

MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
January 14-15, 2023
Holiday Inn Downtown Missoula, Board Room

ATTENDANCE

Jim Hawbaker (President), Billings
Doug Reisig (Vice President), Missoula
Krystal Zentner, Bridger
Jimmy Patelis, Billings
Steve Thennis, Helena
John Fitzgerald, Red Lodge
Luke Kloker, Fairview
Brian Michelotti, Helena
Kip Ryan, Helena
Amy Bartels, Helena
Greta Buehler, Helena
Scott Wilson, Helena
Anna Doran, Helena
Delegations
Dean Phillips, Drummond
Tom Gates, Phillipsburg
CJ Pitcher, Phillipsburg
Elizabeth Kaleva, Missoula
Sid DeBarathy, Butte
Joel Fuhrman, Charlo

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Hawbaker called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

REVISIONS/ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the revisions and adoption of the agenda. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT STATEMENT

Mr. Hawbaker read the public input statement:

The Montana High School Association follows the Montana Open Meeting Law. Anyone in attendance at this meeting may request to address the Executive Board by using the available forms. Please indicate the agenda item for which an audience with the Board is requested and submit the request to the chair.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the following minutes: November 17, 2022 (Zoom meeting); November 21, 2022 (regular meeting); December 13, 2022 (Zoom meeting). Mr. Reisig noted an error in the November 21, 2022, minutes. In the "Requests" section, District 3C Basketball Tournament Bracket Approval, a four-day, three official proposal was made, not a four-day, four official proposal. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

DELEGATIONS/APPEALS

Coop – Drummond / Granite Football Coop Appeal

Drummond and Phillipsburg delegates filled the room. Media was in attendance as well. Mr. Wilson introduced three delegates who were presenting: Dean Phillips, Superintendent of Drummond High School; Tom Gates, Superintendent of Granite High School; and CJ Pitcher, Phillipsburg business owner.

Mr. Hawbaker introduced the executive board. Mr. Michelotti introduced the MHSAA Attorney, Bea Kaleva. Mr. Hawbaker gave the delegation 20 minutes to present.

Mr. Phillips presented a slideshow. Enrollment is declining at Drummond High School. He said the football program's success is due to the exceptional coaches, positive culture, a winning program, and the engaged community.

Mr. Gates said if the coop were to be dissolved "it would end P-Burg." He said students would immediately transfer out of Granite High School. He said the coop helps keep students engaged in school.

Mr. Pitcher said Granite became a better high school because of the coop. He said a dissolution of the coop would result in students transferring to play football elsewhere. He said dissolving the coop would have a negative impact on the community.

Mr. Hawbaker said the decision to dissolve the coop was based on handbook rules and made in the appropriate renewal year. Mr. Fitzgerald said a statewide committee from the member schools would be helpful for future decisions like this as it should not fall solely on the MHSAA Executive Director.

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned the coop remain for one year. In addition, a committee will be formed to create a rubric with the objective to discontinue or renew coops. Mr. Reisig seconded the motion and referred to the handbook: Section 35 H #2. *Making availability for students* needs to stay in place. The motion passed unanimously.

AA Softball Scheduling Appeal

Ms. Bartels introduced delegate, Sid DeBarathy. Mr. Hawbaker introduced the executive board. Mr. Hawbaker gave the delegation 20 minutes to present.

Mr. DeBarathy appealed to the Executive Board Action on Proposed Adjustments for the 2022-2023 MHSAA Class AA Softball Season that took place on September 12, 2022:

- ITEM (a): Allow each Class AA school to schedule varsity and JV contests at the same time, four times during the season.
- ITEM (b): A 9-inning limitation for Class AA players when JV and varsity contests are played at different times for a one-game series.
- ITEM (c): Limiting JV contest length to one hour, 45 minutes when varsity and JV contests are played at different times. The tie will be broken by putting a runner on 2nd base with 2 outs at the start of a new inning. Both teams will have the opportunity to score with the scenario of putting a base runner on 2nd base with 2 outs.

Mr DeBarathy said Class AA softball programs do not have enough JV and Varsity participants to support same-time games and if JV programs disappear, the sport is on a "death spiral."

Mr. DeBarathy said that imposing a one hour, 45-minute time limit on JV games would result in teams taking advantage of it. Taking away playing time from the students would result in

them dropping out of the program. Class A schedules varsity first. If this were to occur in AA, the darkness issue is solved. The weather is better. Then, opportunities would not be taken away from the varsity team.

