



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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

July 27, 2023

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 22, 2023, and the following occurred:

1. The Board and MHSА staff reported on the spring state championships. The Board and the MHSА staff appreciate the managers and venue personnel who administered and hosted these extremely successful events.
2. The Board heard reports from each of the classification's summer meetings held in June of 2023.
3. The Board received an update regarding the MHSА Student Advisory Committee and the addition of five new members for the 2023-24 school year.
4. Joe McElroy from Missoula was welcomed to the MHSА Executive Board as the new appointee from the State Superintendent.

The following information is being sent to member schools for a two-week notice period. All changes are effective for the 2023-24 school year:

Baseball

1. The Board approved the following adjustments for walk-up music in MHSА baseball. Walk-up music may be played **in the regular season by the home team** if approved by the school's administration. Each team can choose their own approved music. Administrators should review the music to determine its appropriateness. Walk-up music should stop the moment the batter steps into the batter's box. Officials may order the music turned down or off if the music is inappropriate or is interfering with the orderly administration of the game.
2. The Board approved an adjustment for the mercy rule in MHSА baseball. The coach's option to continue was removed if the 15-run differential is reached after the 3rd inning. The 10-run differential after 5 innings is still in effect.

Basketball

1. The Board approved Class AA divisional basketball tournaments to discontinue playing the 3rd / 4th place game. Criteria have been developed to determine how these teams will advance to state.
2. The Board approved Class A to go back to an 8-team state tournament in basketball with four teams qualifying from the West and four teams qualifying from the East. There will no longer be a play-in game to advance to state.



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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

3. The Board confirmed the policy that during the 2023-24 season, all games (varsity and sub-varsity) will be played with an operable shot clock. There is no exception for sub-varsity games played in auxiliary gyms.

Football

1. The Board approved adjustments to the Class AA Football Mercy Rule. If the 35-point differential is reached, the running clock will begin in the third quarter instead of the fourth quarter.
2. The Board approved adjustments to the Class A state football bracket. The same number of teams from each division will qualify for the playoffs and there will not be any divisional crossover in the first round.
3. The Board approved an adjustment to the Class B 11-Player football playoff tiebreaker. Other than in the state championship, if like seeds meet in the playoffs, head-to-head results will be the first criterion to determine the host site for the playoff game.
4. The Board approved alternating Whitehall and Jefferson from the South to the West football divisions every 2 years in the next reclassification of Class B 11-Player football.

Golf

1. The Board approved a format change for the Class B state golf tournament. A shotgun start will be used for the practice round and first day of competition. Tee times will be used for the second day of the competition.
2. The Board approved renaming the Class B golf divisions from the current numbering system to geographical area.
3. The Board approved a rotation for the state golf tournament sites beginning in the 2025-26 school year. Bidding sites will rotate from North to Southeast to West.
4. The Board approved a change to Class C golf state qualifiers. Four teams and 20 participants from each boys and girls division will qualify for the state golf tournament.

Soccer

1. The Board approved adjustments to the Soccer Behavior Improvement Plan in all classifications. The new plan will focus more on major fouls that occur in the sport of soccer.
2. The Board approved adjustments to the Class A state soccer bracket. The bracket will follow a yearly rotation.

Softball

1. The Board approved the following adjustments for walk-up music in MHSA softball. Walk-up music may be played **in the regular season by the home team** if approved by the school's administration. Each team can choose their own approved music. Administrators should review the music to determine its appropriateness. Walk-up music should stop the moment the batter steps into the batter's box. Officials may order the music turned down or off if the music is inappropriate or is interfering with the orderly administration of the game.



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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

2. The Board approved an adjustment for the mercy rule in MHSA softball. The coach's option to continue was removed if the 15-run differential is reached after the 3rd inning and the 10-run rule differential is reached after 5 innings.
3. The Board approved allowing Class A softball teams to play 22 games in the regular season as opposed to 20 games.
4. The Board approved the addition of bat testing at divisional softball tournaments in Class A.

Speech and Debate

1. The Board approved the attached changes in Speech and Drama. [Click Here](#) for this information.

Swimming

2. The Board approved a schedule change for the All-Class Swim Meet. The 500-meter prelims on Friday will move to Thursday.

Tennis

1. The Board approved adding divisional team trophies in Class B/C tennis. The MHSA Awards Rule will be followed for the number of trophies given.

Track and Field

1. The Board approved increasing the number of Class AA qualifiers from divisional to state in track and field. In each event, 8 participants will advance to state from each division. In the past, 6 participants or relay teams qualified.
2. The Board approved adjustments to the number of Class C qualifiers from divisional to state in track and field. Each division will advance 6 participants or relay teams to state. Last year the Western division advanced 7 participants.
3. The Board approved returning the number of Class A qualifiers from divisional to state in track and field to 10 from each division. Last year, the East advanced 8 and the West advanced 10 participants.

