attendance is defined as actual physical presence in the building (bricks and mortar).** A home school student is not eligible to participate for an MHSAA member school.

Transfer – New Return to Parent - A student who has attended high school and resides in a district other than where the student's parent(s) resides, and who subsequently returns to live with the student's parents becomes immediately transfer eligible for varsity competition in the parent's district. This can be applied only one time during the student's career. The new Return to Parent Form must be completed.

New Eighth Grade Rule - Eighth grade students may play on a high school volleyball, track relay and/or basketball teams. Permission for eighth grade participation must be requested by the school and authorization granted by the Executive Director of the MHSAA. Once granted approval, those eighth grade participants are eligible to participate in varsity and **JV competition**. Any eighth grade student allowed to participate will have eight semesters of high school eligibility remaining. All eighth grade students participating must meet the academic requirements.

Eighth grade participants would be eligible to play (varsity or **junior varsity**) upon meeting all eligibility criteria and upon approval granted by the MHSAA Executive Director. To access further information and the forms required for submitting eighth grade participation requests go to www.mhsaa.org.

School District Approved Coursework - Only school district-approved course work can be used to compute the 20 periods of prepared work for academic eligibility.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY TRAINING

Effective in 2011-12, the MHSAA Executive Board approved requiring Cultural Diversity Training for all MHSAA member school coaches and administrators and for all MOA officials. The format for the training, including locations, dates and compliance requirements, will be announced in the near future.

The purpose of the training is to help administrators, coaches and officials enhance their knowledge and self-awareness of diversity issues in MHSAA-sanctioned athletics and activities to prevent cultural miscommunications, disconnects or conflicts.

The Board approved the creation of an ad-hoc committee to address various multi-cultural issues affecting MHSAA activities. The committee will consist of member school administrators, MHSAA Board members, MOA members and members of the legislature. The committee will be appointed in the near future.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

It is extremely important that the eligibility of all student activity participants is checked thoroughly before the students participate in any Association Contest. Some of the areas that must be reviewed include academics, age, semesters, physical examination before practice, foreign exchange approved program, etc. Attached is the new "Fundamentals of MHSAA Athletic Regulations" which combines many of our handouts pertaining to rules and regulations (athletic eligibility "Quick Check", open gym/field, fundraising, out-of-season contests, etc.) into one document. Also attached is a "Fine Arts and Spirit Quick Check". And, I have included below more detailed information on each eligibility area to assist a school activities administrator in ensuring all students are eligible for competition. Please contact me with any questions you may have in regard to students' eligibility.

Foreign Exchange Students – [Use this link](#) to access a copy of the 2011-12 approved list of Foreign Exchange Programs from CSJET. As per Article II, Section (10), these are the only approved programs that waive the MHSAA Transfer Rule for participation. However, please keep in mind that while students under these programs are varsity eligible under the transfer rule for two semesters, they still must meet all other eligibility requirements, i.e., age, academics, number of semesters, etc., and they cannot have graduated from their high school.

MHSAA/MOA REQUIRED RULES CLINICS

The MHSAA/MOA rules clinics once again will be provided in an online format for coaches and officials. **This year all coaches including the head coach and all assistant coaches and all school-approved volunteer coaches** are required to view the clinic. The MHSAA still encourages all activity administrators to view the clinics. There is an information sheet attached explaining the procedure on accessing these clinics. Please share this information with

your coaches of fall sports and with your cheerleading coach.

NFHS/MHSA CONCUSSION/SERIOUS INJURY RULE

As you are aware, The National Federation approved a new concussion rule for all sports last year. The MHSA has expanded the scope of the rule to also include other serious injuries. MHSA Rules and Regulations item (4) states: *A participant in any MHSA sanctioned sport who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) or other serious injury shall be immediately removed from the game, evaluated by the coaching staff in regard to the nature of the injury, and if it is determined to be a possible concussion or other serious injury, the player shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional (MD, DO, PAC or NP).*

The implementation and enforcement of this rule during last year's sports seasons seemed to go extremely well. It is an important rule with specific procedures for officials, coaches and administrators to ensure the safety of athletes who participate in MHSA activities.

