

**MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE CALL OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
JUNE 22, 2023
(via Zoom)**

ATTENDANCE

Steve Thennis, Helena
Krystal Zentner, Bridger
Aric Harris, Whitefish
John Fitzgerald, Red Lodge
Kara Triplett, Richey
Jimmy Patelis, Billings
Joe McElroy, Missoula
Brian Michelotti, Helena
Scott Wilson, Helena
Kip Ryan, Helena
Greta Buehler, Helena
Amy Bartels, Helena
Anna Doran, Helena
Delegations:
Nathan Dunham, Fort Benton
Colter Tinsen, Highwood
Brandon Gondeiro, Highwood
Chris Lee, Sidney

CALL TO ORDER

Board President, Mr. Thennis, called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT APPOINTEE

Joe McElroy was introduced as the OPI representative to the Board.

TWO-WEEK NOTICE ITEMS FROM APRIL

A motion was made by Mr. Fitzgerald, and seconded by Ms. Zentner, to approve final action on the following items from the April Board meeting:

- Language change for live streaming on the NFHS Network for MHSA events.
 - All postseason live video-streaming of MHSA events will be exclusively broadcast on the NFHS Network.
 - All video streaming of regular season 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 be live parallel streamed on the NFHS Network.
- Changing the number of preseason days of practice from 10 to 8 in all sports except football and golf. Football will remain at 10 and golf will remain at 2 preseason required practices.
- Send digital NFHS rule books to schools for all sports beginning in the 2023-24 school year. A hard copy of the rule book can be received upon request.
- MHSA postseason ticket price increase for the 2023-24 school year.
- MOA Items--
 - One-way mileage for officials in the postseason.

- Increase in sub-varsity pay for MOA officials from \$48 to \$55.
 - Change to the MOA soccer assignment policy and fee structure.
 - Allowing walkup music in MHSAs baseball and softball games during the regular season (not allowed in postseason).
 - Updating the MHSAs Pre-Participation Physical Exam form for the 2023-24 school year.
 - Revising the language, criteria, and procedures for football reclassification.
 - Changing the MHSAs jewelry policy to align with each sport's NFHS Rules or governing body (USTA or USGA).
 - Approval of the rule regarding the additional practice requirements when a student transfers to another school.
 - Changing the MHSAs summer coaching rule (Tuesday after Memorial Day).
 - Volleyball to return to switching benches between sets.
 - New language regarding the participation of outside club teams during the MHSAs team sport seasons.
- The motion carried.

SPRING TOURNAMENT EVALUATIONS

Board and staff reported on the following spring events: State AA, A and B/C Tennis, State B and C golf, State AA, A and B/C softball, and State AA-B and A-C track.

FORT BENTON/HIGHWOOD GIRLS' BASKETBALL CO-OP APPEAL

Mr. Dunham (Activities Director, Fort Benton), Colter Tinsen (Highwood), and Brandon Gondeiro (Activities Director, Highwood) joined the meeting to request a waiver of the co-op enrollment rule. Mr. Michelotti said the Fort Benton Highwood Co-op was denied because the schools' total combined enrollment exceeds the cap for Class C. Mr. Gondeiro said girls' enrollment is down at Highwood. There are three players, which is not enough to field a team. Mr. Dunham said Fort Benton supports giving the three players a chance to play. He added they would like to continue at the Class C level. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if Highwood has any eighth-grade players. Mr. Gondeiro said they do not.

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the Fort Benton/Highwood Girls' Basketball Co-op and that it can remain in Class C, and Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion carried.

SIDNEY STATE CLASS A WRESTLING TEAM SCORE APPEAL

Chris Lee (Activities Director, Sidney) joined the meeting. After learning about a team scoring error, Mr. Lee made an appeal that the third-place trophy be given to Sidney instead of Laurel. The appeal was denied because the reported error did not fall within the required timeline (30 minutes within the conclusion of the tournament). Mr. Fitzgerald proceeded to read the 30-Minute Rule aloud. Mr. Wilson elaborated on the scoring error that took place. There are different rules for each class, making it a challenge when using the live scoring system, Track Wrestling. Mr. Wilson said the complaint came from an outside source who notified Sidney two months after the tournament occurred.

