

BASEBALL

TOURNAMENT DATES

State Tournaments

Classes AA and A-B..... May 27 -29

I - GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (1) The Montana High School Association will promote, provide for and control all interschool BASEBALL activities among the member schools.
- (2) The playing rules as authorized and published by the National Federation of State High School Associations for the current year shall be followed for all games. By National Federation Rule, Montana has adopted the following:

- a. Any regular season game will end when, after two and a half or three innings, a team is fifteen (15) or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.
- b. Any game will end when, after four and a half or five innings, a team is ten or more runs behind and has completed its turn at bat.
- c. Games suspended before 4 1/2 or 5 innings because of weather – resume from the point of interruption.
- d. Games suspended before 4 1/2 or 5 innings that are tied – resume from the point of interruption.
- e. Games suspended before 4 1/2 or 5 innings because of darkness – resume from the point of interruption.
- f. Junior varsity games played prior to varsity games, the following time limit shall apply: No new inning shall begin more than 1 hour and 45 minutes after the conclusion of the pre-game plate meeting.
- g. Using a maximum time limit of 1 1/2 hours for games played at invitational tournaments. The game can be called if there is five minutes or less before the maximum time limit or officials should not start a new inning after one hour and twenty minutes of play.
- h. Postseason play-in games suspended before 4 1/2 or 5 innings because of weather, darkness or a game that is tied – resume from the point of interruption if the game can be continued at a later time, unless the opposing coaches wish to terminate the game and determine a winner. If the game is suspended and the game cannot be played at a later time, the higher seeded team (#2 seed) is declared the winner. In case of a tie, the higher seeded team is declared the winner.

- (3) Pitcher limitation from JV to Varsity: the starting pitcher in a varsity game cannot pitch in a JV contest unless there is an injury or for other out of the ordinary circumstances, which must be approved by the Executive Director.
- (4) Pitch Counts for MHSA Baseball: Refer to the chart on the baseball section of the MHSA website at mhsa.org.
- (5) The Montana High School Association Executive Board shall establish the starting date for practice and the first allowable date when any contests may be played. No individual shall play in any Association BASEBALL contest until he has a minimum of eight (8) days of BASEBALL practice of at least one practice session per day on eight (8) different days (no practice permitted on Sunday), prior to the date of the first allowable game.

The initial eight (8) practices for each individual must be completed as a comprehensive, regularly scheduled team practice with the full coaching staff.

When determining what constitutes a MHSA practice that satisfies the language above in (5), the following criteria must be applied:

1. Practice must be at least one (1) hour long.
2. At least one full squad (varsity team/J.V. team/C squad) and their coaching staff must be present.
3. The athlete must participate in the entire practice.
4. Practice should include the majority of drills and conditioning that are the norm for that team or squad.
5. A practice the day of a game does not count (unless an athlete is practicing with another squad that does not have a game that day, i.e. a varsity team member who stays home and practices with the JV team that does not have a game that day).
6. Warm-ups or walk-throughs with the team prior to a game does not constitute a practice.

If a student begins their initial eight (8) days of required practices and that period of days is interrupted by sickness, injury, academic ineligibility or any other reason for a period of two weeks, then the student shall be required to practice an additional four (4) days and in cases of sickness or injury to produce a doctor's release.

Athletes participating on teams competing in MHSA post season play, which overlaps the beginning of the next MHSA sanctioned activity starting practice date, may be credited for practices during the overlap period toward meeting the minimum practice requirement of the overlapped activity season.

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 number of practices (equal to half the # of required practices for that sport or activity) at their new school.

- (6) Twenty-two (22) games with no more than three (3) games on one date will be the maximum for schools excluding Association sponsored tournaments.

