



# MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

PROMOTING SUCCESS ON THE COURT, ON THE FIELD, ON STAGE  
AND EVERYWHERE ELSE UNDER THE BIG SKY SINCE 1921.

June 25, 2024

**TO: MHSА MEMBER SCHOOLS**

**FROM: BRIAN MICHELOTTI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**RE: JUNE EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION**

The Montana High School Association Executive Board met via conference call on June 20, 2024, and the following occurred:

1. The Board heard reports from each of the classification's summer meetings held in June of 2024.
2. The Board approved extending the wrestling season by one week by changing the dates of the All-Class Wrestling Tournament. This permanent change will begin in the 2025-26 school year and the date of the state wrestling tournament will be February 19-21, 2026.
3. The Board approved extending the Class C golf season by one week by changing the dates for the Class C State Golf Tournament. The Class C State Golf Tournament change will begin next year with the tournament being held at Sidney Country Club on May 20-21, 2025.
4. The Board approved a change to the dates of the future State All-Class Volleyball Tournament. When the tournament is held on a week where the MSU Bobcats have a home football game on Saturday, the tournament will begin on Wednesday and conclude on Friday.
5. The Board approved a change to the dates for the District 8 Music Festival at Fergus High School. The new dates are Friday, April 25th, and Saturday, April 26th, 2025.
6. The Board approved several State Tournament Bids during the meeting. The 2025-26 Class B State Golf tournament will be held in Billings at Lake Hills Golf Course and the 2024-25 Class AA State Tennis Tournament will be held in Bozeman at Gallatin and Bozeman High Schools.

**The following information is being sent to member schools for a two-week notice period. All changes are effective for the 2024-25 school year:**

- **Basketball**
  - The Board approved changes to the Class C State Basketball Tournament Bracket by moving the start time of Saturday's games to the following: Consolation (4:00 & 5:30) and Championship (7:00 & 8:30).
  - The Board approved an allowable exception to NFHS rules stating: The five-second closely guarded provision while a player dribbles the ball has been eliminated. The closely guarded rules remain in effect while a player holds the ball.
- **Cross Country**
  - The Board approved a \$100 fine to schools for late and/or incorrect entries at the State Cross Country Meet.



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- **Golf**

- The Board approved in Class AA allowing host schools for postseason events to be responsible for securing enough markers for the event. All participating schools will be responsible for securing one back-up marker for the event to be used, if needed.
- The Board approved changing the qualifiers to Class B Golf. The top 25 Individuals, both boys and girls from the West, North, and South Divisional advance to the State B Meet. There will be no auto team-qualifying for the State B tournament. If a team qualifies four individuals from their school, they will be able to compete at the state meet for the team championship. The team's fifth golfer will be an alternate at the state tournament if he/she is not in the top 25 at divisionals.

- **Football**

- The Board approved adjustments to the Class A state football bracket. The bracket follows yearly rotation as the Western Division will be the #1 overall seed. [2024 Class A Football Bracket](#).
- The Board approved the updated language for the Class A Football postseason stating first-round playoff games will be played on Friday and the remaining playoff games will be played on Saturday unless mutually agreed upon by the two schools involved.

- **Softball**

- The Board approved a change to allow Western A to discontinue the divisional softball tournament. Western A will use play-in games to determine their 6 qualifiers to state.
- Any postseason tournament game will end after two and a half or three innings, when a team is fifteen (15) or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.

- **Soccer**

- The Board approved the realignment for the 2024 Class A season with the addition of Thompson Falls/Plains to Class A/B Soccer. [Click here for the new divisions](#).
- The Board approved the Class A Soccer playoff bracket. [Click here to view the 2025 Class A State Soccer Bracket](#). Also, If the two (2) seed has beaten the three (3) seed twice during regular season conference play, then there is no play-in game.
- The Board approved the maximum postseason roster size increase in Class A from 20 to 22 participants.

- **Speech and Debate**

- The Board approved allowing school districts to add eighth grade participation in Speech and Debate.
- The Board approved adding new events to Class A and B/C Postseason. Program Oral Interpretation of Literature - solo event and Program Oral Interpretation will be added.
- The Board approved allowing host schools to assess a drop fee of \$20.00 for each registered school the day before or the day of the Divisional tournament.

