

ACTIVITY NEWS

Montana High School Association · 631 N Last Chance Gulch, Helena, Montana 59601 · 406-442-6010 · www.mhsa.org

January 2026

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE HAVE MOVED

Please take note of our new address: 631 N. Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT, 59601. All other contact information remains the same.

NON-VOTING SCHOOLS LISTED – Volleyball Post Season

As requested by the MOA Regional Directors and approved by the MHS Executive Board, MHS and MOA publications will provide a list of schools which do not submit ballots for tournament officials.

The following schools did not submit a ballot by the deadline and received a fine:

- Brockton High School
- Frazer High School

Winter Sport Ballot Reminders: Wrestling and Basketball Ballots will be sent to schools January 12th, 2026 and due no later than January 21st, 2026. Schools that do not complete a ballot are subject to a \$100 fine for each ballot due.

WANTED - SUPER FANS IN YOUR AREA

The MHS/Stockman Bank Sportsmanship program is on the lookout for fans who have been long time supporters of your activity programs by positively supporting activity participants at your school.

These fans proudly represent their community at extracurricular activities. Each Super Fan will receive an attractive certificate and congratulatory letter to be presented by the school. If you would like to recommend a Super Fan from your area, please contact Ryan Richards at richards@mhsa.org at the MHS office for a nomination form. Don't miss this chance to recognize your communities' Super Fans.

TROPHIES AND AWARDS REMINDER

The following is information and guidelines provided in the MHS Handbook related to awards, specifically conference trophies.

1. Conference trophies are given in football only (they are considered district or divisional trophies).
2. In other sports, if a conference would like to award a trophy (first place only) for their conference champion it must be ordered through the MHS office and must be paid for by the conference. The MHS office staff does not automatically order conference trophies because some conferences do not choose to award them.
3. MHS will provide one trophy for each co-op team and schools can purchase additional trophies for the other schools(s) in the co-op. Also, if there is a co-op conference champion or if a conference has co-champions, the conference still needs to order those trophies through MHS and pay for both.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please select the SCHOOLS tab on the MHS homepage (www.mhsa.org) for important directory updates. Please notify the MHS with any changes to your information, as well as update your information in Arbiter at <https://arbiter.io/>. Also, please call or email Jenise Cockhill (jcockhill@mhsa.org) with any questions regarding the Directory.

ANNUAL MEETING

ANNUAL MEETING PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED

The 2026 Annual Meeting proposals were initially sent to schools in December, along with other materials.

A current copy of the proposals is available on the MHS website at www.mhsa.org and [linked here](#). If you have questions or if you need additional information, please feel free to contact the MHS office.

MHS EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The term of one MHS Executive Board member will expire in the coming year.

John Fitzgerald, Red Lodge Public Schools Superintendent has served as the Class B representative for the past four years and will complete the term of service for which he was elected.

The resulting vacancies will be addressed as follows:

There will be an election of new board member for the Class B representative.

Class B Representative

Dustin Gordon Fairfield, Superintendent has been nominated for the Montana High School Association Board of Directors as the Class B Representative. A veteran educator with 30 years of service, Gordon has spent the last 20 years in the Fairfield School District, beginning his tenure as a high school mathematics teacher before advancing to the role of high school principal for over a decade. Dustin is currently in his 6th year as Superintendent of Schools at Fairfield. Prior to assuming district leadership, Gordon coached multiple athletic programs over a 30-year coaching career, primarily in basketball. His successful commitment to student-athletes in Montana athletics is reflected in his induction into the Montana Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

BASKETBALL

AWARENESS EVENTS

The MHS office will permit a school to modify the basketball uniform/apparel from the NFHS Basketball Rules for one (1) week during the regular basketball season to be designated for charitable awareness events, such as Breast Cancer Awareness week. This interpretation will be applied to all sports. The school must request permission from the MHS to conduct these events.

BASKETBALL OFFICIALS BALLOTS

The MHS/MOA reminds basketball coaches to vote for postseason basketball officials. The ballots will be sent on January 12th. Ballots must be received in the MHS office no later than Wednesday, January 21st. Schools will be fined \$100 for each unreturned ballot (separate ballots are required for boys' and girls' teams).

ACTIVITY NEWS

Montana High School Association · 631 N Last Chance Gulch, Helena, Montana 59601 · 406-442-6010 · www.mhsa.org

January 2026

The MOA office staff will tabulate tournament ballots and will contact officials selected for divisional and state tournaments. MOA Regional Directors will assign officials to district tournaments using results from coaches' voting and pool leader input.

WRESTLING

WRESTLING COACH REGISTRATION FOR FLOOR ACCESS AT STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENTS

Again this year, schools will register their certified coaches (coaches who are recognized by the school, have completed the MHSAs annual rules clinic, the NFHS Concussion Course and the NFHS Fundamentals of Coach Education Program) that will represent their school at the state wrestling tournament. In an effort to make the wrestling area less congested and to afford a better environment for those participating, the MHSAs will print wrist bands with the coaches' names and schools, which will allow these individuals access to the floor. The electronic registration link will be emailed to school administrators the week of January 12th.