INTERPRETATIONS

1. Any BASEBALL team that receives a forfeit may be allowed to schedule and play a make-up game but the team that gives the forfeit must count the forfeited game as one of the season's game limits for its school and that team will not be allowed to schedule another game in place of the forfeited game(s).
2. Definition of "squad" — An athletic squad is determined by union of "act and intent" by grouping together a number of students to play as a unit to represent the school, under the direction of a designated coach or coaches. A school must have at least fourteen (14) players participating to be able to schedule sub varsity games or play a sub varsity schedule. At least five (5) players must be designated as varsity only and cannot play in the sub varsity contest whether on the same or different day of the varsity contest.
3. Club team participation – During the MHSA baseball season, no more than four (4) rostered participants in a school's program can compete in an outside baseball event on the same team.

- (7) **Baden Perfection Pro 3B-PPRO Baseballs** shall be utilized at all MHSA sponsored BASEBALL tournaments and/or baseball play-in games.

- (8) Walk-up music may be played in the regular season by the home team only 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.

- (9) No school is required to take part in any contests or athletic events, but once entered, teams are obligated to participate in a contest or athletic event to its normal conclusion unless the contest is terminated by mutual consent of the school

officials involved due to unusual weather or game conditions, or situations which could be hazardous to participants or spectators. Any coach is prohibited from unilaterally refusing to play.

If a school fails to complete contests or athletic events that they have entered, the violating school would be subject to penalties as deemed appropriate and necessary by the Executive Director.

No school is required to take part in any game or tournament, but when once entered under the plan outlined, schools shall carry out their part of the program in fairness to all other schools represented. Any team taking part in season play is automatically entered in to the first tournament held in that district or in that division. That team shall not be allowed to withdraw from playing in such tournament without the specific approval of the Executive Director. The penalty for violation shall be as outlined under Penalties, Article VIII, Section (2).

- (10) American Legion teams and MHSA High School teams are not allowed to play each other.
- (11) The BASEBALL season officially closes with the end of the state tournament for the classification of the school concerned.
- (12) The MHSA prohibits any use and/or possession of tobacco, alcohol or other mood-altering drugs during competition. Violation will cause the coach or participant to be disqualified from further participation in that event.

II - STATE CHAMPIONSHIP PARTICIPATION AND PLAYOFF

- (1) Schools in each classification will be charged with the responsibility of drawing the conference schedules each season and for determining the number of conference games the schools must play to be eligible for tournament seeding. Tournament seeding will be determined by each classification.
- (2) The site(s) and manager(s) for the state tournament(s) will be determined by the MHSA Executive Board.
- (3) No all-state teams or players shall be picked or announced at the state tournament site by either the Executive Board or tournament officials. This applies to playoffs, divisional and state competition.
- (4) The game balls for the State Tournament shall be provided by the Montana High School Association.
- (5) First round games at state tournaments will have the team with the higher seed being designated as home team. A coin flip determines home team in all future rounds.
- (6) The state baseball tournament shall be single elimination with a consolation bracket format. Game times shall be established by the tournament manager.
- (7) State tournament games suspended because of weather and/or darkness will be resumed from the point of interruption.
- (8) State tournament games suspended because of weather and/or darkness after 4 1/2 - 5 innings of play will be resumed from the point of interruption and 7 innings completed unless the 10-run rule is reached.

III - ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

Teams and players recognized as eligible to participate in interscholastic BASEBALL in Montana under the rules of the Montana High School Association will be eligible to participate in the tournaments arranged. All schools are cautioned to carefully check over their list of potential players and make certain that each student whose name is submitted is fully qualified under the rules.

IV - TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANTS

No more than seventeen (17) players can be in uniform for any tournament game.

V - TOURNAMENT POLICING

- (1) The local tournament manager and/or committee must make arrangements for adequate policing at the field during the course of the tournament.
- (2) Special attention must be given to ensure that the game officials are afforded proper protection when leaving the field.
- (3) These rules apply for divisional and state tournaments.

VI - VIDEO TAPE AT BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS

The MHSA Executive Board has given the tournament manager the authority to grant or refuse permission for schools to use video tape at BASEBALL tournaments provided it is within the guidelines of the MHSA Handbook and National Federation rules.

