



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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January 18, 2024

TO: MHSА MEMBER SCHOOLS

FROM: BRIAN MICHELOTTI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: MHSА EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

On Saturday, January 13th, and again on Monday, January 15th, the MHSА Executive Board conducted its regularly scheduled meeting. Following is a synopsis of the major items and items are being sent to member schools for a two-week notice period. These changes will be effective for 2024-25 (unless noted):

- The Executive Board reviewed fall sports postseason financial reports. At the time of the meeting, some financial reports and profit checks had still not been received. The Board discussed implementing a fine in the future for late financial reports and/or profit checks to the MHSА.
- Track and Field - Process if failing of FAT during district or divisional meet (Effective 2023-24):
 - Convert the stopwatch time for the heat in which the timing failed by adding 1 to any tenths (10ths) if there were any hundredths (100ths) on the recorded time, and next add an additional .24 for the total corrected time. You only need to convert the time for the first-place runner because the difference between the first runner and the other runners may be obtained from the timing system and then add this additional time to the first-place time.
- Tennis—The following language changes/clarifications were approved for the 2023-24 season:
 - Jewelry is allowed per USTA rules, with the exception of smartwatches or other devices that can be used to communicate with others.
 - The MHSА Tennis uniform language has changed. [Click here for the new rule.](#)
 - Once players have taken the court for warmups, no coaching is allowed until the 90-second change over after the 3rd game.
- Baseball - Click the following link for the approved baseball divisions. [2023-24 Baseball Divisions](#)
- Baseball Play-offs - All division champions will automatically qualify for the state tournament. The following play-in games will be played either Saturday, May 11th, or Monday, May 13th, 2024, at the home sites of the #2 teams. The winners qualify for the state tournament:
 - #2 SW vs. #3 E (winner plays the #1 NW)
 - #2 E vs. #3 SW (winner plays the #1 W)
 - #2 NW vs. #3 W (winner plays the #1 SW)
 - #2 W vs. #3 NW (winner plays the #1 E)
- Montana Officials Association - The following financial changes were approved:
 - Volleyball: The Board approved adding a line judge fee of \$25.00 per contest if schools opt to use an MOA official for a regular season contest. Additional line fee changes were approved as follows for the postseason: Districts - \$25.00 per match, Divisional - \$30.00 per match and State -\$175.00 for the tournament.
 - Soccer: The Board approved a fee adjustment for soccer officials when only 2 officials are available. The total fee paid for the contest for the 2 officials will be the same as if 3 officials were used and this is only approved for sub-varsity competition.

- Soccer: The Board adjusted the postseason per diem to \$10.00 per game or \$.12 per mile (whichever is greater) regardless of if the official is in or out of town.
- Football: The Board approved a 5-person official crew to be used for postseason competition in 6-player football when available for the first round, and will be required for each subsequent round.

Final action was taken on the following items from their November meeting after two-week notice:

- Emergency Action Plan - Schools must have an EAP for each venue where they practice or have contests. A form must be submitted to the MHSAA by July 15th of each school year to verify the completion of this requirement.
- Track and Field - A change to qualifying procedures for the Class C Southern Divisional track meet was approved. Last year in the 4C, 5C and 6C district meets, the top two places qualified for divisionals and then the next four best overall times/distances/heights also qualified. Beginning this year, the same procedures will be in place, but participants will also qualify for divisionals through divisional qualifying marks.

Final action was taken on the following realignment items from previous meetings:

- [Eight-Player Football Placement & Alignment Link](#)
- Realignment for basketball, track and field and volleyball for the 13C and 14C districts. The 13C and 14C will now consolidate to become the 13C in 2024-25. The following schools will represent District 13C: Alberton, Charlo, Drummond, Granite, Hot Springs, Lincoln, Noxon, St. Regis, Seeley-Swan, Two Eagle River, Valley Christian, and Victor.

Other items for your information - MHSAA Annual Meeting

Proposals Approved

The 2024 Annual Meeting was conducted in Bozeman on January 15, 2024. The proposals approved by the membership to take effect in 2024-25 were:

MHSAA Eligibility By-Laws were amended to allow homeschool/non-public students to transfer in school districts with multiple schools. The MHSAA transfer rule will apply.

MHSAA Eligibility By-Laws were amended to allow an exception to the bricks and mortar rule. This exception will allow a school district approved personalized learning program as an exception to the required twenty hours per week and in regular attendance in ten hours per week at the school where the student participates. This exception requires that the student enrolled and completing the personalized learning program must participate for the district in which they are enrolled.

MHSAA General Penalty By-Laws were amended to allow the MHSAA Executive Board to assess a higher fine to member schools who violate the MHSAA postseason streaming policy.

MHSAA Administration By-Laws were amended to add an American Indian Executive Board Member. This board member will be elected as an American Indian superintendent, high school principal or high school activities director from an American Indian member school. An American Indian school shall be defined as any MHSAA member school with an American Indian student population of at least 50% in grades 9-12 as reported to the Office of Public Instruction. The election for this position will occur at the MHSAA Annual Meeting in 2025 and the first term will begin in the 2025-26 school year.

MHSA Eligibility By-Laws were amended to allow participation eligibility for students attending a state-approved Charter school approved by the Montana Board of Public Education. The Charter School student must participate for the district in which the student's family resides.

MHSA General Rules and Regulations for adding a new sport or activity were amended. New sports or activities will be added as an emerging sport/activity in the future. [Click here for the emerging sport/activity details.](#)

MHSA Executive Board By-Laws were amended to state that rules and regulation changes, appeals or any other requests for action at a board meeting must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director seven (7) days prior to a scheduled Executive Board meeting.

MHSA Executive Board By-Laws for expedited hearings were amended. A fee will be assessed to the appellant for these hearings in the future.

Awards

The following awards were presented at the 2024 Annual Meeting:

AIM Higher Award

Jefferson High School
Columbia Falls High School

NFHS State Music Award

Andrew Alley, Plentywood High School

Mildred Adams Award

Marlene Crum, Huntley Project High School
Julie Caster, Huntley Project Project High School
Sandy Hodgkiss, Choteau High School

MHSA Heart of the Arts Award

Karen Hale, Winnett High School

MHSA Spirit of Sport Award

Jesse Rumsey, Flathead High School

MHSA Service Citations

Chris Hayden, Director of Sports Facilities, Montana State University-Bozeman
Kathy and Hank Eekhoff, Manhattan Christian

James C. Haugen Meritorious Service Award

Mark Ator, Activities Director, Bozeman Public Schools
Merle Gunderson, Great Falls Public Schools
Dennis Murphy, Havre

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact the MHSA office.