

**MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE CALL OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
OF THE MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
JUNE 25, 2025  
(via Zoom)**

**ATTENDANCE**

John Fitzgerald, Red Lodge  
Krystal Zentner, Bridger  
Aric Harris, Whitefish  
Dan Mills, Bozeman  
Kara Triplett, Richey  
Jimmy Patelis, Billings  
Joe McElroy, Missoula  
Dee Pretty On Top, Lodge Grass  
Brian Michelotti, Helena  
Scott Wilson, Helena  
Kip Ryan, Helena  
Greta Buehler, Helena  
Amy Bartels, Helena  
Jenise Cockhill, Helena

*Delegations:*

*Brenner Flaten, Glasgow*  
*Travis Blome, Hamilton*  
*Mike Henneberg, Great Falls*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Board President, Mr. Fitzgerald, called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Fitzgerald recited the Open Meeting Law to those in attendance. No one addressed the board.

**FINAL ACTION ON TWO-WEEK NOTICE ITEMS**

Mr. Michelotti explained that no comments regarding the two-week action items from the April Executive Board Meeting have been received. A motion was made by Ms. Zentner, and seconded by Mr. Pretty On Top, to approve final action on the following items from the April Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Baseball

Approval of a change to the postseason procedures in baseball. Beginning at the 2025 MHSAA State Baseball Tournament in Hamilton, if the host school or a school from the host site city is the number one seed from their division, the state baseball bracket will be switched so that the host school/city school plays the last game of the first day of the tournament. All matchups and future matchups will remain the same.

Basketball

Approval to move district 1B, 2B, 3B, and 4B (5B was approved previously) basketball tournaments a week later to avoid a conflict with the State Wrestling Tournament.

### Softball

Approval of an updated bracket and rotation for Class A State Softball.

### Speech, Drama and Debate

Approval of Online Scrimmage Participation - allow students to participate in online competition. Online competitions would not count towards the student allotted number of competitions during the regular season. Any cost incurred due to participation in these events will be the responsibility of the individual competitor.

Approval of all the 2025-26 MFEA proposal items. Visit the MHSA website to view all MFEA approved items.

### Tennis

Approval of a recommendation from the B/C State Tennis committee for the following qualifying numbers for the State B/C Tennis Tournament, starting in 2025-26:

Girls' singles - 32 participants

Girls' doubles - 24 participants

Boys' singles - 16 participants

Boys' doubles - 12 participants

Approval of a proposal for Class B/C to use the 10-point tiebreaker in lieu of a full third set for all postseason matches, beginning with the 2025 postseason.

### Wrestling

Approval of the State Wrestling Tournament to be scheduled as a 3-day tournament beginning in the 2024-25 school year. Approval of changes to the wrestling weight classes; the boys and the girls' divisions will go to 14 weight classes.

Approval of the growth allowance to change to 2 lbs. on January 1st with no growth allowance in February. A weigh-in cannot exceed +4 lbs. from scratch weight.

Approval for girls' placing from the current six (6) placers at state to top eight (8) placers at state girls' tournament.

Approval for all boys' and girls' classifications to give max points when 2 wrestlers from the same school wrestle in the postseason. Max points are defined as advancement points (two points for the championship bracket or one point for the consolation bracket), place points and two match points.

### General

Approval of an extension to the agreement the MHSA has with our Digital Ticketing partner GoFan. GoFan will continue to be optional for all MHSA schools, and we encourage schools to consider this option for regular season contests.

Approval of a bid from 5518 Designs from Butte to rebrand the MHSA and MOA logos to ensure for future copyright and trademark compliance in the future.

Approval of the removal of the 5-year requirement for the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching. New coaches now need to complete this course only once in their coaching career. Instead, an annual online continuing education requirement will be added, covering topics like Mental Health, Sportsmanship, and Bullying. This initiative aims to enhance the professional development of coaches and foster a positive environment in sports.

Approval of a change to the NFHS Network regular season streaming policy for Softball, Baseball and Soccer events. Beginning immediately the following changes in bold below will change:

1. All video streaming of regular season home events must be approved by the MHSA Executive Director. The NFHS Network is the preferred service of the MHSA. If a school uses a different commercial company for streaming their regular events, these events must also be live parallel streamed on the NFHS Network. **Exception for soccer, softball, and baseball. If the host site does not**

have a Pixelott camera available, school(s) can request streaming with a different commercial company without the NFHS Network parallel streaming requirement.