Mr. Michelotti said the same time, four times a season compromise was proposed in a meeting with two AA Activities Directors, MHSA Legal Counsel, Bea Kaleva, and MHSA Staff. The conversation focused on retaining and increasing participation in softball. Mr. Michelotti agreed with Mr. DeBarathy that AA should play varsity first, and JV second. If the second game runs short because of darkness, it will not affect the varsity (first game) record.

Ms. Kaleva said, from a Title Nine standpoint, same-time scheduling was problematic as it could affect participation. Ms. Kaleva advised AA schools to gather data this spring to see if the new compromise increases or decreases participation. The AA was concerned contests played at different times would have a negative impact on participation. At the conclusion of the 2022-23 season, under the new compromise, participation must be evaluated to support or refute the new measure.

Mr. Koker motioned to deny the appeal of ITEM (a) and ITEM (b) with flexibility on ITEM (b) under MHSA approval and grant the appeal of ITEM (c). The motion was seconded by Ms. Zentner. The motion passed unanimously.

MOA Misconduct and MHSA Director Hearing

The meeting was closed. After the meeting reopened, Mr. Kloker motioned to deny the Billings Pool Complaint by MOA member, Mike Creeden. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Reisig motioned to deny the Brian Michelotti Complaint by Mr. Creeden citing the complaint had no merit. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Appeal of MOA Regional Directors Misconduct was tabled for a later date.

MOA Report - Joel Fuhrmann

Ms. Bartels introduced Mr. Fuhrmann. Mr. Fuhrmann relayed that the MOA Regional Directors worked together to make the following changes:

1. The MOA member recognition system - rather than pins, certificates and plaques will be issued along with a media release.
2. Smitty Apparel, not Universal Athletics, will be the new apparel partner. Officials like working directly with the owner of the company and their products are superior.
3. The MOA Hall of Fame will be annually, not bi-annually.
4. A Leadership Committee was created with administrators and officials. The meetings have been effective. Officials feel like their voices are heard.

Mr. Fuhrmann shared the April meeting topics: MOA fee increase, mileage, and post-season selection. He said soccer in Billings and Missoula took more time with assigning.

FINANCES

Mr. Michelotti reviewed the bills paid November 1 to December 31. The payments to Mark Beckman ended January 1, 2023. While payments to Mr. Beckman have discontinued, he will continue to serve as a resource. Mr. Michelotti explained the Dragonfly software company costs. Ms. Zentner motioned to approve bills paid. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti reviewed the financial statement through December 31. The corporate sponsorship money increased significantly. The MHSA will receive money from sponsors and Employee Retention Tax Credit is coming. Ms. Zentner motioned to approve the financial statement. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reisig. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti reported that football game revenue is low and ticket control should be monitored and tightened up. Mr. Wilson said schools used GoFan at the gate this year. GoFan eases the process of managing ticket control. Mr. Kloker raised the question of increasing admission prices. Mr. Michelotti said a price increase will be addressed at the April meeting. Mr. Kloker asked if there were additional costs to view playoff games on NFHS. Mr. Michelotti said that would be a challenge for NFHS.

Mr. Ryan reported that volleyball income was down overall. He discussed the payout factor system, and new equipment purchased. Officials' fees have increased while motel costs decreased this year. Mr. Fitzgerald inquired about the state volleyball floor system condition. Mr. Ryan said the floor system will last three more seasons then will need to be replaced. There were complaints about the lighting on the inside court and MSU is working to resolve the issue.

Ms. Bartels reported that AA soccer did not charge admission. It is difficult to enforce on open fields/parks. Mr. Thennis said the perception is that soccer fans do not have to pay. When he tried to charge in the past it felt like he was fighting people non-stop.

GENERAL OFFICE REPORT

Administrator's Meetings for Reviewing Annual Meeting Proposals

Mr. Michelotti reported on the Northern C Meeting. There was a discussion on Roberts Rules of Order. The only way to change reclassification is through a proposal. An overwhelming majority of the caucus looks to move forward in April. Esports: Would this going to go under the umbrella of MHSA or a Club? Mr. Ryan reported on the Region 3 MASSP. There was discussion about co-ops. If a co-op is split after the regular season, how would it affect the post-season? There would be an impact on relay teams or coaches.