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to deny the appeal to award the third-place trophy to Sidney based on NFHS Rule 665B1, and Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion failed 2-5 (Dissenting: Triplett, Harris, Zentner, McElroy, Thennis). The third-place trophy will be awarded to Sidney High School.

CLASS AA REQUESTED CHANGES FOR 2023-24

Mr. Thennis presented the Class AA requests from the classification meeting.

- a. Football – The existing football mercy rule will change. The running clock will begin in the third (not fourth) quarter.
- b. Soccer – The Soccer Behavior Improvement Plan (AA and A) will be adjusted. The MOA will only report the Yellow Cards that involve sportsmanship fouls (dissent and taunting).
- c. The winter sports date start time will be the Monday of Thanksgiving week. (No action required)
- d. The winter sports date will start the Monday of Thanksgiving week with a black out period over Thanksgiving through the weekend. (No action required)
- e. Basketball – The divisional basketball tourney schedule will no longer have a 3rd/4th place game.
- f. Swimming – The 500-meter preliminary race will be held on Thursday at the state meet.
- g. Track – The top 8 finishers (vs 6) will advance to the state meet.
- h. Tennis – There will be a mandatory postseason tie-breaker match. Mr. Michelotti suggested bringing this topic to the tennis committee prior to action.

Ms. Zentner motioned to approve the Class AA requested changes a, b, e, f, g, and to table item h. Ms. Triplett seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CLASS A REQUESTED CHANGES FOR 2023-24

Mr. Harris presented the Class A requests from the classification meeting.

- a. Football – The playoff bracket will be adjusted so that no crossover will occur in the first round.
- b. Soccer – The playoff bracket will be updated.
- c. Softball -
 - 1) There will be 22 games in the regular season as opposed to 20 games. This is the same as Classes B/C and AA.
 - 2) There will be bat testing at the divisional tournaments.
- d. Track & Field –
 - 1) Return to 10 qualifying for State from the East and 10 from the West.
 - 2) East and West Divisional track - The top 30 in each event qualify. Mr. Ryan asked if each division could decide for itself. There are only five entries per event for each school. Mr. Michelotti suggested tabling so Mr. Ryan could follow up with the track committee.
- e. Wrestling – Amend the current language for qualifiers to read “a maximum of 17 wrestlers with no more than two in any weight class”.
- f. Postseason - Qualifying for State -
 - 1) There will be no more play-in games to get to the state tournament in volleyball and basketball. Four will qualify from the East and 4 from the West.
 - 2) Track & Field will return to 10 qualifiers in each event from East and 10 from West.
- g. FYI – No Action Required
 - 1) 8th grade participation for 22-23 season: 11 schools did not allow, four schools are considering, and 13 allow.
 - 2) Baseball – There are three schools potentially adding for the 23–24 season.
 - 3) Track - A coaches’ box will be added for field events at the state meet: 24 for, 0 opposed.
 - 4) Football - Option - Class ‘A’ teams move to Class ‘B’: 13 for, 8 opposed, 3 unsure.
 - 5) Wrestling - to move from a 2-day to 3-day state tournament: 21 for, 1 opposed, 2 unsure.
 - 6) Wrestling – The addition of a new boys’ weight class (NFHS class +100lb): 16 for, 5 opposed, 3 unsure.
 - 7) Wrestling – The addition of a new girls’ weight class: 15 for, 5 opposed, 4 unsure.
 - 8) Music – The State Music Festival date change to April: 24 for, 0 opposed.

Ms. Zentner motioned to approve Class A requested changes a, b, c, d1, e, and f. Mr. Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CLASS B REQUESTED CHANGES FOR 2023-24

Mr. Fitzgerald presented the Class B requests from the classification meeting.

- a. Football -
 - 1) Class B 11-Player Football Playoff bracket - tie breaker language change.
 - 2) Alternate Whitehall and Jefferson from the South to the West football division every 2 years.
- b. Tennis - Add B/C Divisional Team Trophies using the Award Rule.
- c. Golf -
 - 1) Use a shotgun start procedure at the state meet for the practice round and first day (tee times on the final day).
 - 2) Rename the golf divisions from numbers to the geographic area.
 - 3) Rotate the State location from North to Southeast to West.
- d. Cross Country - Change State qualifying times to 22:00 (boys) and 27:00 (girls). Mr. Ryan said the cross country committee recently changed the qualifying times to 25:00 (boys) and 30:00 (girls) and this would be the second change in a year.

