



**MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
2020 ANNUAL MEETING**

**Monday, January 20, 2020
Billings Hotel & Convention Center
Billings, Montana**

PROPOSALS

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1. PROPOSAL TO AMEND ELIGIBILITY BY-LAW

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to By-Law, Article II, Section (2) Eligibility on page 10 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (2) ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate in an Association Contest, a student shall meet all the following criteria:

2.1 A student must be enrolled in twenty hours per week and in regular attendance in ten hours per week at the school where the student participates. Regular attendance is defined as actual physical presence in the building (bricks and mortar). ***Exception: A student who is enrolled and participating in a transformational learning program in their school that meets a district's proficiency-based learning requirements pursuant to the adopted policies of the local school board is exempt from the ten hours per week bricks and mortar requirement.*** A home school student is not eligible to participate for an MHSA member school. **Recommendation is to support this proposal. Currently, we would utilize the SBAC and/or ACT assessment scores to meet the "proficiency-based learning requirement".**

Rationale:

With the recently passed law regarding transformational learning, MHSA eligibility rules need to be updated to assure member schools are not violating any provisions of the law. This amendment to Section 2 clarifies students under a bona fide transformational learning program do not have to meet the ten hours per week bricks and mortar requirement.

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2.2 ***A home school student is eligible to participate for a member school if:***

- a. Their family lives in the attendance area of the school they participate.***
- b. The home school student has registered with the County Superintendent of Schools***
- c. The home school student's curriculum and grade placement are approved by the local school district.***
- d. The home school student meets the MHSA eligibility requirements of age, semester, physical exam, concussion education and any other relevant eligibility requirement.***

2.3 A student must have received a passing grade and received credit in at least twenty periods of prepared class work or its equivalent in the last previous semester, at the school where the student participates; except that any ninth grade student enrolled and attending any junior high, in the same school system as the senior high school, may be eligible to participate on that senior high school's athletic teams. If the school prohibits participation by ninth grade students, this action by the local

school will not be subject to review by the MHSA or its Executive Board. **Exception: students under section 2.2 are exempt from this section.**

- 2.4 A student must have received a passing grade and received credit in at least twenty periods of prepared work per week or its equivalent during the last preceding semester in which he/she was enrolled. **Exception: students under section 2.2 are exempt from this section**

Rationale:

During the recent legislative session, Senate Bill 8 was passed in both houses by wide majorities. Senate Bill 8 provided ANB funding for schools who had outside students (home school) students participating in their activity programs for three weeks or more. Senate Bill 8 was vetoed by the Governor however the sponsor and other legislators stated that the purpose of this Bill was to make it clear the MHSA needed to examine their rules regarding allowing home school participation at MHSA schools. These amendments would allow home school participation however with very specific requirements including residency in the school attendance area, all curriculum and grade placement to be approved by local school policy and the student must meet all other MHSA eligibility requirements including age, semester etc. The Executive Board wants to be proactive regarding this issue and require criteria for those home school students who would participate instead of having legislation being passed that may not have the same restrictions. **Recommendation to vote AGAINST [NO] this proposal. There are far too many issues with Home School students and accountability.**

Fiscal Note:

There could be ANB provided if a bill similar to Senate Bill 8 is passed and signed into law during a future legislative session.

3. PROPOSAL TO AMEND EIGHTH GRADE PARTICIPATION/ACADEMIC/TRANSFER BY-LAWS

Arlee High Schools proposes the following amendments to By-Laws, Article II, Section (5) Students Below Ninth Grade on page 11 and to Section (10) Transfer Rule on page 12 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (5) STUDENTS BELOW NINTH GRADE

