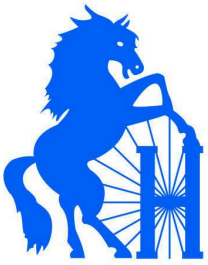
MHSA CLASS 'A' HANDBOOK 2024-2025



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
CLASS 'A' CONFERENCE
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revised August 2nd , 2024

MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
CLASS 'A' CONFERENCE
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MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
CLASS 'A' CONFERENCE
ADVISORY COMMITTEES

ACTIVITY	Chairperson 24-25			
Baseball	Travis Blome Hamilton	Shaun Murgel East Helena	Aric Harris Whitefish	Chris Lee Sidney
Basketball	Mike Erickson Lockwood	Nik Rewerts Libby	Paul Bartos Fergus	Travis Blome Hamilton
Cross Country	Dani Smith Stevi	Travis Krieger Hardin	 Browning	Kyle Pryor Custer County
Football	Mike Ryan Billings Central	Aric Harris Whitefish	Vinson Gundlach Custer County	Brock Myllymaki Dillon
Golf	Aschan Richards Ronan	Chris Lee Sidney	Chad Petersen Butte Central	Andrew Torgerson Laurel
Soccer	Nolan Trafton Billings Central	Tyson Tucker Corvallis	Scott Rosberg Park	Eli Field Frenchtown
Softball	Mike Erickson Lockwood	Eli Field Frenchtown	Chris Lee Sidney	Nik Rewerts Libby
Swimming	Jim Hawbaker Billings Central	Matt P Big Fork	Mark Irvin Havre	Sean Dellwo Polson
Tennis	Matt P Big Fork	Kyle Pryor Custer County	Troy Bowman Columbia Falls	Travis Krieger Hardin
Track & Field	Wade Murphy Dawson County	Aschan Richards Ronan	Mike Ryan Billings Central	Tyson Tucker Corvallis
Volleyball	Brock Myllymaki Beaverhead Co	Shaun Murgel East Helena	 Browning	Paul Bartos Fergus
Wrestling	Mark Irvin Havre	Sean Dellwo Polson	Scott Rosberg Park	Aric Harris Whitefish
Forensics	Mike Erickson Lockwood	Troy Bowman Columbia Falls	Paul Bartos Fergus	Travis Blome Hamilton
Music	Eli Field Frenchtown	Mike Ryan Billings Central	Dani Smith Stevi	Mark Irvin Havre

revised August 2nd , 2024

MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
CLASS 'A' CONFERENCE
CONSTITUTION

Article 1 - NAME

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the:

MONTANA CLASS 'A' HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE

Article 2 - PURPOSE

Section 1. The purpose of this organization shall be to coordinate and improve the student inter-scholastic activity programs of its member schools by establishing a cohesive organization to help direct and schedule interscholastic activities; and to solve mutual problems relating to active competition and concerns related thereto.

Article 3 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership shall consist of all schools authorized by the Montana High School Association in the 'A' classification.

Section 2. A school shall be accepted as an active member of this Conference provided it is a member in good standing of the Montana High School Association, and agrees to abide by the provisions of this constitution and by-laws.

Article 4 - ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. The officers of this organization shall consist of a President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer.

Section 2. The officers shall be high school principals, assistant principals or activity directors.

Section 3. The officers shall be elected for a term of two years at the summer meeting.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the President when deemed necessary.

Article 5 - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The officers of the organization shall constitute the executive committee.

Section 2. Special meetings or conference calls of the executive committee may be called by the President at any time when deemed necessary with 24 hours advance notice of all member schools.

Section 3. Any member school may have representation at any executive committee meeting or conference call, but will not be entitled to a vote on any executive committee action.

Article 6 - MEETING OF THE ENTIRE ASSOCIATION

Section 1. The Annual Meeting date and place will be considered on an annual basis with a date and place selected by a vote of the general membership. Meetings may be scheduled other than the annual meeting, if called by the President, with the consent of the executive committee, or at the request of half or more of the member schools.

Section 2. The President shall be responsible for making arrangements for meeting rooms.

Section 3. The President will establish the general meeting agenda following input from the membership.