I hope you find this informative and helpful. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please send any questions regarding this rule or the procedures etc. to Brian Michelotti at bmichelotti@mhsa.org.

Additional resources are available on the MHSA website. Visit www.mhsa.org and proceed to the Sports Medicine page by using the link on the home page.

COACHES EDUCATION

All coaches (9-12), whether paid or volunteer, and coaching at any level must complete this program. The coaches' education certification is good for three years and the MHSA **strongly recommends** that coaches complete the program before their season actually begins. Spirit (cheerleading) coaches are no longer required to complete the program. Each coach must sign in each time she/he enters the curriculum. The coach will either select or be assigned his/her own password that must be remembered. The testing curriculum will also change with each login. See the coaches' education website for more details. All schools must submit the certification report listing whether coaches have completed the program or not. Schools will be subject to penalties for failure to submit this report.

OPI renewal units are available if approved locally and if your district is an approved renewal unit provider. MHSA does not certify renewal units.

MOA ITEMS

All regular season invitational tournament fees and post season fees are listed in the MOA Handbook and also online at www.mhsa.org. Also the mileage fee has **increased** from .50 to .51 (this is the IRS mileage rate posted in January 2011.). The per diem allowance for each official, including the driver remains at \$0.08 per mile.

I am pleased to report that the fourth year of MOA/MCA "Train the Trainer" Mechanics Clinics were once again extremely successful ventures. This year clinics were conducted in volleyball and basketball (held at the MCA Clinic in Great Falls).

Reminder - Payment of Officials – there are only two ways that officials can be paid for contests:

- 1) All officials assigned be paid before the contest with a check issued by the member school or;
- 2) If a member school and the local official's pool agree to other methods of payment (still payment to the individual official – not to the pool) the official must be paid within five (5) working days of the contest. Pools cannot receive payments from the schools to distribute to individual members as this would make the officials pool the employer, no longer having independent contractor status and subject the pool to unemployment and workers' compensation obligations. Any changes in the payment process must be approved by the Regional Director

MHSA HANDBOOKS AND DIRECTORIES

The 2011-12 MHSA Handbooks and Directories will be mailed to schools after Labor Day. The Directories will not be published until every member school has submitted the appropriate information. The MHSA Handbooks are in the process of being printed, but in the interim, the individual chapters of the Handbook are available in PDF format at www.mhsa.org under HANDBOOK.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST ...

I have included information below regarding changes that were made last year by the Executive Board and by the membership, including this year's additions or revisions to the By-Laws, Rule and Regulations and sport and activity specific rule changes.

The MHSA office staff is here to serve you!

Please contact the office with any questions, concerns, comments or suggestions.

Have a great fall season!

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Checklist for School Activities Administrators:

✓ Submit a Record of Transfer Form

The form (this year it is new form) that must be submitted to our office for any student who transfers to your school (except first time ninth graders) and desires to participate in athletics at any level. **These forms must be filed before the student is eligible to participate in an Association Contest on any high school athletic team at any level of competition (freshman, sophomore, junior varsity or varsity).**

✓ Check Foreign Exchange Programs

Make sure your foreign exchange student's program is approved by CSIET. A link to this list is included in the Student Eligibility Article above, or contact the office for a copy. The list is also on the web at www.csiet.org. Keep in mind that students in these programs must also meet all other eligibility requirements, i.e., age, number of semesters, academic grades, and they cannot have graduated from their high school (some foreign high schools graduate students after three years of school). Also the foreign exchange student must live in the attendance area of the school requesting eligibility for that student.

✓ Waiver of Transfer Rule Petition "Hardship Petition"

Waivers must be filed by the school after the student is enrolled at your school. A waiver of the transfer rule is considered if the circumstances are beyond the control of the student applying for the waiver. If the behaviors that caused the extenuating circumstances are "self inflicted" by the student, the petition is usually not considered. The information provided for the waiver is confidential, but please include as much information as possible so a well-informed decision can be made. The student can participate only at the sub varsity level until the petition is approved if they are eligible in every other way. If the petition is approved the student is eligible for varsity competition, but if the petition is not approved he/she can play sub varsity but is ineligible for varsity competition for 90 PI days (or its equivalent in districts with extended school days/four day weeks). All other eligibility requirements must be met such as age, number of semesters, academic grades etc. Any student who is transfer ineligible becomes eligible on the 90th P.I. day (or its equivalent in districts with extended school days/four day weeks) at the end of the day.

