

Adoption of Interscholastic Programs Process

An activity or sport that is requested by a group of member schools to become a fully-governed interscholastic program must follow the defined steps to reach fully-governed, interscholastic status. This process begins with a request by member schools who submit a valid request to the Board of Directors to have a competitive program become an emerging activity/sport initially, then, upon meeting the required number of participating teams, it will be considered by the Representative Assembly for approval. This process is as follows:

Step 1: Emerging Status Application

To apply for Emerging Status, an activity/sport must:

- Have the support of the current governing body to progress toward a fully-governed, interscholastic MSHSL activity/sport.
- Have a minimum of 20 school-based teams (no more than one per member high school or co-op) competing for two consecutive years prior to the application. The application must be accompanied by completed commitment forms for a minimum of 20 teams indicating their commitment to register for the activity/sport with the MSHSL should Emerging Status be granted.
- Upon receipt of the Emerging Status application, the Board of Directors will review all information provided, including data demonstrating that all benchmarks have been met and the activity/sport is in alignment with the Constitution, Mission and Beliefs of the MSHSL and make a determination as to whether or not the activity/sport would be approved.

Step 2: Emerging Status

An activity/sport must remain in Emerging Status, as defined in the *Emerging Status Definition*, for a minimum of two years, or as otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, and may remain in Emerging Status for a maximum of five years. After five years, if an activity/sport has not had a minimum of 32 MSHSL registered and competing teams for two consecutive years, the activity/sport shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors. The Board will determine if the activity/sport will continue in Emerging Status for a Board-defined period of time or if it will be required to re-apply for Emerging Status when it meets the required benchmarks for an Emerging Status Application. During the time that an activity/sport is in Emerging Status, the Board of Directors shall have the authority to review and suspend Emerging Status as it deems appropriate.

Step 3: Full MSHSL Status

An emerging activity/sport becomes eligible for fully-governed interscholastic status when the activity/sport has 32 or more MSHSL registered teams from member schools for the second consecutive year. Upon reaching this benchmark, the Board of Directors will certify the activity/sport has met the requirements and forward the proposal to the Representative Assembly for approval as a fully-governed interscholastic activity/sport with a defined timeline of implementation.

Emerging Status Definition

Emerging Status has been created by the MSHSL Board of Directors for new activities/sports that align with the mission and beliefs of the MSHSL and that member schools seek to have approved for fully-governed, interscholastic status. Emerging Status is provided only to activities/sports that meet all the requirements within this definition and are formally requested by member schools to become fully-governed, interscholastic activities/sports and abide by all applicable MSHSL rules, policies and bylaws.

Emerging Status for an activity/sport is determined when the activity/sport has:

- a completed application submitted by a minimum of five member schools,
- met established benchmarks and
- been approved by the Board of Directors.

When an activity/sport has reached Emerging Status, each member school that participates in that activity/sport in Emerging Status must:

1. Register and pay membership dues with the MSHSL for the activity/sport.
2. Follow the rules, policies, and bylaws of the MSHSL including but not limited to:
 - a. student eligibility,
 - b. student registration, pre-participation physicals, etc.,
 - c. coaches' education requirements and head coach certification,
 - d. eligible officials (where applicable).
 - e. cooperative agreements and
 - f. allow only one program per school.
3. Follow established playing rules (NFHS or other governing body).

When an activity/sport has reached Emerging Status, the MSHSL will provide the following:

1. rules meetings and rule books (where available),
2. League staff liaison,
3. catastrophic medical accident and concussion insurance,
4. information on the emerging activity/sport on the League website and
5. an advisory committee inclusive of coaches and activities directors.

Other rules that apply to Emerging Status include:

1. Postseason competition is the responsibility of the existing governing body and only MSHSL registered teams will be eligible for participation in the postseason.
2. Emerging activities/sports are offered the opportunity to have registered member school teams compete against non-registered school-based teams during the regular season. This opportunity only exists when the non-registered school-based team has obtained insurance for its team.
3. The schedule of regular season contests will be determined by the member schools and/or the existing governing body.

Emerging Status has the following requirements and process:

1. Application - An activity/sport must have 20 or more teams (maximum of one per school or co-op) competing for two consecutive years to be considered for Emerging Status, must be

governed by a governing body or organization and be requesting fully-governed, interscholastic status.

2. Emerging Status Timeline - Once Emerging Status has been approved, an activity/sport must remain in Emerging Status for a minimum of two years or as determined by the MSHSL Board of Directors. The maximum length of time that an activity/sport may remain in Emerging Status is five years or as determined by the Board of Directors.
3. Fully-Governed Interscholastic Status Requirements - An activity/sport must have 32 or more MSHSL registered teams (maximum of one per school or co-op) competing for two consecutive years to be recommended for fully-governed, interscholastic status to the Representative Assembly. When this benchmark has been reached and at the request of the participating member schools, the Board will review and recommend to the Representative Assembly the approval of the activity/sport for fully-governed, interscholastic status.
4. Emerging Status Reconsideration - Should an emerging activity/sport not reach the requirement of 32 or more teams for two consecutive years within five years of attaining emerging status, the activity/sport will be reconsidered by the Board of Directors to determine if Emerging Status will be dropped or continued for a determined amount of time.

Emerging Status Activity Application

*Required areas of the application

1. *Activity/Sport applying for MSHSL Emerging Status:
2. *Authors of the application and their school affiliation (Note: authors must represent five or more MSHSL member schools and be submitted by administrators or designated board representatives):
3. *Current governing body for the activity/sport:
 - a. Required: Attach a letter of commitment from the governing body requesting fully-governed, interscholastic status and agreement to cede full sanction and governance of the MSHSL activity/sport of the regular season and postseason to the MSHSL at the time of approval by the Representative Assembly.
 - i. Note: Should a governing body not be willing to cede full sanction and governance of an activity, the MSHSL may consider becoming a presenting sponsor for a state tournament if the governing body agrees.
4. *Current playing or performance rules established by NFHS, established governing body, national entity, etc.:
 - a. Required: Provide a current copy of the playing rules or performance rules.
5. *Provide 20 completed commitment forms from member schools that indicate the intent to register with the MSHSL in this activity/sport when Emerging Status is granted. The commitment form must be completed by the superintendent, president or authorized designee. (The five or more authors may be a part of this group of 20).
6. *Provide a statement as to how this activity aligns with the mission and belief statements of the MSHSL and complements the activities/sports that are currently included in the Minnesota State High School League.
7. Provide the following information for the most recent two years or more of the activity:
 - a. number of programs (one per member high school or one per co-op of member schools) who are or have participated in the existing activity/sport,
 - b. number of member schools that currently have students participating on one of the teams,
 - c. number of total participants in the activity/sport within the schools that have programs, and
 - d. number of Administrative Regions (out of 16) with teams competing in the activity/sport.
8. Provide additional supporting data and information, as available, that further demonstrates the involvement and growth of the activity/sport. Information may include, but is not limited to:
 - connection to the educational program (curricular, facilities, etc.),
 - health and safety information regarding participation in the activity/sport where data exists,

- data that indicates diverse populations who are participating in the activity/sport,
- historical data that supports growth and stability with the number of participating teams/schools,
- financial impact of the addition of the activity/sport (include anticipated expenses and revenues),
- youth participation numbers within the state at levels below high school,
- post-secondary opportunities in this activity/sport and
- participation data from other states (primarily states contiguous with Minnesota).