Mr. Patelis motioned to approve Class B requested changes a, b, c, and table item d. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CLASS C REQUESTED CHANGES FOR 2023-24

Ms. Triplett presented the Class C requests from the classification meeting.

- a. FYI – Votes on MHSA Items - All
 - 1) Football re-classification rubric
 - 2) Post-season basketball officials selection changes
 - 3) Reclassification Multiplier
 - 4) Wrestling weight class adjustments and tournament format
- b. Track and Field – Change divisional qualifiers to the State Track Meet to 6-6-6-6.
- c. Golf
 - 1) Hold the state meet on Sunday (practice round), Monday, and Tuesday.
 - 2) Lower the participant and team numbers who qualify at divisionals for the state meet (4 teams and 20 individuals).
 - 3) Divisional pay for the required marker's meals, whether a team brings their required markers or not.
- d. Cross Country
 - 1) State C Cross Country qualifying standards to 22:00 (boys) and 27:00 (girls)
 - 2) Exploring Divisional Meet and Qualifiers
- e. Realignment in Class C – Mr. Michelotti said with teams moving to Class B, realignment will be required for balanced divisions. A realignment committee could be created. The private school multiplier (success factor) is still on the table.

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve Class C requested changes b, and c2. Mr. Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried.

MHSA HANDBOOK CLARIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS

- a. Open Gym Rules--The amended language will read: *During the summer coaching period, only the current student body or non-secondary students within the school's attendance area (who are not enrolled in another district) are allowed to participate in open gyms or practices.* Ms. Zentner motioned to accept the open gym rules amended language. Ms. Triplett seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- b. School Board Action will be needed on eighth grade policies. Each individual MHSA school district must adopt a school policy on eighth grade participation. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to accept the eighth-grade school board policy. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- c. Committees – clarification on Native America or Native American School Representative. Mr. McElroy suggested the MHSA use the proper term, American Indian, rather than Native American. Mr. Patelis motioned that committees may have an American Indian or American Indian School Representative. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- d. Increase the fine to schools using alternate video streaming platform in MHSA postseason. Mr. Michelotti tabled Item d. It will be a proposal at the next annual meeting.
- e. Baseball and Softball –
 - 1) There will be no walkup music in the postseason. During the regular season, walkup music is allowed by the home team. Mr. Patelis motioned to accept the walkup music language. Mr. Harris seconded the motion. The motion carried.
 - 2) Mercy Rule change – Remove *mutual agreement by coaches*. Ms. Zentner motioned to accept the Mercy Rule change. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- f. Speech and Debate changes – Accept the changed language for B-C State tournament procedures. Ms. Triplett motioned to accept the changed language. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- g. Cooperative Sponsorships - Three Forks/Ennis Wrestling – Review and Placement in Class A Wrestling. A proposal was made to move the co-op to the Eastern A division. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to accept the new placement. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

EMPLOYEE POLICY MANUAL

- a. Floating Holiday – Easter Monday to allow flexibility. Mr. Patelis motioned to accept the floating holiday proposal. Mr. McElroy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

2023 STATE BASEBALL BID - MISSOULA

The proposal was tabled.

STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Bartels said the committee is being finalized for next school year. Five new members will be added.

2022-23 BUDGET CLOSEOUT

- a. Budget Items:
 - 1) Year End Purchases – printers, monitor and new office furniture. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the end-of-year purchases. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- 2) Reserve amounts – an estimated \$300,000 will be divided among the following accounts: Building (\$150,000), Health and Wellness (\$50,000), Sick Leave and Severance (\$50,000), and Technology (\$50,000).

MHSA STAFF RESPONSIBILITY UPDATES

Mr. Michelotti updated the Board on staff responsibility changes and the BCBSMT BlueNorth strategic planning process.

BASKETBALL SHOT CLOCK CLARIFICATION

Ms. Buehler wanted clarification from the Board about subvarsity games being played without shot clocks in 2023-24. Previously, the Board had decided that in 2023-24 if a school does not have a shot clock, it cannot host home games. The Board reiterated that this applies to both varsity and subvarsity games.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, Mr. Thennis adjourned the meeting.

Executive Director Brian Michelotti

MHSA President Steve Thennis