✓ Age Rule

A student who turns 19 after midnight August 31st is age eligible. Any 19 year old (who turns 19 on or before midnight August 31st) can file a waiver of the age rule if the following is proved by the student – 1) student does not create a safety risk, 2) student does not skew the overall competitiveness of the activity, 3) participation will not exclude others, and 4) the student meets all necessary criteria to participate in MHSA activities.

✓ Graduate Students

Any student who meets any of the following criteria shall be ineligible to participate in any Association Activity:

- a. The student is a graduate of a regular four-year high school.
- b. The student is a graduate of a secondary school which has the same requirements for graduation as a regular four-year high school.
- c. The student has earned enough credits to entitle him/her to be graduated from the high school and has completed eight semesters of high school.
- d. The student has received a GED.

Interpretations

1. A student who graduates the first semester is ineligible the second semester.
2. A student who has earned enough credits to graduate the first semester but remains enrolled and graduates on the regular date remains eligible to participate.
3. Senior students who are currently eligible in their eighth semester (4th spring) will continue to be eligible for all interscholastic activities even though graduation exercises precede the completion of interscholastic activities for that specific year. If a student has earned a GED he/she is considered a high school graduate and is not eligible to compete in any MHSA sanctioned activity.

✓ Academically Ineligible Students

Students who are ineligible because of grades cannot participate in any Association contest (varsity or sub varsity) for a period of one semester. They can practice if the school allows but they cannot suit up or participate in any games at any level of competition. They become eligible to compete on the Monday morning following the week in which the semester ends. A student who becomes academically ineligible also becomes ineligible on the Monday morning following the week in which the semester ends. A student must have received a passing grade in at least twenty periods of prepared class work in the last

previous semester at the school where the student participates or during the last preceding semester in which he/she was in attendance to be eligible. If a student was enrolled 20 PI days or more or played in an Association contest he/she has attended a semester and must have received credit and passed 20 periods. If he/she withdrew and didn't receive credit (or even W's) he/she did not receive credit and is ineligible. If a student had not been enrolled in school at all for the semester (less than 20 PI days and did not participate in a contest) then the grades from the last previous semester enrolled are used.

✓ Physical Exams

Physical exams are required for students participating in MHSA sanctioned sports. The exam is valid for one school year and the MHSA form must be used. This examination must be certified by **a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice**. Physicals performed before May 1st are not valid for the next school year.

✓ Semester Rule

Students are eligible for eight consecutive semesters and the semesters start to accrue after entering the ninth grade.

Changes to the By-Laws and Rules and Regulations Effective This Year:

ANNUAL MEETING RULE AND REGULATION CHANGES

- For Classes A, B and C, the football clock stoppage rule was amended to delete requiring the clock to run for a score. Now if the point differential reaches 35 points or more, the clock will still be stopped for a score.
- For wrestling, the following provision was added:
(7) When three or more schools take part in a double dual meet wrestling competition held in two separate schools/towns that are located less than thirty (30) miles apart and held on the same day, the following provisions apply:
 - a. One weigh-in will be used for multiple competitions that day.**
 - b. Each dual meet wrestled will be counted as one contested event toward the season limitations.**
 - c. A school not participating in the first dual will be required to follow NFHS rules and weigh-in one hour prior to their dual.**

MHSA EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTIONS

Reclassification/Realignment

- Approved the reclassification of seven schools.
- Approved the realignment of two schools to different districts or conferences for a specific sport.
- Approved the Class B conference realignment.
- Approved the Class A conference realignment.
- Approved three schools for competition in six-player football.
- Approved the Class C six-player football realignment.