- 5.1 Any student in the Eighth Grade shall be eligible to participate in an Association Contest as noted.
- a. Eighth grade students may participate in high school volleyball, basketball, wrestling, track, cross country, swimming, soccer, tennis, softball and golf.
Eighth grade students are not eligible to participate in football.
 - b. Permission for eighth grade participation is determined by local control of respective boards in the school district. However, record of transfer forms for new eighth grade students enrolled from other districts must be filed, including a proof of residency, in the attendance area of the school where he/she will participate.
 - c. Any eighth student must be passing in twenty periods of prepared classwork or its equivalent during the last preceding semester in which he/she was enrolled.
 - d. Any eighth-grade student allowed to participate will have eight semesters of high school eligibility remaining.
 - e. All other eligibility rules required of students Grades 9-12 will apply to Eighth Grade Students including but not limited to:
 1. Physical Exam
 2. Concussion Education
 3. Transfer Rule
 4. Award and Amateur Rules
 5. And any other relevant MHSA by-laws/rules and regulation

Section (10) TRANSFER RULE

- 10.1 Any student (**including eighth grade students allowed high school participation**) who transfers from one member high school, home school, or non-member school to a member high school is ineligible to participate in a varsity Association Contest for half the number of P.I. days in the current school year of the school to which he/she transfers from the date of enrollment (first day he/she attends classes) in the school to which he/she transfers. A student and his/her parents or legal guardians must reside in the attendance area of the school in which he/she is enrolled except for a student enrolling in ninth grade for the first time **unless that student has been previously approved for high school participation** (see Section (12) Record of Transfer.) This rule applies to a student who transfers after twenty (20) days of enrollment or after he/she participates in an athletic contest while enrolled in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, **EXCEPT** the following students may be declared eligible:

Rationale:

- With declining enrollments across the state smaller schools are having to co-op or use eighth grade students to field teams. Presently schools can only use eighth graders for basketball, volleyball and for track relay teams and only if they have need to fill a J.V. and/or Varsity roster.
- The MHSA now has over 200 co-op teams – up from about 140 six years ago.
- The MHSA has approved the following number of eighth grade students to participate in high school basketball and volleyball (very few were for track relay teams) over the past four years: 2013-14 – **193**, 2014-15 – **194**, 2015-2016 – **195**, 2016-2017- **225** 2017-2018 – **224** and **2018-19– 319 approved. Recommendation is to support this proposal; it currently does not affect our school, but could be an issue in future years, especially if we encounter declining enrollments or declining student participation levels.**

Fiscal Note:

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

4. PROPOSAL TO AMEND AWARD RULE BY-LAW

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to By-Law, Article II, Section (15) Award Rule on page 14 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (15) AWARD RULE

- 15.1 No award exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00) in value shall be given per event in any MHSA sanctioned sport or in any MHSA sanctioned interscholastic activity by a member school, by any person or by an organization to a student in recognition of that student's achievement or participation in any interscholastic activity. An event is defined as a sports camp, an invitational tournament/meet, a post season recognition function (i.e. sports banquet), or a fund raiser or similar function. Special awareness functions (i.e. pink week) are included as defined events with the following limitation: merchandise retained by students in conjunction with awareness events is restricted to disposable items such as basic t-shirts, socks, headbands/wristbands and similar items. Cash cannot be awarded. A single Association Contest is not considered an "event" for the purpose of this rule.

INTERPRETATION

1. Schools may provide training apparel for practice and/or workouts that will be fully depreciated and have no intrinsic value at the end of the season. These items may be provided by the school and/or its boosters, including general or team fundraisers, provided that the items are school-approved and are supplied on a gender-equitable basis. Allowable items are limited to one of each of the following: practice shirt, practice shorts, spandex, tights and a pair of socks.

2. The acceptance of awards and/or prizes in non-sanctioned sports or activities shall not endanger member schools' students' eligibility.

3. Schools may provide warm up shirts (e.g. shooting shirts) to be worn on the field or court before a contest that may or may not have individual names printed on them. They can also display the school name/mascot, but no corporate sponsors names/logos are allowed. These items may be provided by the school and/or its boosters, including general or team fundraisers, provided that the items are school-approved and are supplied on a gender-equitable basis.