### **CLASS AA REQUESTED CHANGES**

Mr. Henneberg presented the Class AA requested changes for 2025-26.

- a) Golf
  - 1. No spectators on the course for the state practice round.
  - 2. Advance the top 4 teams and the next 8 (was 10) highest scores not included in those teams to state.
- b) Wrestling
  - 1. The AA will go to a one-day seeding/divisional tournament.
  - 2. Request that MHSAA survey all member schools regarding choosing between current 14 MHSAA recognized weight classes and moving to the NFHS recognized weight classes for the 25-26 season. Additionally, we request that MHSAA shares with all member schools that the AA supports such a change.
- c) Basketball
  - 1. Play-in game official selection for basketball, volleyball and softball – officials will be selected in the following manner respectively:
    - Host city pool who are working state tournament
    - Host city pool who received state tournament votes
    - Neutral city pool of officials
- d) Track
  - 1. Move to a one-day divisional track meet.
  - 2. To score 8 at divisional. Currently, we are advancing 8 so we should score 8 at our divisional meet.
  - 3. To start pole vault earlier and run some track on Thursday at the state meet.
  - 4. Refine the State Meet appeal process to allow for rerun of a race at State Meet
  - 5. For all classifications to allow for ¼ inch pyramid spikes instead of the current maximum of 1/8 inch.
  - 6. To allow the top 10 times make finals rather than the current model that takes the set top number from each heat and the next few.
- e) Softball
  - 1. State championship game language regarding home team being the undefeated team will be home team for game 1 of the state championship. If game #2 is needed the winning team from game #1 will be the home team for the second game.
  - 2. To modify Playoff Series format from the best of 3 series to a 2-game playoff. The higher seed wins one game and will advance to state, lower seed must win both games to advance to state. The host team is the home team for game 1. Game 2, if needed, then the visiting team is designated as home team.

Mr. Mills motioned to approve Class AA requested changes to a)1 for all classifications, a)2, d)2, d)5, e)1 and e)2, table item c)1 and have the MHSAA initiate a survey for item b)2. Ms. Triplett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **CLASS A REQUESTED CHANGES**

Mr. Blome presented the requests for Class A for the 2025-26 year.

- a) Baseball

1. Giving schools the options of limiting JV to no new inning after 1:45 minutes if the JV game is before the varsity game (mirror softball language). Cheerleading
- b) Cheerleading
  1. Adopting language in the Class A Handbook that limits 12 cheerleaders at indoor events in the postseason. This would also restrict cheerleader performance during 30 second timeouts.
- c) Football
  1. Presented a new 2025 Class A Football Bracket.
  2. Changing first round playoff games to Friday at 7pm unless mutually agreed upon for a different day and time. Higher seeds host in all playoff games, like seeds will follow the bracket.
- d) Golf
  1. Changing language to allow 2 coaches per gender on the course at a time.
- e) Soccer
  1. "Participation Limits: If a team is scheduled for a single varsity contest in addition to sub-varsity contest(s) on any given date, each player will be limited to participation in three separate halves of the scheduled games. Regardless of the order in which the games are scheduled, a player who participates in a sub-varsity contest cannot start the varsity (or next) game. A player who starts the varsity game is not eligible for participation in a sub-varsity contest scheduled on the same day.
  2. In both Class AA and Class A, no more than twenty-two (22) players can be in uniform for any tournament/playoff game. (MHSA Handbook Change) We changed this last year unanimously, but it never made it to the MHSA Handbook.
  3. Changing the Class A soccer playoff bracket to modify the play-in game. The highest ranked #3 seed automatically gets into the playoffs while the remaining two #3 seeds will have a play-in game the Tuesday before the start of the playoffs. Vote 9-7 (Thompson Falls did not email in a vote).
- f) Softball
  1. Schools have the option of limiting JV to no new inning after 1:45 minutes if the JV game is before the varsity game.
  2. 2025-2026 Softball Bracket
  3. 2026-2027 Bracket
- g) Swimming
  1. Class A-B Relay teams will only score the top six teams for team points.
- h) Tennis
  1. Coaches would like to stay at one site for a 3-day state tournament.
- i) Track
  1. Moving the 3200 and 4x100 Prelims to Thursday of the state meet.
  2. Every pre-qualified athlete needs to go to state regardless of entry limits at Divisionals
  3. Ten (10) individuals from the Eastern and Western divisionals will qualify for the final in the 100m at the divisional meet. If an individual false starts or does not compete in the 100m final at the divisional meet, they will still advance to the state meet but will be seeded at state with NO Time (NT) unless they have a qualifying standard time they can use to seed at state. This is informational only and will be changed in the A Handbook.
- j) Summer Meeting
  1. Class A summer meeting will be in Big Sky June 14-16, 2026.

