



THE OFFICIAL WORD

February 2026

A Publication of the Montana Officials' Association

631 N Last Chance Gulch Helena Montana 59601

Phone: (406) 442-6010 www.mhsa.org

Postseason tournaments in basketball are about to begin, and as always, this is an exciting time for officials, coaches, student-athletes, and fans. As participation and attendance increase, it is important to continue reinforcing expectations for positive sportsmanship at all high school events.

Crowd control remains the responsibility of school administrators—not game officials—and the MHSAs Ejection Rule is in place as an effective tool to address unruly behavior. Administrators are encouraged to proactively engage with challenging spectators by sitting near them, de-escalating concerns when possible, and issuing a clear warning that continued misconduct may result in removal and a three-game suspension. Officials are asked to alert administrators to any concerns involving spectators. Beginning next school year, the suspension period will increase to two weeks, as approved at the MHSAs Annual Meeting.

We appreciate your continued efforts to ensure that high school activities remain positive, respectful, and enjoyable for everyone involved. Thank you for the hard work you put into managing officiating throughout the regular season and especially during tournament time. We also encourage spectators to remember the message on our Stockman Bank-sponsored posters: Spectators – Conduct Counts! As always, fans are encouraged to Be Loud, Be Proud, and Be Positive, and to keep in mind our longtime reminder—“Without Officials, It’s Just Recess.”

We are pleased to share that the MHSAs has officially moved into our new office in Helena, located at 631 N. Last Chance Gulch. This new space enhances our ability to serve our member schools and better support all MHSAs programs and activities. Here is a link to a story that recently ran on a local station - [Link](#)

We invite you to stop by the next time you are in Helena. This is your space, and we hope you feel welcome to use it—whether for MOA meetings, collaboration with colleagues, or simply to connect while you are in town.

Also, we are excited to introduce the new MHSAs/MOA website, featuring a fresh, modern look designed to better serve our schools, communities, and fans. The updated platform is fully mobile-friendly, making it easier than ever to access information on the go. All basketball schedules and scores are now readily available in one convenient location in Arbitrator, allowing fans to stay connected throughout the season. We hope you enjoy the improved experience and the enhanced accessibility the new site provides.

Good luck during the coming postseason events, and if the MHSAs/MOA office can assist you in any way, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Brian Michelotti
MOA Commissioner

MHSAs Rules Interpreter – Interested Officials

The MHSAs/MOA values its strong collaborative relationship with our current rule’s interpreters. These individuals work closely with our state office sport liaisons and play a vital role in supporting our programs. Interpreters serve four-year terms. At the conclusion of each term, the MHSAs/MOA office has the option to renew the appointment.

As several terms are coming to an end, we are opening the interpreter positions in each sport to current individuals serving in the role (if they want to continue) and are also accepting applications from new, interested candidates.



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High school sports rules interpreters play a vital leadership role in supporting schools and officials while maintaining consistency across the state. Selected individuals act as a liaison between MHSAs/MOAs, officials, and coaches while ensuring accurate interpretation and application of rules and mechanics.

- Primary Responsibilities:
- Interpret and clarify sport-specific rules and mechanics
- Conduct preseason and in-season training sessions for officials
- Distribute weekly or periodic bulletins addressing rule changes, clarifications, and commonly misinterpreted scenarios
- Communicate effectively with the state office, officials, and coaches as needed

Strong communication skills, both written and verbal, are essential. Candidates must demonstrate a deep understanding of the selected sports' rules, commitment to the MHSAs, and the ability to provide clear, consistent guidance.

OPEN POSITIONS

If you are interested in becoming the next rule interpreter for your sport, we encourage you to reach out to Brian Michelotti at bmichelotti@mhsa.org.

MOA Regional Directors Election

Regions 5,7,9 and 10 have opened Regional Directors Positions. Submissions for any active official are due not later than Monday, April 13, 2026. Submission must include a letter of interest, and a personal biography sent to the MOA office at abartels@mhsa.org. Regional Directors will serve a 3-year term for the MOA.

May 1st - Ballots are sent only to the regions that have an open regional director position.

May 15th - Ballots are due to the MOA office via electronic ballot.

Electronic ballot information will be sent to regions with an open position. Only active MOA officials are eligible to vote and only one submission per active official is allowed.

Ejection Information:

New Online Ejection Form

The MHSAs/MOAs have an online form to submit all ejections (player, coach and spectator). Please use the following link.

[Ejection Report - Click Link](#)

When any official ejects a coach or player from a contest, this ejection must be reported in writing to the MOA office within 24- hours.

If a spectator must be ejected from the premises, the officials must first contact the contest administrator, and the administrator must remove the spectator from the premises.

[Ejection Policy Information - Click Here](#)

New Report of Unusual Situation

The MHSAs/MOAs have an online form for submission of all unusual situations.

[Report of Unusual Situation Form Click Here](#)

Both reports will be available on the MOA section under forms/links on the MHSAs webpage at [MOA - Forms and Links](#)

At this time the MOA Word and PDF forms may be used for the remainder of the 2025-26 season. Only the use of an electronic form will be accepted for the 2026-27 season.



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Upgrading:

All officials that are eligible to upgrade are required to turn in a Request to Upgrade form to the MOA office 7 days prior to the opening of the testing window.

Upgrading officials will not be eligible to test without submitting a Request to Test Form submitted by the deadline and approved by the MOA office. Forms are available on the MHSa website at [MOA Forms](#).

Emails to the MOA will not be an acceptable form to submit your upgrade request. An individual form must be submitted for each sport upgrade. Forms will be accepted at the end of each season for the following year only.

Hall of Fame

The selection of candidates will occur every year. Nomination forms are routed through the Regional Directors and are due in the MOA office by April 1st of each year. Nominees remain for a period of five years.

April 1st: Nominations due to the MOA office.

May 20th: Inductees are notified.

June 15th - July 1st: Inductees are announced to the media.

Postseason Tournament Officials

Follow the link below to access the MOA Tab/Archives for all MOA information archived including postseason tournament officials for all sports.

Postseason Officials - Click on the following link to access the MOA Archives. [MOA Archives - Click to View](#)

Officials Information Updates

Official information including name, address, email, phone, sports, and sport pool(s) must be updated. MOA information will be sent to your current information on your Arbiter account. The MHSa/MOA will not be responsible for late requirements due to inaccurate information on your Arbiter account.

Contest payments: Schools will access your information from your Arbiter account. Your address needs to be correct, or they may not be able to pay you in a timely manner.

W9 Forms: Schools that require a form to be filled out must have this completed by all officials before they will be paid any contest fees. If you have questions, contact the school as necessary for information on this process.

Do not create additional accounts due to the inability to access your Arbiter account. This may impact rating, years of service, delay testing and uploading requirements, or games assigned games.

Contact Arbiter to get help with any account issues:

For any help with Arbiter, you may always access the [Arbiter Help Articles - Click Here](#)

Technical Support - 800-311-4060

Email: Support@arbitersports.com

The MHSa/MOA office cannot access any Arbiter Pay information, please reach out directly to Arbiter.

Pool information

All officials must be a part of one pool for each sport. This must be updated in your Arbiter account. If you are not a part of a pool your pool leader/assignors will not be able to assign you in Arbiter.



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If a school pays an official through Arbiter, you will need to set up your Arbiter Pay account to access your contest fees. See the following link for help setting up your My Money account.

[Arbiter Pay Support – Click Here](#)

MOA - Officials Apparel

Please click the following link for all new MOA apparel selections.

<https://purchaseofficials.com/collections/montana>

Visit the MOA section of the MHSa website at www.mhsa.org for all MOA Information