We will be enforcing NFHS rules and will allow schools to have a maximum of two individuals in the corner (on chairs at the edge of the mat). NFHS Rule 2-2-2 states:

"During tournament competition, a maximum of two team personnel (coaches and/or non-participating contestants) will be permitted on chairs at the edge of the mat. It is permissible to allow coaches on the corner of the mat in a restricted zone. In tournaments where coaches are permitted on the corner of the mat, the restricted zone shall be defined by either a contrasting line marked on the mat with paint or tape or a contrasting-colored surface under the chairs."

WRESTLING REMINDER

Reminder, a new growth allowance has been added to the [MHSAs Handbook](#). A two-pound growth allowance has been added on January 1st. There is not an additional growth allowance in February. If you have any questions on the application of this rule change, please contact the MHSAs office.

DIVISIONAL/SEEDING WRESTLING TOURNAMENTS

Each divisional/seeding tournament in Class AA, A, and B/C will have a boys division and a girls division. Boys will qualify per each classification's guidelines. Girls will qualify using an equitable distribution of qualifiers (EDQ) which will be determined before the start of each divisional tournament. All divisional/seeding tournament guidelines are in the wrestling section of the MHSAs Handbook on pages 112 - 113.

STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT ADMINISTRATIVE HELP

Once again, the MHSAs is requesting administrative help as a mat monitor on the tournament floor at the state wrestling tournament. The purpose for this request is to help with congestion around the wrestling mats and score tables. This was implemented last year and was very successful with keeping those areas clear. Please contact Scott Wilson swilson@mhsa.org or Mark Sulser sulserm@billingschools.org if you would like to be a mat monitor for this year's state tournament.

STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

The State All Class Wrestling Tournament will be at MetraPark in Billings on February 19-21, 2026. The boys' and girls' tournament will run together Thursday through Saturday.

The updated schedule for the tournament will be posted on the wrestling page of the MHSAs website and will be sent to coaches and administrators prior to the state tournament.

SWIMMING

The State Swimming Meet will be held at Great Falls High School on February 12-14, 2026.

The schedule will be posted on the swimming page of the MHSAs website and appropriate state meet information will be sent to schools prior to the state event.

SPIRIT

Did you know that spirit coaches and school administrators have a legal duty and/or responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of their cheerleaders?

- Be sure that the selected environment for practice and spirit activities is appropriate to the number of participants, the type and/or level of anticipated activities and the required supervisory demands.
- Areas for cheerleading participation should be separated from other concurrent activities and should be an appropriate space to conduct cheerleading skills safely.
- Ceiling clearance (including light fixtures, air ducts, pipes, etc.) should be sufficiently high to preclude any possibility of physical contact during participation.
- Consideration of practice/performance surfaces are a vital component of risk minimization. The NFHS Spirit Rules book lists specific surface area requirements for tumbling and stunts. Keep in consideration also that stunts and tumbling must be modified to be appropriate for the surface and/or area and in relation to other participants.

Reminder: Coaching Certifications

Coaching certificates must be up-to-date and turned in to administrators.

Certifications will include:

- NFHS Concussion in Sport - 1 year certification
- NFHS Cheer and Dance Safety - 4 year certification
- MHSAs Spirit Rules Clinic - 1 year certification

MHSAs Spirit contact Amy Bartels at abartels@mhsa.org.

SPEECH AND DRAMA

SPEECH AND DRAMA SEASON COMING TO A CLOSE

Schools participating in speech and drama will finalize their seasons in January. The sites for state tournaments are as follows:

Class AA – Glacier High School
Abby Snipes Tournament Managers

ACTIVITY NEWS

Montana High School Association · 631 N Last Chance Gulch, Helena, Montana 59601 · 406-442-6010 · www.mhsa.org

January 2026

Class A – Corvallis High School
Tyson Tucker and Doug McConnaha -Tournament Managers

Class B/C - Broadwater High School
John O'Dell and Denise Bakkum -Tournament Managers

Dates for state tournaments are January 30 - 31, 2026. If you need additional information about these events, please feel free to contact the MHSA office at 406-442-6010, visit www.mhsa.org, or contact the specific tournament managers.

Staff Members

Brian Michelotti, Executive Director
Kip Ryan, Senior Associate Director
Scott Wilson, Associate Director
Amy Bartels, Assistant Director
Greta Buehler, Assistant Director
Jenise Cockhill, Business Manager
Ryan Richards, Corporate Sponsorships



Executive Board Members

John Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Red Lodge School (President)
Aric Harris, Activities Director, Whitefish School (Vice President)
Joe McElroy, State Superintendent's Appointee, Missoula
Dan Mills, Principal, Bozeman High School
Kara Triplett, Superintendent, Lambert School
Krystal Zentner, MTSBA Appointee, Bridger
Jimmy Patelis, Governor's Appointee, Billings
Dee Pretty on Top, American Indian Representative, Lodge Grass

MHSA thanks all the following corporate sponsors for their steadfast support of Montana's activities!



BlueCross BlueShield
of Montana



NorthWestern
Energy