Mr. Patelis motioned to approve Class A requested changes a)1, b)1, c)1, c)2, d)1, f)1, f)2, f)3, g)1, h)2; to deny i)2 and to table items e)3, h)1 and i)1. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **CLASS B REQUESTED CHANGES**

Mr. Flaten presented the requests for Class B for the 2025-26 year.

- a) Wrestling
  1. Class B voted 39 to 2 in favor of eliminating the 50-match limit. This is informational only.
  2. Class B voted 33 to 1 to expand the competition limit from 18 to 20.
- b) Softball
  1. Requesting that the MHSAA provides the highest quality bat testers at each of the Divisional tournament locations for all classifications of softball. To train and make it a requirement for the Umpire in Chief to oversee the bat testing at the Divisional (or postseason) site. An MHSAA bat approved sticker that is good for both Divisionals and State tournaments. Executive Board action is needed.
- c) Tennis
  1. Require schools to have at least one coach at each site where genders are playing at split locations for postseason play.
- d) Football
  1. Requesting consideration to be made from "8 quarters per week" to "8 quarters in 3 days". The rationale is that teams are already playing Varsity Friday night, JV on Saturday, take ONE day off, and then play a Monday JV game and it is legal by current MHSAA rule. But then teams are not allowed by the current rule to Play JV on Monday, take THREE full days off, play Varsity on Friday, and the JV Game on Saturday. (Only because the clock starts on a Sunday for that week). There is a request on the table to receive MHSAA permission for 12 quarters on those rare occasions where teams may have a JV game on a Monday and a Friday or a Saturday of the same week, alongside a player's minimal varsity action on Friday night.
  2. Requesting to move from a 16 team to a 12-team playoff bracket in Class B Football. We will take an official vote at the Summer 2026 Meeting in Big Sky.
  3. Requesting to move to a neutral site state championship doubleheader with Class A.
- e) Volleyball
  1. Beginning a Class B master volleyball scheduling committee. Mike Schmitt (1B), Sara Marsh (2B), Tim Kaczmarek (3B), Ron Osborne (4B), Sarah Layng (5B), and Dakota Norris (West) will be the initial committee members.
  2. Allowing two sub-varsity players to start the varsity match by mutual agreement between school administration.
- f) Track and Field
  1. Discussion was held about coaches being in favor of running the 3200 M races on Thursday night alongside the pole vault that is already taking place. Executive Board action is needed.
  2. Requesting that Athletic.net live be mandatory at all State Track & Field sites.
- g) Basketball
  1. Increasing quarter limits from 5 to 6 mirroring the Class C model.
  2. All Districts and Divisions in Class B have now agreed to move their postseason events back one week due to the change in the MHSAA Wrestling Schedule. The plan is to keep that in place moving forward. The annual schedule should flow as follows for five straight weeks: Divisional Wrestling, State Wrestling, District Basketball, Divisional Basketball, and State Basketball.
  3. Considering the current NFHS Network deal to allow state or regional TV stations to carry the games and put on a more professional product we can be proud of. This would be of course

provided there is an agreement that their feed needs to also be fed into the NFHS Network at the same time.