Recent Events

Mr. Ryan will present the Academic Excellence Award this weekend. Mr. Wilson reported a storm hit the night before the AIM Higher Workshop in Great Falls which impacted participation. Mr. Wilson attended the 2023 NFHS Football Rules conference in Indianapolis. Decisions were made that will go to the NFHS Board.

Coming Events

Mr. Wilson anticipates 100+ participants at the AIM Higher Workshop in Billings

NFHS Network Payback Discussion

Mr. Wilson provided a handout with information on schools and streaming. He explained how the profit-sharing checks will work. The amounts will decrease next year. Projections will be off because during covid member school enrollment increased and viewership was high. Mr. Riesig asked why there are camera malfunctions on the network. Mr. Wilson said, at any given school, the camera could be blocked, the internet may be down, or viewers may not have a strong internet connection at home. Mr. Michelotti said there is a push by Huddle to take over filming. MHSA needs to stay strong and align with NFHS because better streaming services are in the works. If member schools work with NFHS, they will get a reimbursement check for subscription revenue.

1099 Discussion – New Policy

Mr. Michelotti said W-9s and 1099s must go out to all the officials. Under the new rule, officials must add mileage and per diem to their payments received (reported income). If payment was made through Dragonfly (over \$600.00), a 1099 will be issued. The policy is retroactive to 2022.

Class AA Soccer Payout

Rather than issuing a \$50 check per school, Mr. Michelotti asked if entire payout should be issued to the AA Conference.

Other Items

There was discussion of the NFHS Bench Bad Behavior Campaign. The concussion insurance is a great program. Mr. Kloker asked if there are AED units in schools now. It is time for member schools to focus on emergency action plans.

OFFICE ACTION

Mr. Michelotti gave updated numbers regarding the Waivers of Transfer Rule and Waivers of the Age Rules. Four to five penalties have been imposed thus far. He will bring information to the April Board meeting.

LEGAL

Mr. Michelotti discussed legal costs. There have been emails and threats by members of the MOA (soccer and volleyball) that needed to be handled legally. The AA softball scheduling complaint was an additional legal cost.

REQUESTS/MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Michelotti reported the number of people who have viewed offered clinics. This is expected to increase during basketball season.

Mr. Michelotti reported there have been 47 ejections. He said our sportsmanship problem is with the fans who create the challenges, not players and coaches.

Mr. Michelotti attended the National Federation Winter Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. He networked with other directors from around the nation. There was discussion regarding the NFHS network and how it must step up as Huddle is going to be a threat.

Ms. Bartels reported that the MHSA Student Advisory Committee has a solid group and have ideas regarding the MOA. Another meeting is scheduled in February.

Mr. Wilson reported on the Girls Wrestling Awards. There must be a set of AA, A, B, and C trophies. Baseball will be unique because there is no classification this season. There will be no divisional championship. This will be addressed in the caucus group tomorrow. Mr. Hawbaker motioned to give Mr. Wilson the authority to make the decision on baseball awards after caucus meeting tomorrow. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti said no action is needed for the Squad Rule (in-season rule regarding the number of high school athletes playing club). While players are in-season, half or more of the squad cannot play in an unsanctioned tournament. Further, the rule stands that a coach cannot participate in such a tournament. However, nothing is stated about the players. Mr. Kloker said a rule should be in place that half (of starters) cannot play during the season in an unsanctioned tournament. Mr. Michelotti will work on the language of this rule.

Mr. Ryan passed out a handout after collecting information from the Volleyball Committee. The consensus was that teams should go back switching sides on the court. Coaches want to switch, and administrators do not. Last year, 46 states did not switch sides. Mr. Ryan suggested taking the issue to the caucus so the board can decide in April. Mr. Michelotti said if there are physical limitations in the gym then schools could appeal to MHSA to switch sides. This must be completed prior to the season starting. This would solve the disadvantage issue.

ANNUAL MEETING

Kip will give everyone a scheduled name tag. 14 exhibitors will be present. Registration is through the GoFan Mobile App. Tickets must be redeemed or else participant will not be accounted for. Participants will receive a shirt, folder, and MHSA Activity Planner. Board Members will assist with registration. There will be a reception on Sunday at 4:30 pm by Destination Missoula. Vendors will save MHSA \$16,000 in costs (shirts, food, etc.).