- **Swimming**

- The Board approved a change to assure 48 swimmers will participate in each event at state. For instance, when Class A/B does not have enough swimmers to fill the heat for an event, additional AA swimmers will be used to fill lanes.



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- **Track & Field**
  - The Board approved allowing each Class A division to set their own divisional qualifications.
  - The Board approved a change in all Classes to allow all Track & Field meets (Varsity and JV) where Fully Automatic Timing (FAT) is used to be considered a qualifying event for state meet competitions.
  - The Board approved allowing an additional 26relay as an exhibition event during the regular season. The 200, 200, 400, 800 medley relay can be run if requested by meet management to the MHSA Executive Director.
  - The Board approved updated qualifying standards from each Classification. [Click here to view these updated qualifying standard](#)
  - The Board approved a coaching box to be added at State Track & Field meets for field events at the discretion of host facility meet management.
  - The Board approved a \$100 fine to schools for late and/or incorrect entries at the State Track & Field Meet.
- **Tennis**
  - The Board approved language that players advancing via forfeit, disqualification or default in the postseason on the winner's side of the bracket will receive 2 advancement points.
  - The Board approved language for all postseason events in Class AA. This states no match will begin later than 10:00 PM. Additionally, if conditions will not allow for the completion of a minimum of 40 matches on the opening day, the event will become a 3-day event.
  - The Board approved raising the Class A participant fee from \$15 to \$20 per participant to share proportionately in the cost of the state tournament.
  - The Board approved reducing the Class B/C State Tennis Qualifiers from 32 girls' doubles teams to 24. The girls' singles (32), boys' doubles (16), and boys' singles (16) state qualifiers will remain the same.
- **Volleyball**
  - The Board approved the maximum postseason roster size increase in Class A from 12 to 14 participants.
- **Wrestling**
  - The Board approved a change to increase the number of scoring wrestlers in Class AA boys from 13 to 14 wrestlers in the postseason.
  - The Board approved increasing the number of boys' entries at the divisional tournament from 17 to 18 in Class A and from 16 to 17 in Class B/C.
  - The Board approved adding Boys' Class C team trophies at the Divisional level per the awards rule. Teams participating will be based on a match that has been won at the divisional tournament.
- **General**
  - The Board approved the allowable items by fans in the items in the regular season to mirror the post season – [Allowable Items at MHSA Regular Season and Postseason Events](#)
  - The Board approved an addition to policies allowing the MHSA to utilize video to determine if players have left the bench area during an altercation in an MHSA contest.



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- The Board approved language to give MHSA authority to implement further sanctions to students, coaches or fans if an ejection occurs after a game or if deemed egregious.
- The Board approved the following language regarding the MHSA participation numbers: A school administrator is responsible for reporting the school participation numbers for all sports and activities annually. Participation numbers will be reported on the OPI website per MCA 20-7-104.
- The Board approved the following language for administration at postseason events: Schools are required to have an administrative representative at all MHSA baseball, basketball, softball and volleyball state events. The representative must be available to assist with crowd control for their team.
- **Class AA**
  - The Board approved a change for Class AA to eliminate divisional tournaments for volleyball and basketball and reduce the number of softball teams advancing to the state tournament from 12 to 8. In this new approved format, teams finishing first and second in their respective conference will advance to the state event. Teams finishing seventh or eighth in their conference would have their seasons end. Play-in games would take place involving all teams, finishing third, fourth, fifth, and sixth in their respective conferences after regular season play. In basketball and volleyball 3rd vs 6th and 4th vs 5th will have a play-in game, and in softball the same seeds will play and the winner of the best of three series will advance to state.
- **Class B**
  - In Class B, the Board approved the Qualifying rotation for the number of volleyball and basketball teams qualifying for the state tournament beginning in the 2025-26 Season:
    - 2025-26 - 4 South - 2 North - 2 West
    - 2026-27 - 3 South - 3 North - 2 West
    - 2027-28 - 3 South - 3 North - 2 West
- **Class C**
  - The Board approved changes to the new qualifying criteria for the Western Division for basketball and volleyball. Volleyball will send 5 teams from the 13C and 3 teams from the 12C to the divisional tournament. Boys' and girls' basketball will now have a play-in game where the 4 seed from the 12C plays against the 5 seed from the 13C on Monday following the district tournament. The site(s) of these play-in games will be determined by the division.