Rationale:

It has come to the attention of the MHSA office that many schools are allowing warm-up shirts (e.g. shooting shirts) to be worn on the court / field before games and may be in violation of the Awards Rule and in violation of the Ridgeway Decision. This interpretation would allow warm up shirts to be purchased, by the school or boosters, and worn on the court if they are school approved, meet the listed requirements and are supplied on a gender-equitable basis. **Recommendation is to support this proposal, as our school has used this practice in prior years. We remain equitable for both boys and girls sports.**

5. PROPOSAL TO ADD CO-OP TROPHY LANGUAGE

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to Awards, General Rules for Awards, on page 41 of the current MHSA Handbook:

GENERAL RULES FOR AWARDS

- (4) All trophies or awards authorized by the MHSA, except basketball, wrestling, volleyball, and Class AA soccer conference championship trophies, will be ordered and paid for by the MHSA.

New # (5) MHSA will provide one trophy for each co-op team and schools can purchase additional trophies for the other school(s) in the co-op.

Renumber remaining sections.

Rationale:

The number of MHSA co-op teams have increased greatly over the past several years, from 140 a few years ago to over 200 presently. The cost of trophies has also increased and with two team and now many three team co-ops the amount paid by the MHSA exceeds the generous NWE yearly contribution for trophy and award purchases. The cost of extra co-op trophies far exceeds the amount of dues each school pays for a sport per year and those dues are to assist with the operating expenses of the MHSA. **Recommendation is to support this proposal. Our annual dues could increase if this proposal fails, as MHSA would definitely pass those additional costs on to member schools. RBHS does NOT co-op any sports and we would be paying for those 140 other schools in co-ops.**

Fiscal Note:

Cost of the additional trophy/trophies for additional schools in a co-op.

6. PROPOSAL TO AMEND SEMI-FINAL TROPHIES FOR FOOTBALL AND SOCCER

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to Awards, Authorized Awards for MHSA Activities, Athletic Awards on pages 42-43 of the current MHSA Handbook:

ATHLETIC AWARDS

III. Football

G. State Semi-Finalist (~~Mailed to the school~~)

- ~~1. Team - A trophy will be awarded to each semifinalist that fails to qualify for the state championship game.~~
- ~~2. Individual - No individual awards are to be presented.~~

V. Soccer

B. State Semi-Finalist ~~(Mailed to the school)~~

- ~~1. Team - A trophy will be awarded to each semifinalist that fails to qualify for the state championship game.~~
- ~~2. Individual - No individual awards are to be presented.~~

Rationale:

Providing two trophies to the teams that lose the semi-final game hasn't been too well received by the teams that lose this game. The trophy lists them as semi-finalists however schools have expressed displeasure with what they view as a participant trophy with little meaning. **Recommendation is to support this proposal. Based on the rationale above, it has not been well received.**

Fiscal Note:

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

7. PROPOSAL TO AMEND GOLF COACHING RULE

Hamilton High School proposes a change to the golf coaching rule in the General Rules and Regulations for Golf subsection (14) on page 71 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (14) COACHING

- (14) **Coaching** – Each school may have up to two certified coaches on the course at the same time to give advice to participants representing that school each day of the competition from green to tee provided that:
- a. The coaches must have been approved by their local school district administration, have passed the MHSA Coaches Education Requirements, have completed the MHSA Golf Rules Clinic for the current season and have been a bona fide member of the coaching staff during the entire season.
 - b. The coaches are identified by tournament management before the start of the competition each day with credentials / access passes displayed on a lanyard which must be worn and visible at all times.
 - c. The coaches shall not give advice to, or ask for advice from, another school's participants;
 - ~~d. The advice shall not be given during the playing of a hole but rather from the time all of the participants hole out on a hole until one of the players is ready to tee off on the next hole (or during a suspension of play);~~
 - d. Allow authorized coaches to coach a player up until the player and the player's ball are on the green. If any part of the player's ball is on the actual green, the ball is considered on the green. Once the player arrives at the green (no delay by the player) the coach can have no more communication with competing player(s) until all players in the group have holed out. When providing advice—a coach must not enter a bunker. Coaches are not to assist or instruct a player regarding any putting on the green. If no part of the player's ball is on the actual green, coach instruction is permitted. Coaches must understand that there is to be no delaying of play when providing instruction during the prescribed coaching time. The coach must understand this is additional time to coach**

- player(s), but when visiting with players the pace of play shall not be delayed.
- e. The advice shall be given in a private manner and does not unduly delay play.
- f. Motorized carts will be allowed for coaches if the golf course allows.