Board Member will attend the caucus of their class and lead that meeting. LK will go to Class B. First, get Kara and Krystal set up. BM: Get an official vote on the proposal. Bring back to lunch with BM. There will be a proposal on the 6% increase and 10 practice rule. If the mandatory practice rule moves from 10 to eight, the board will be responsible to adjust calendar dates. Schools may decide to start later but not earlier. The summer "dead period" proposal will be addressed as well.

Additional items to discuss in caucuses – Track coaches who register late registration or provide inaccurate information is problematic for the director of the meet. The penalty should be a school fine and not directed to the athlete. If enough AA schools implement baseball next year, then the sport will have to go into classifications.

TWO WEEKS NOTICE FINAL ACTION

Realignment

Six Player Football Placement and Alignment – New placements for Brockton, Plevna, Terry and Westby/Grenora. Realignment for CJI and Great Falls Central.

Eight-Player Football Placement and Alignment- Manhattan Christian and Wibaux approved to remain.

Class B Realignment - Whitehall / Harrison to the West (Football), Golf Realignment, Basketball, Volleyball and Track & Field realignment.

Class A Realignment – Bigfork.

Class C Eastern Division Realignment – Volleyball – Savage to 3C

Other Two-Week Notice Items

Volleyball - The Board approved the recommendation to return to the NFHS rule 1-2-4 on having a pre-match conference and coin flip.

Track and Field - Class C Southern Divisional track - From the district meets in the 4C, 5C and 6 C, the top two placers qualify for divisional and then the next 4 best overall times/distances/heights will qualify. BM 30-36 MHSA has received no feedback

Mr. Patelis motioned to approve all the two-week notice items. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Wrestling

Wrestling officials will receive an additional \$75 for working both boys' and girls' tournaments. Should this payment be retroactive to the beginning of the season? Mr. Michelotti said if the payments were to be retroactive, some schools would have difficulty to recoup the costs. Had they known, they would have increased the entry costs.

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned the \$75 increase begin on the date MHSAA announced the change. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ASSIGNMENTS OF BOARD & STAFF TO FINAL EVENTS

Mr. Hawbaker assigned the board and staff to winter events.

State Speech and Debate: Mr. Hawbaker (Billings), Mr. Kloker (Sidney), Ms. Bartels (Manhattan).

State Swim: Mr. Ryan and Mr. Hawbaker (Great Falls).

State Wrestling: Mr. Wilson, Mr. Patelis, and Ms. Zentner (Billings).

State AA Basketball: Ms. Buehler, Mr. Michelotti, Mr. Thennis, and Mr. Reisig (Butte).

State A Basketball: Mr. Wilson (Bozeman).

State B Basketball: Ms. Bartels and Mr. Fitzgerald (Great Falls).

State C Basketball: Mr. Ryan, Ms. Zentner, and Mr. Kloker (Billings).

State Music Festival: TBA (Billings).

APRIL MEETING DATE

The next MHSAA Board Executive Meeting will be in Helena, April 17-18, 2023.

OTHER ITEMS

The 2024 Annual Meeting Site is Bozeman.

Request for Calendar Change - Mike Richards Powder River Co. This ties into the MHSAA Calander. The starting date is Friday, December 1. Can they play on November 30? Mr. Kloker requested to table the request for now.

House Bill 203 - Open enrollment Bill

Mr. Reisig asked: What does this do to MHSAA eligibility rule? Mr. Michelotti said it does not have an effect and cannot waive the MHSAA transfer rule.

Appointment of Class C Representative

By keeping one class vote/year, the rotation remains for all four years.

Mr. Kloker motioned the appointment of Ms. Triplett. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RECESS

The meeting was recessed at 2:34 pm and will reconvene after the conclusion of the Annual Meeting on Monday.

MEETING RECONVENES

The meeting reconvened at 1:43 p.m.

DELEGATIONS/APPEALS

Delegate Shane Brown, Lincoln, would like to move to varsity for the 2023 season after having played JV for the 2022 season. Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the request. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jeff Crews, Alberton, said since the Coop with Superior no longer exists, he has had difficulty finding JV games. Mr. Crews requested to put together a Six-player varsity team because it would give his athletes the opportunity to play every week. They only played 1.5 games last year. He believes consistency in program would be helpful. His roster looks to be 14 next season.

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the request. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

These were the only member school representatives who came to the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.