Volleyball

1. The Board approved Class A to go back to an 8-team state tournament with four teams qualifying from the West and four teams qualifying from the East. There will no longer be a play-in game to advance to state.

Wrestling

1. The Board approved adjustments to Class A qualifiers in postseason wrestling. With this change, Class A schools can enter a maximum of 17 wrestlers into the postseason and shall have no more than two wrestlers in a weight class.



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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

General

1. The Board approved the following clarification for the MHSAA Open Gym Rule. There is no such thing as an open gym during a sport-specific season (i.e. no volleyball open gym during volleyball). 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.
Interpretation:
 - 1 - Coaches who coach AAU clubs or teams with mixed high school students must follow district policy to rent the gym to practice.
 - 2 – Approved co-op students are allowed to participate in each school's open gyms or practices.
2. The Board approved the following interpretation of the MHSAA 8th Grade Rule:
Each individual MHSAA school district must adopt a school board policy on whether or not they allow 8th grade participation.
3. The Board approved an update to the recent MHSAA committee structure change. Each MHSAA advisory committee will have representation from an American Indian member or an American Indian school representative.

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

1. Approval of the following language for live streaming in MHSAA Schools:
All postseason live video-streaming of MHSAA events will be exclusively broadcast on the NFHS Network.
All video-streaming of regular season events must be approved by the MHSAA Executive Director. The NFHS Network is the preferred service of the MHSAA. If a school uses a different commercial company for streaming their regular season events, these events must also be live parallel streamed on the NFHS Network.
2. Approval to change the amount of preseason practice days 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.
3. Approval of policy to send digital NFHS rule books to schools for all sports beginning in the 2023-24 school year. A hard copy of the book can be received upon request.
4. Approval of the following MHSAA postseason ticket prices for the 2023-24 school year. [Click here to view the new state tournament prices](#)
5. Approval of the following MOA Items:
 1. The Board approved one-way mileage for officials in the postseason.
 2. The Board approved increasing the sub-varsity pay for MOA officials from \$48 per game to \$55 per game beginning in the 2023-24 school year.
 3. The Board approved a change to the MOA Soccer Assigning Policy and Fee Structure. [Click here to view the new policy and fee structure](#)
6. Approval of the following for walk-up music in MHSAA baseball and softball.
 1. **Baseball** - Walk-up music may be played if approved by the school's administration. Each team can choose their own approved music. Administrators should review the music to determine its appropriateness. Walk-up music should



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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

- stop the moment the batter steps into the batter's box. Officials may order the music turned down or off if the music is inappropriate or is interfering with the orderly administration of the game.
2. **Softball** - Walk-up music may be played if approved by the school's administration. Each team can choose their own approved music. Administrators should review the music to determine its appropriateness. Walk-up music should stop the moment the batter steps into the batter's box. Officials may order the music turned down or off if the music is inappropriate or is interfering with the orderly administration of the game.
 7. Approval of the Pre-Participation Physical Exam form for the 2023-24 school year. The Board approved the removal of Covid-19 language and the addition of the MHSA's new corporate partner, Logan Health, as the official recommended health care provider of the MHSA. [Click Here for the updated form to use after May 1, 2023.](#)
 8. Approval of revised language, criteria and procedures for football reclassification.
 9. Approval of changes to the MHSA jewelry policy. Effective immediately in the 2022-23 spring season, ***jewelry can be worn if allowed by NFHS rules or the governing body for the sport (USGA or USTA).***
 10. Approval of a rule regarding the additional practice requirements when a student transfers to another school. If a student transfers to a new school after completing the required days of preseason practices for their sport or activity, the student must complete an additional amount of practices (equal to half the number of required practices for that sport or activity) at their new school.
 11. Approval of the following changes to the MHSA Summer Coaching Rule. This rule will be in place beginning immediately:
 1. ***The team coaching rule is suspended from the Tuesday after Memorial Day through July 31st. The team coaching rule for MHSA baseball coaches is suspended from the Sunday after the State Baseball Tournament through July 31st.*** This means that the coach of a team sport can coach his/her players anytime, anywhere, during this period. During this period a team can scrimmage against another team without violating the out-of-season contest requirements (renting facility, etc.). ***Practice, competition and facility use during the coaching rule suspension are not covered by MHSA insurance (liability, catastrophic, concussion, etc.).***
 2. The team coaching rule is in effect from August 1st ***until the Tuesday after Memorial Day. The team coaching rule for MHSA baseball coaches is in effect from August 1st until the Sunday after the MHSA State Baseball Tournament.*** This means that there is to be no coaching of one's team sport (football, basketball, volleyball, softball and soccer) out of season other than the one-on-one provision allowed presently. Coaches of individual sports (cross country, wrestling, track and field, swimming, golf and tennis) are not affected by this rule.
 12. Approval of a change in volleyball to go back to switching benches between sets.
 13. Approval of language regarding the participation on outside club teams during the MHSA team sport seasons. [Click here to view the new language](#)