Rationale:

Allowing golf coaches to coach from tee to green will help with the overall quality of the game. The rule change will also give the coaches the ability to help monitor spectators, as well as, give them the ability to address speed of play to players who have fallen behind the group in front of them. **Recommendation is to support the proposal. RBHS currently does not have golf, but has offered the sport in the past.**

Fiscal Note:

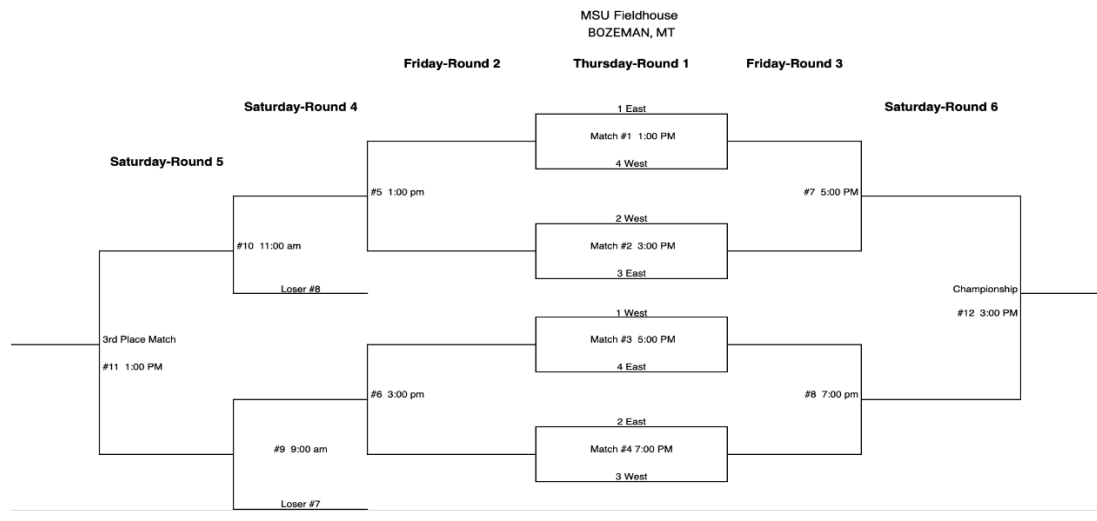
There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

8. PROPOSAL TO CHANGE STATE VOLLEYBALL BRACKET – ALL CLASSES

Glacier High School proposes a change to the state volleyball bracket in the General Rules and Regulations for Volleyball subsection (7) on pages 98-99 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (7) TOURNAMENT BRACKETING

Proposed Volleyball Bracket and Times for State



Rationale:

1. The proposed format would create a TRUE championship match; 2 rested, healthy teams facing each other for the first time in the tournament, ready to battle. It's what our current Friday night at 6:00 pm match has become. Instead of one team resting and watching while the other team battles early Saturday morning for a chance to play in the championship, with little to no break between matches.
2. The vast majority of state volleyball champions in all classifications have been the team that has won their first 3 games. Since 1998 there have been 5 AA *if necessary*, matches; in 1 out of those 5 matches, the winner from Friday night's semi-final match lost the first championship game and came back to win the *if necessary* game.