Section 4. Half, or more, of the number of member schools shall constitute a quorum and conduct official business of the conference.

Section 5. Each member school shall be entitled to one vote (if represented). The principal, Assistant Principal or Activities Director of the school shall cast the vote.

Article 7 - AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution shall be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) favorable vote of the membership at a regular or special conference meeting. Each member school shall receive at least 30 days prior notice in writing.

Section 2. The By-Laws of this Constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting by a simple majority vote.

MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
CLASS 'A' CONFERENCE
BY-LAWS

1. **Dues.** Annual dues shall be $200.00. These are due and payable on or before **October 1st** of each school year. Member schools that have not paid dues will not have a vote at any meeting.

2. **Assessments.** Assessments may be voted by the conference at a regular or special meeting to carry out the work of this association. Such assessments, when voted, must be made equally on all member schools.

3. **Passes.** Fourteen (14) passes will be issued to each member school and shall be honored by each member school, exclusive of tournaments and play-offs. The conference President will be responsible for securing passes and distributing them according to this policy, by September 1, of the ensuing school year.

4. **Activity Guidelines.** These may be developed to facilitate the conduct and operation of the inter-school activities of this association.

5. **Advisory Committees.** The President shall appoint advisory committees for all class 'A' conference activities for *two (2)* year terms. Each committee of *four* persons shall be composed of principals, assistant principals or activities directors with equal representation from the *East and West*. Active solicitation for input from coaches/sponsors will be sought by members of these advisory committees. The committees shall make recommendations to the conference for changes in the guidelines that may become necessary.

6. **Ad hoc Committees.** The President shall have the authority to appoint ad hoc committees as needed.

7. **Rules Violation Penalty.** Upon alleged violation of any of the rules set forth in the Class 'A' Conference Handbook the Executive Committee of the conference, following appropriate investigation in accordance with due process procedure, may invoke the following penalty(s). If the school under investigation is represented on the Executive Committee, the President will draw from the general membership for a replacement member for service on the committee during action on the alleged violation.

    a. First Offense—Self-reported infraction: Public reprimand in the form of a letter sent to the school reporting the violation with a copy to every member Class 'A' school. If the infraction is not “self-reported” the violation will be addressed as a Second Offense violation.

    b. Second Offense—Public reprimand as described above, $50.00 fine and loss of voting privileges at the annual Class 'A' meeting for one (1) year.

    c. Third Offense—Public reprimand, $250.00 fine, loss of voting privileges at the annual Class 'A' meeting for one (1) year. Penalties will be cumulative for one (1) school year.

Any decision by the Executive Committee may be appealed to the membership as a whole at the next general membership meeting.

8. **Sportsmanship Guidelines.** In order to achieve some standardization as to what is expected of fans and student cheering sections by all Class 'A' Conference schools at sporting events, the following sportsmanship guidelines should be enforced by administration at all home activities, playoff games, and tournaments. Special attention should be given to crowd behavior at regular season events so that fans are aware of the expectations prior to the season ending playoffs or tournaments.

    a. An administrator or designated supervisor must be in close contact with his/her student cheering sections at home games and tournaments. His/her main focus must be on student cheering section behavior. The designated supervisor must communicate with the game officials that they are the person in charge.

    b. Fans will not be allowed to use profanity in cheers or direct profane statements at officials, players, coaches, or opposing cheering sections.

    c. Fans will not single out opposing players and heckle them by directing derogatory or profane statements at them.

    d. Fans will not be allowed to advance on the court or field to protest or communicate with officials, coaches or players.

    e. Fans will not direct offensive cheers at opposing cheering sections.

    f. School flags and rally signs must remain near the home schools fans and away from the opposing schools cheering section.

    g. In tournament and playoff game situations, administrators will assist game or tournament management in dealing with out of line fans from their community.

9. **Selection of Class 'A' Representative to MHSA Executive Board.** The Class 'A' Conference Schools, at their annual summer meeting, will select a single candidate to place in nomination for Class 'A' Representative to the MHSA Executive Board.

MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
CLASS 'A' CONFERENCE
DIVISIONS

GENERAL RULES

A. All activities shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws and rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

B. In addition to the above, the general rules for the activities and the specific rules for the 'A' conference programs as printed in the handbook shall also apply unless modified by the guidelines contained in this "Class 'A' Conference Handbook".

EASTERN DIVISION		**WESTERN DIVISION**	
NORTHEAST	***SOUTHEAST***	***NORTHWEST***	***SOUTHWEST***
Custer County	Billings Central	Big Fork	Butte Central
Dawson County	East Helena	Browning	Corvallis
Fergus	Hardin	Columbia Falls	Dillon
Havre	Laurel	Libby	Frenchtown
Sidney	Lockwood	Polson	Hamilton
	Park	Ronan	Stevensville
		Whitefish	

BASKETBALL
(Boys and Girls)

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. The home team will dress in white jerseys, the visiting team in dark jerseys. Unless mutually agreed upon by both schools.

B. Visiting teams will be treated with courtesy and adequate protection will be given to these teams before, during, and after games. This includes the boarding and departure of the bus.

C. Home teams shall provide basketballs for team warm-up.

D. A taping table should be provided for visiting teams.

E. Adequate protection must be given to the valuables and personal belongings of the teams. (Some thought may be given to making a key available).

F. Sub-varsity (C squad and JV players) may play six (6) quarters of eligibility, if suited for varsity games only five (5) quarters of eligibility.

G. All bench officials will be properly clothed and instructed according to the National Federation Handbook.

SEASON

A. Conference standing for the purpose of seeding will be determined by the overall record against other teams in the conference.

B. The Regional Scheduling Committee shall determine the basic divisional schedule. This schedule will include playing the other teams in the conference once at home and once on the road.

C. Starting times – Each conference/division or schools within each conference/division will determine the starting times for basketball. Each conference will be responsible for communicating all starting times for their conference schools to the class ‘A’ President by August of the current school year. The Class ‘A’ President will forward the information to all class ‘A’ schools.

D. Regular season contests (at any level of competition) will have at least a 15 minute pre-game warm-up period and when one regular season game (at any level of competition) immediately follows another on the same night and the same officials or any of the same officials work consecutive games there will be at least a 20 or 15 minute intermission between games approved by working officials.

E. On days when school is not in session, it is recommended that the visiting team's locker room be open at least one hour prior to the start of the first game. When school is in session, the locker room will be available at least 30 minutes prior to game time.

F. Program information should be sent to all schools at least one week prior to a scheduled game(s), and include the following: number (in numerical sequence and light/dark), name, height, position and year in school.

G. It is recommended that only master/certified officials be used for varsity games.

PLAYOFF PROVISIONS

A. Seeding of basketball teams into the divisional tournament.

1. The Class 'A' schools in each division will be charged with the responsibility for divisional tournament seeding. Possible options include:

   a. Play-off games in which the number of teams advancing from each conference are determined by the division.

   b. Conference tournament. Seeding at the conference tournament will be based on conference records. Each conference will be responsible for determining the number of conference games each school must play for conference tournament seeding including the breaking of any ties in conference standings.

   c. Both the Eastern Division and Western Division will hold a tournament to determine advancement. The top four (4) teams from the Western Division and the top four (4) teams from the Eastern Division will advance to the State Tournament.

B. Tie breaker.

1. Two-team tie-breaking procedure:

   a. The team with the best head to head record will receive the higher seed.

   b. If two teams split during the season the net point differential (winning margin minus losing margin) will determine the lower seed. The maximum point differential will be 15 points

   c. If two teams have played only once during the season then the winner will be declared the higher seed.

   d. If two teams are still tied, the respective record for common opponents will be used to determine the higher seed.

   e. If two teams are still tied, the conference president or neutral officer (if the president's school is involved) will flip a coin. The team with the higher seed the previous year will call the flip. (The team winning the flip must take the higher seed).