- h) Golf
  1. Moving from the current postseason qualification standards of "Top 4 teams and Top 15 Individuals to State" to "Top 3 Team and Top 20 Individuals to State" for next season. (top 15 at Divisionals would remain all-conference).
  2. Class B will have further discussion at the January Caucus meeting and/or next summer about either supporting a "Cut Line" after Day 1 of the State Tournament or ways to eliminate the 5th golfer (alternate) on some of the 9 teams that qualify for the State tournament out of the Divisionals. This may be based on the overall score at Divisional or Stroke Gap between a team's 4th and 5th golfer.
  3. Expanding the number of coaches a school is allowed to have at the State tournament or eliminate this altogether provided the coach is employed by the school and has all the proper training and paperwork in place.
- i) Cross Country
  1. Dropping the minimum state qualification times to 27:00 for girls and 22:00 for boys.
  2. Class B formed a Divisional Cross Country Committee. The Cross Country Committee will be 1B - Cut Bank, 2B - Harlem, 3B - Baker, 4B - Joliet, 5B - Broadwater, 6B - Florence, 7B - Thompson Falls with John O'Dell as the Chairman.
- j) Class B Representative
  1. The Class B Association votes unanimously to support Dustin Gordon (Fairfield) for the upcoming Class B seat on the MHSAA Executive Board.

Mr. Harris motioned to approve Class B requested changes c)1, e)1, e)2, g)1, g)2, h)1, h)3 and i)1 and table items b)1, d)1 and f)1. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **CLASS C REQUESTED CHANGES**

Ms. Triplett presented the Class C requests for the 2025-26 year.

- a) Cross Country
  1. Changing to NCAA displacement scoring at the state event, which removes individual finishers from team points. Executive Board action is needed.
  2. Improving the qualifications for Golf. An athlete may not qualify as an individual but could qualify with a team. Will still limit the numbers at state but with lower auto qualification standards. A committee was formed for possible implementation in the 2026-27 year.
- b) Football
  1. Raising the host team allowance to \$500 (From \$100) for each 6-Player post season game.
- c) Wrestling
  1. Discussion on eliminating the 50-match rule without increasing contested events from the current 18 to 20.
- d) Tennis
  1. Class C Supports the new qualifiers for State Tennis.
- e) Basketball
  1. Discussed the potential for a 3-day state tournament vs the current 4-day format Class C went to a 4-day format to provide a better experience for the athletes and cut down on finding a separate venue on Saturday for loser out games.
- f) Golf

1. To qualify students with a minimum score of 115 for boys and 130 for girls to compete at Divisionals for individuals.
  2. To qualify as a team, at least two individuals must qualify individually, then they may add a third individual to form the team.
  3. Changing from the top 20 to the top 18 individuals who qualify from divisionals to state.
- g) Golf Divisions
1. There was discussion on moving to 3 divisions in the future.

Mr. McElroy motioned to approve Class C requested changes a)1, b)1, f)1, f)2 and f)3. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **BUILDING UPDATE**

Mr. Michelotti reviewed expenses thus far and upcoming timelines for the new building on North Last Chance Gulch.

### **MHSA HANDBOOK CLARIFICATIONS, ADDITIONS OR DEFINITIONS**

Mr. Michelotti addressed By Law and Rules and Regulations changes due to Montana Government Legislation for the following:

#### Montana Senate Bill 350

The Homeschool participation at Montana schools changed during the 2025 legislative session. Under the new law, school districts, athletic associations, conferences, and other relevant organizations have the authority to restrict or prohibit the participation of homeschooled students in extracurricular activities based on specific criteria. Hence, for a homeschool student to participate in MHSA sports or activities, the student must be a United States citizen, and he/she must be a Montana resident, as determined under the provisions of 1-1-215. Mr. Patelis made a motion to approve a By-Law change because of this adjusted state law. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Montana House Bill 869

This provides for sudden cardiac arrest prevention in youth sports, and it aims to enhance student safety in schools by addressing sudden cardiac arrest. The bill requires schools to train coaches, provide resources, and purchase automatic external defibrillators (AEDs). It also mandates that cardiac arrest information is available on the OPI and MHSA websites. Also, the bill appropriates funding for reimbursement grants to school districts for AED purchases that will be available in August of 2025. The MHSA has already implemented many of the requirements of this law in 2024-25. Mr. Harris made a motion to approve a Rules and Regulation change because of this adjusted state law. Ms. Triplett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Montana House Bill 300

This bill generally revises laws related to discrimination in education, specifically focusing on gender and sex in athletic and restroom/locker room access within educational institutions. The bill restricts males from participating in female athletic programs and prevents them from accessing restrooms, locker rooms, and sleeping quarters designated for the opposite sex. The MHSA Executive Board has put into our By-Laws the following language to ensure we are complying with state statute. Mr. Patelis made a motion to adopt By-Law language that states 'If a State of Montana Statute establishes law regarding transgender participation in sports and activities, the MHSA shall adhere to and comply with such state statute.'. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstaining vote from Mr. Mills.