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

- a) **Baseball** – Approval of a new policy for baseball play-in contests regarding the game ending procedures. [Click here to see the adopted language.](#)
- b) **Basketball** - Approval of a new policy for assigning offsite game locations for Saturday morning games at the state basketball tournaments. The gym assignments for Saturday morning contests will not be determined until after the Friday semifinal games are completed. The following factors would be used to determine which games are played at the main tournament site and which games are played at the secondary site:
  - A team will not play in their home gym.



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- Different gender teams from the same school should not play at separate locations.
- Gym capacity could be considered for crowd size

Brackets would be updated with gym assignments Friday night and affected teams would be notified as soon as possible.

- c) **Football** - Approval of a 4-year rotation for 8-Player football playoff brackets with the new 4-division format. [Click here to view the 8-Player playoff brackets.](#)
- d) Approval of the timeline for football reclassification. [Click here to view this timeline.](#)
- e) Approval of a change to the process for awarding football conference trophies. In the future, conference presidents can request that trophies for football divisional winners be sent earlier so the trophy can be presented immediately after the final regular season contest.
- f) **Softball** - The board re-aligned Manhattan High School to the East for B/C Softball.
- g) **Track and Field** - Approval allowing schools to conduct non-high school track & field meets at the same time as high school district track & field meets. The high school and non-high school events must be conducted separately. This is being allowed to provide adequate rest time between races and to utilize the same workers. This change is effective for the 2023-24 MHSA Track & Field season.
- h) **Wrestling** - Approval of the State Wrestling Tournament to be scheduled as a 3-day tournament beginning in the 2024-25 school year. [Click here to see the proposed schedule.](#)
- i) **Wrestling** Approval of changes to the wrestling weight classes. The boys and the girls divisions will go to 14 weight classes. [Click here to view the new wrestling weight classes.](#)
- j) Approval of significant changes to the cooperative sponsorship (co-op) language.
  - **Removed the 3-year contract** -The co-op shall be **continuous** unless an application for dissolution is submitted to the MHSA. However, the MHSA may terminate said agreement based upon valid reason as determined by the MHSA to become effective at the conclusion of a school year. An Application for Dissolution is required from only one member school of the cooperative. **Existing co-ops are grandfathered and do not need to be renewed this year.**
  - Schools in each co-op are allowed to have an official name recognized by the MHSA that is different from the combination of school names (Ex: Saco-Whitewater-Hinsdale could officially be called North Country in the MHSA Handbook and on tournament brackets).
  - February 1st is the application deadline for new co-ops and for the dissolution of existing co-ops (for all sports except football).
  - Football co-ops will be reviewed on the same cycle as football reclassification (2-year cycle). Enrollment and participation data may be requested by the MHSA office to determine if a cooperative sponsorship will be dissolved or reclassified.
- k) Approval of a new AED and CPR requirement for coaches. The MHSA requires completion of the NFHS Learn CPR & AED Training course prior to contact with student-athletes. Certification is good for a one-year period. \*
  - \* The following courses/certifications can be substituted for the NFHS Learn CPR & AED course (**for two years**):
    1. American Heart Association



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- Basic Life Support (BLS) CPR & AED Training
  - Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS)
  - Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) for Experienced Providers
  - Heartsaver CPR/AED
2. American Red Cross
- In-person class and skills check OR online class and in-person skills check
  - Advanced Life Support (ALS)
  - Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)
- l) Approval of a change in security policy at all postseason events to utilize safety measures such as metal detectors and/or bag check procedures when available at the site.
- m) Approval of a change to the MHSA Open Gym policy. One on one instruction will be allowed in open gyms as long as it is separate from the group activity.
- n) **Montana Officials Association** - The Board approved the following MOA items:
- 6-year MHSA / MOA regular season fee plan- [Click to Link](#).
  - 6-year MHSA / MOA postseason fee plan- [Click to Link](#).
  - Regular season change for officials' mileage - When an official is assigned a contest in the pool site city, but lives outside that city, they shall get paid round trip mileage and per diem from their home zip code to the pool city or zip code.
  - Regular Season per diem rate increased from \$0.12 per mile to \$.16 per mile.
  - Post Season per diem rate increased \$5.00.