Other General Rules and Regulations Items

- Approved requiring Cultural Diversity Training for all MHSA member school coaches and administrators and for all MOA officials. The format for the training, including locations etc. will be announced in the near future.
- Approved a mandate that assistant and school approved volunteer coaches must also view the MHSA mandatory on-line rules clinic for their respective sports. The requirement for head coaches to view the clinic was previously established.
- Approved that tournament managers for MHSA post-season events must complete the tournament manager online workshop for that sport once every five years. The requirement is sport specific.
- Approved the following additions to the Crowd Control Section of the MHSA Handbook:
 - a) Special attention must be given to the supervision of student cheering sections *including having an administrator present near the vicinity of the student cheering section for home and post season contests to assist with crowd control* (pending two-week notice).**
 - b) At outdoor contests *the use of electronic and air amplified devices by spectators is prohibited. At all outdoor contests bands will not be allowed to play during "live ball"*.**
- Approved the policy regarding lighting for player introductions and other related matters (pending two-week notice). [A copy of this policy is available by contacting the MHSA office.]
- Approved amending the language for state tournament tickets prices in having the Executive Board establish those prices. In addition the Board will establish all post season playoffs and state championship football games ticket prices. (There was no change to established ticket prices).

- Approved providing wrist bands to be worn by qualifying schools' band members for admission to state tournament events.

Basketball

- Approved a combined boys' and girls' basketball state tournament format for Class B. This format will be utilized beginning in 2012-2013.

Softball

- Approved the following addition for ending games at invitational tournaments: The game can be called if there is five minutes or less before the maximum time limit **or officials should not start a new inning after 1 hour and 20 minutes of play, except if a tie exists where NFHS Softball Rules for tiebreaking would be followed.**

Golf

- Approved language to clarify the maximum dates of competition allowed for each individual golfer.
- Approved clarifying that qualifying scores for the State C Meets ***must be recorded on a regulation golf course (9 hole course – minimum of a par 35; 18 hole course – minimum of a par 70)*** (pending two-week notice).
- Approved clarifying that at the Class AA State Golf Tournament, no practice round will be allowed on the tournament course the day before the state tournament begins or at any time during the seven day period preceding the opening of the tournament including all other provisions per General Rules for Post Season Golf Meets, # 12. (per existing Class AA policy and pending two-week notice).

Spirit

- Approved miscellaneous additions and revisions to the Spirit Section of the MHSA Handbook (pending two-week notice for comment). [A list of these specific changes is available by contacting the MHSA office.]

Soccer

- Approved the Class A Soccer Play Off Bracket format and revisions to the [Class AA State Soccer Tournament brackets](#).

Speech and Drama Items

- As recommended by the MFEA, various amendments to speech, debate and drama rules were approved, including specific changes to topics, sources, original material, entries and the progress of individual events. There were significant amendments to eligibility rules for forensic participants that were precipitated by the recently amended eligibility By-Laws for athletics. [A list of these specific changes is available by contacting the MHSA office.]

Music Items

- Several amendments were made to the music rules and regulations, including a change in the All-State audition fee that will facilitate online auditions. As with speech and drama, additional amendments include significant changes to eligibility rules for music participants that were precipitated by the recently amended eligibility By-Laws for athletics. [A list of these specific changes is available by contacting the MHSA office.]

Track and Field and Cross Country

- Approved the following provision regarding the state cross country meet: ***“Each MHSA school will be required to share proportionally the cost of the state cross country meet by a paying a fee per qualifying participant. This fee will be set by the MHSA Executive Board prior to the event, in relation to the projected expenses bid by the successful site when the state sites are determined.”***
- Approved requiring that athletes meet a qualifying time in at least one regular season cross country meet prior to participation in the State Cross Country Meet.
- Approved implementing qualifying standards for the 2011-2012 Class A State Track and Field Meet (pending two-week notice). [The standards and procedures will be similar to Class AA, except the Board approved Class A to use hand-held adjusted times and seeding methods appropriate for Class A.](#) [A list of these specific changes is available by contacting the MHSA office.]
- Approved allowing multiple track and field divisions competing at the same meet site to begin at 12:00 p.m. on the first day of the meet.
- Approved specific requirements for throwing events warm-ups.

Wrestling

- The Board approved, for Class B-C Wrestling, to award two additional team trophies for Class C schools. Class B-C wrestlers will continue to compete together for individual medalist honors. Trophies are presently awarded to the top three teams in Class B-C and also to the Class C team with the most points. With this change first, second and third place trophies will be awarded to Class B schools and first, second and third place trophies will be awarded to Class C schools.