### **2024-25 BUDGET CLOSEOUT**

Budget Items:

- 1) Year End Purchases – new laptops and OWL remote setup.

- 2) Reserve amounts – an estimated \$240,000.00 will be divided among the following accounts: general, severance, legal, technology and building reserves.

Ms. Zentner motioned to approve the end-of-year purchases and reserve allocations. Ms. Triplett seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### **MHSA STAFF RESPONSIBILITY UPDATES**

Mr. Michelotti explained Ms. Buehler will take over soccer next fall. Mr. Ryan and Mr. Wilson will work on AD mentoring programs.

#### **MFEA HANDBOOK**

Ms. Bartels reported on the MHSA/MFEA Handbook for the 2025-26 season for Speech and Debate and Drama. Ms. Triplett made a motion to approve the 2025-26 MHSA/MFEA Handbook and Mr. Harris seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **MHSA SPORTS MEDICINE**

Ms. Buehler reported that the Sports Medicine Advisory Council met last month and are recommending an AED requirement for each site utilized at a tournament or event. Ms. Zentner made a motion to approve the AED requirement at each site of an event or tournament and that site must have a current EAP also. Ms. Triplett seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **OPEN GYM**

Mr. Michelotti explained the current open gym coaching policies and that discussions were had at the classification meetings this summer. It was decided that a committee will be formed to study this issue and make possible adjustments to our current rule.

#### **WRESTLING**

Mr. Wilson reported on the classifications votes to eliminate the 50-match rule and increase contested events language from 18 to 20. He furthered there was not much discussion on the impact on Girls Wrestling and more research needs to be done. Mr. McElroy made a motion to table the elimination of the 50-match limit rule and to deny the contested events language change until after the 2025-26 season. Mr. Patelis seconded, and the motion carried.

#### **SPIRIT POSTSEASON TICKET DISTRIBUTION**

Ms. Bartels reported on the confusion around spirit, band and performing groups entering postseason events. Ms. Triplett made a motion to discontinue individual tickets for postseason events for spirit, band and performing groups. Further, spirit, dance and cheer will be allowed entrance as a group per day when accompanied by the coach or advisor. Band members will be given wristbands that must be worn throughout the entire tournament. Mr. McElroy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **SUMMER COACHING RULE**

Mr. Wilson discussed the existing Handbook language for the summer coaching rule. Mr. McElroy made a motion to approve the MHSA Handbook language change to include all currently enrolled student body or non-secondary students within the school's attendance area who are not enrolled in another district and attend the high school's feeder school can practice/compete with that high school's team during the summer coaching period. For out of district transfers, participation for a MHSA high school will occur after the following:

1. The student must finish the current school year.
2. The parent(s) complete registration at the student's selected school.

3. The parent(s) paid the applicable tuition charge.
4. The parent(s) complete a request that cumulative school records be sent to the high school.

Upon completion of these four criteria, students are eligible to participate in the open team coaching period for that high school during the summer coaching period. He also amended this same language be put in the Co-op section of the Handbook. Ms. Zentner seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **TENNIS**

Mr. Michelotti explained that in the previous two-week notice items for soccer, baseball and softball, parallel streaming language was added as an exception for these sports when a Pixellot camera is not available. Ms. Triplett made a motion to amend this language to include Tennis. Mr. Harris seconded, and the motion carried.

#### **NFHS NETWORK**

Mr. Michelotti explained there has been a change to the previously approved extension for the NFHS Network contract. The change is that if the mother company of NFHS Network sells to another company, there is a proceeds bonus to the contracted associations and this would be true also for a secondary sale as well. This change would be a rolling 10-year extension to mirror the initial contract extension. Mr. McElroy made a motion to extend the contract with the bonus proceeds change. Mr. Patelis seconded, and the motion carried.

#### **ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

Mr. Michelotti reported on a new logo and new website production and associated timelines.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, Mr. Patelis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Zentner seconded, and the motion carried. Mr. Fitzgerald adjourned the meeting at 1:21 pm.