VII - DETERMINATION OF TOURNAMENT SITES

- (1) The determination of sites, tournament managers and arrangements for state MHSA tournaments will be made by the Executive Board. This determination will be made at a meeting of the Board after interested member schools or communities have been given an opportunity to submit written invitations to host an Association tournament.

Tournament managers cannot be a coach or an official if that coach or official is participating in the tournament.

- (2) Following are some of the criteria which will be considered by the Board in making the determination of tournament sites: (1) Adequate field facilities; (2) Adequate community facilities for team and spectator housing and eating; (3) Reasonable assurance of financial success; (4) Definite invitation showing local community support; (5) Geographical rotation when feasible.
- (3) If the Board locates a tournament by a member school's request, an administrator of that school will normally be named tournament manager. If the tournament is located by a request from other than a member school, the Executive Director, a member of the MHSA staff or a member of the Executive Board will normally be named manager.
- (4) The concession rights for any tournament held in a non-member school facility shall be awarded by the MHSA Executive Board.

VIII - TOURNAMENT PROGRAMS, CONCESSIONS AND CORPORATE SPONSORS

- (1) The tournament program rights for all state tournaments will be the responsibility of the MHSA Executive Board.
- (2) The concession rights for any state tournament must be approved by the Executive Director. Concession rights include but are not limited to t-shirts, other apparel, photos, buttons etc.
- (3) At district and divisional events, concessions where goods and/or services are received would be at the approval of managers of events.
- (4) Corporate sponsorship of any post season event is the responsibility of the MHSA Executive Board and requires Board approval. Exceptions are: a) program advertisements and b) signage or announcements acknowledging the receipt of donated goods including food or beverages for the hospitality room, the use of tents at outdoor events, or the use of other equipment necessary for staging the event. Signage should be placed only in the appropriate areas; i.e. on the tents or in the hospitality room/area.

Established facility sponsorships are not affected provided that MHSA corporate sponsorship requirements are met.

IX - TOURNAMENT FINANCE PLAN

- (1) After each divisional or state tournament the tournament manager shall submit a financial report of the tournament to the Executive Director of the Montana High School Association within fifteen (15) days following the conclusion of the event.
- (2) The Executive Board wished to point out that the local community definitely profits from the tournaments in three ways: (a) All concessions of the tournaments are normally given to local organizations. (b) Local communities profit considerably through income at hotels, motels, restaurants and stores. (c) The local school is under no expense to send its team to the tournament.
- (3) The host school does not underwrite the expense of the tournament but is obligated to do its best to see to it that the gross receipts are such that allowable expenses are paid in full.

Allowable Tournament Expenses

Charges against the tournament will stand for payment in the following order:

- (1) Referees' fees and expenses.
- (2) The BASEBALLs for all state tournaments will be furnished by the MHSA office at no charge.
- (3) Normal administrative expenses. (Printing tickets, scorebook, advertising, signs, postage, telephone, clerical, scorer and timer.)
- (4) Use of facility charges (rental), shall include all charges, if any, for the following: extra field preparation/maintenance, utilities, ticket sales, ticket takers, police/security, entrance guards, ushers, parking attendants, first aid room and towel service.

Non-allowable Tournament Expenses

- (1) Proper policing of hotels.
- (2) Proper timing and scoring equipment.
- (3) Adequate dressing room and shower facilities.

Established Ticket Prices for the State Tournaments

The following ticket prices as established by the MHSA Executive Board will be used for all state tournaments.

	Adult	Student
General Admission (one day)	\$12.00	\$10.00
All-Session (three day)	\$28.00	\$21.00

X - SELECTION OF OFFICIALS

Refer to the MOA section for procedure for selection of officials to work the BASEBALL tournaments.

XI - POLICY FOR TOURNAMENT PASSES

The Association has established the following policy for tournament passes which shall be adhered to by all tournament managers.

- (1) For school administrators - Up to fourteen all-session tickets. If schools co-op the host school will receive the fourteen administrative tickets and the other school(s) in the co-op will each receive an additional four (4) administrative tickets. These complimentary tickets are for administrators, coaches, spouses, chaperones, bus drivers etc. who actually attend tournament.