3. Since 1998 the "AA" team that won Friday's night match won the championship match 17 times.
4. The proposed format would create two semifinal contests that allow additional fans to support their team.
5. The proposed format allows greater travel time and planning for fans to travel to a state championship game that may not attend.
6. 4 well-rested teams in the 2 semifinals will result in a better level of play versus the one "undefeated" semifinal.
7. 6 teams still in play on Saturday. This will allow for better potential support for 3rd place and championship matches.
8. With the proposed bracket, teams win 3rd place, not lose and end up 3rd.
9. The proposed bracket is better for the overall health of student athletes. The idea of 3 matches on Friday and right back up Saturday AM has never been conducive to a high level of play.
10. Under the current bracket, it will take 3 great days to win a title. Right now, a team needs two great days to win the tournament. A team could also win a trophy with one good day at the tournament.
11. With the proposed bracket, all championships are decided at the same time. Right now, if there is an "if necessary" game, the field house is often mostly empty, and some courts being disassembled. **Recommendation is to support the proposal.**

Fiscal Note:

There is no fiscal impact to the Membership.

9. PROPOSAL TO ADD GIRLS' WRESTLING AS A MHSA SANCTIONED SPORT

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to By-Law, Article I, Section (2) Dues on page 7 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (2) DUES

Add Girls' Wrestling to the list of sanctioned sports offered by MHSA.

Rationale:

The MHSA membership voted to form a committee to study the addition of girls' wrestling as an MHSA sanctioned MHSA sport. The committee's recommendation is to add girls' wrestling as an MHSA sanctioned sport. Their recommendation included the logistics for the season, weight classes, weigh-ins, regular season and post season competition etc. Those recommendations were sent to each school in early December. The committee also recommended adding a boy's sport because of the equal number of sports required to be offered by each school pending review by MHSA legal counsel on current interpretations of the Ridgeway Decision. The committee evaluated various sports and recommended boys' powerlifting as it would be easy to administer and cost effective. **Recommendation is to support the proposal. RBHS will look to add wrestling as a sanctioned event within the next 1-2 years. We currently allow girls to participate in football and this may be another avenue/opportunity for interested girls to participate in an MHSA sanctioned sport.**

Fiscal Note:

The additional cost of administering the program if offered (coach – if not the same for boys), travel, etc.

10. PROPOSAL TO ADD BOYS' POWERLIFTING AS A MHSA SANCTIONED SPORT

The MHSA Executive Board proposes the following amendment to By-Law, Article I, Section (2) Dues on page 7 of the current MHSA Handbook:

Section (2) DUES

A. Add Boys' Powerlifting to the list of sanctioned sports offered by MHSA.

Rationale:

With the possibility the membership would approve the addition of girls' wrestling as a sport, the Ad-hoc committee wanted to provide an option to add a boy's sport if the current interpretation of Ridgeway continued requiring schools to offer an equal number of girls and boys sports. The committee realized that many larger schools already offer all MHSA sanctioned sports and may not be able to offer girls wrestling, if approved. The committee reviewed various boy's sport offerings and because it would be easy to administer and cost effective to implement, the committee recommended the Board add boys' powerlifting.

The Executive Board also realizes that the normal process of approving a committee to study adding an activity during an Annual Meeting and then voting on their recommendation during the next Annual Meeting was not followed in this case, however, the Board's concern is that a boys sport, if even approved, would take another three years to add through this process. This option gives the schools the opportunity to decide if they want to add the boys' sport now or wait and go through the normal process. Unless the interpretation of Ridgeway is modified, and if the current interpretation of equal number of girls' and boys' sports continues, schools would have to ensure proportionality is met when adding girls wrestling (if approved) or have the capability to add another currently MHSA sanctioned boys' sport offering.

Recommendation is to support the proposal. If Proposal #9 [girls wrestling] fails; this would be a moot point and could be withdrawn because it would not be necessary to remain in compliance with the Ridgeway Settlement. If Proposal #9 passes, this may be another avenue/opportunity for interested boys to participate in an MHSA sanctioned sport.

Fiscal Note:

The additional cost of a coach stipend, and possible travel costs to a few regionalized regular season competitions and to a state meet (if participants meet qualifying standards). Most schools would have the equipment / facilities to sponsor this sport.