- (2) For players — seventeen passes for players and two for managers — total of nineteen.
- (3) For spirit, bands and performing groups — they will be allowed free admission at playoff and state championship games when they play or perform.
- (4) For radio — three passes to each station given permission to broadcast the tournament or game. The game (games) must be broadcast in its (or their) entirety.
- (5) For media other than radio
 - a. Print news media - one pass for Associated Press and passes for working staff of local newspapers of teams in the tournament or newspapers in the marketing area of those teams. Members of the print media are required to show their Montana Newspaper Association press credentials when picking up their passes.
 - b. Television news media - passes for working staff of local stations of teams in the tournament or stations in the marketing area of those teams.
 - c. Commercial photography or broadcast - passes for working staff as contracted by the event manager or MHSA.
 - d. Passes will not be issued for spouses or children who attend the event with working members of the media.
- (6) For umpires — one pass to each umpire working the tournament.

These are the only complimentary passes that shall be allowed and others from non-participating schools must purchase tickets.

XII – CLASS AA BASEBALL PROGRAM

- (1) See www.mhsa.org for the detailed alignments for Class AA.
- (2) Standings for AA playoffs will be determined by the AA Conference Policy. Seeding to state will be as follows:

Western Conference

#1 and #2 receive byes (1st & 2nd seed at state)
 #3 West v. 6 West (at #3's site)
 #4 West v. 5 West (at #4's site)

Eastern Conference

#1 and #2 receive byes (1st & 2nd seed at state)
 #3 East v. 6 East (at #3's site)
 #4 East v. 5 East (at #4's site)

Each division's seeding will be as follows for advancement to the state tournaments:

Seeding for Eastern and Western Divisions

#1 – 1st place in the division
 #2 – 2nd place in the division
 #3 – Next highest remaining seed in the division
 #4 – Last remaining seed in the division

- (3) Class AA 2-game playoff. If the higher seed wins one game, they will advance to state. The lower seed must win both games to advance to state. The host team is the home team for game one and if a second game is needed, the visiting team will be the home team.

Pairings for the state tournament will be as follows:

Bracket I	2 nd place Eastern vs. 3 rd place Western 1 st place Western vs. 4 th place Eastern
Bracket II	2 nd place Western vs. 3 rd place Eastern 1 st place Eastern vs. 4 th place Western

***Brackets I and II shall alternate each year. Brackets shall be switched when the host city has an entry in the state tournament so the host city's team will play in the evening session. When the host city has two teams in the tournament and they are in opposite brackets, the brackets shall remain the same. If more than two host city teams are in the tournament, then the bracket with the most host city teams shall be played in the evening. The order of games within each bracket may not be switched for any reason.

- (4) The state tournament will be an eight-team single elimination with consolation bracket, three-day tournament.

XIII – CLASS A-B BASEBALL PROGRAM

- (1) See www.mhsa.org for the detailed alignments for Class A-B.
- (2) The BASEBALL Conferences will be charged with drawing up the conference schedules each season and determining the number of conference games each school must play to be eligible for state tournament seeding including the breaking of any ties in conference standings.
- (3) The #1 seed in each conference will receive an automatic bid to the state tournament. Play-in games will be played to determine the remaining teams using the following matchups:

#3 Central @ #2 East
#3 East @ #2 Central
#3 South @ #2 North
#3 North @ #2 South

Seeding for the Class A-B state tournament will be as follows:

2026-2027 (Subject to Change)

Bracket I	1 st East vs. Winner 2 nd South vs. 3 rd North 1 st Central vs. Winner 2 nd North vs. 3 rd South
Bracket II	1 st North vs. Winner 2 nd Central vs. 3 rd East 1 st South vs. Winner 2 nd East vs. 3 rd Central

***If the host school or a school from the host site city is the number one seed from their division, the state baseball bracket will be switched so that the host school/city school plays the last game of the day on the first day of the tournament. All matchups and future matchups will remain the same.

- (4) The state tournament will be an eight-team single elimination with consolation bracket, three-day tournament.