2. Three-team tie breaking procedure:

a. If team ‘A’, team ‘B’ and team ‘C’ have played, the seeds will be based on how they did against one another (head to head). If team ‘A’ has a better record, then team ‘A’ will receive the highest seed, team ‘B’ and team ‘C’ will then use the two-way tie breaker to determine the other two seeds. If one of the teams above has more losses then they will receive the lowest seed, and the two-way tie breaker will be used to determine the other two seeds. If there are an unequal number of games played among the three teams, use the first game played to determine the seed.

b. If there is still a tie, the net point differential will be used, providing the teams have all played each other. If they have played one another an unequal number of times, use the first game to determine the point differential. The maximum point differential will be 15 points. The lowest point differential will be the lower seed and the two-way tie breaker will be applied to determine the other two seeds. If two teams tie for the lowest point differential the team with the highest point differential would be the highest seed and the two-way tie breaker will be used to determine the other two seeds.

c. If there is still a tie or the teams did not play one another, use the record for common opponents to determine the highest seed. If there is an unequal number of games played, use the first game played for seeding. Use the two-way tie breaker to seed the other two teams. If there is a tie for the higher seed, the team with the worst record among the common opponents would be the lower seed. Use the two-way tie breaker to seed the other two teams.

d. If there is still a tie, the conference president or neutral officer (if the president’s school is involved) will flip a coin. The team with the higher seed the previous year will call the flip. (The team winning the flip must take the higher seed).

3. Four-team or more tie breaking procedure:

a. If the teams have played each other and there is a clear winner (head to head), they will receive the higher seed and the tie is reduced to three teams, apply the three-way tie breaker. If there is an unequal number of games played use the first game. If there is not a clear winner to receive the highest seed and a clear loser can be determined, that team will be the lower seed. The tie is reduced to three teams and the three-way tie breaker is applied. If there is an unequal number of games played, use the first game to seed.

b. If there is no clear winner, the point differential will be used to determine the seeds. The lowest net point differential will be the lowest seed and the three-way tie breaker will be applied to determine the other three seeds, (if the lowest point differential results in a tie of two teams the team with the higher net point differential becomes the higher seed). Apply the three-way tie breaker.

c. If this does not resolve the tie, the respective records for common opponents will be used to determine seeding. If there is an unequal number of games played, use the first game to seed. Example: Team ‘E’ is the common opponent. Team ‘A’ defeats ‘E’, teams ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ lose to ‘E’ – team ‘A’ is the clear winner. Use the three-way tie breaker to seed the remaining teams.

d. If there is still a tie, the conference president or neutral officer (if the president's school is involved) will flip a coin. The team with the higher seed the previous year will call the flip. (The team winning the flip must take the higher seed).

C. The tournament host for any 'A' tournament should furnish six basketballs for each team to conduct warm ups prior to the game.

D. The tournament management shall secure adequate security for crowd control and management.

E. The tournament management may arrange for and utilize a rope crew.

F. The tournament management will make nets available to the winning team.

G. A 15 minute warm-up period will be allowed for games at the divisional tournaments if approved by the division and the MHSA.

MEETINGS, ALL-CONFERENCE & ALL-STATE SELECTIONS

A. Each conference will choose its all-conference team at an agreed upon time by the conference. It will consist of five first team selections, five-second team selections and honorable mention selections less than or equal to the number of teams in the conference.

B. Only all conference individuals are eligible for selection to all-state.

C. Maximum number of all-state selections in basketball is 16 with 3 from each conference and one additional selection for each conference that has a team that places in the top 4 at the state tournament. Each conference should rank the next four all-conference selections to ensure they are able to name additional all-state selections if awarded.

D. The all-state team may be separated into first and second team all-state at the discretion of the coaches. If this is done, the combined first and second team must be within the maximum number established for that sport.

CROSS COUNTRY
(Boys and Girls)

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. Please refer to the MHSA general rules.

SEASON

A. The beginning of the season shall be defined by the MHSA calendar.

B. The cross country season officially closes with the end of the state meet.

ADMINISTRATION

A. Tag System:
The tag system requires that the participant's name and school be written or typed on an identification tag to be worn by the participant on the front of the competition jersey, preferably clipped to the neck of such jersey near the neckline, or that runners wear numbers attached to the front of their jersey that have been assigned to them by meet management. This is for speed and convenience of handling by the tag official at the end of the race who must remove the tag, record the runner's place on it, and place it in the proper sequence to be recorded for team and/or individual scores.

B. It is recommended that at least one official (preferably more in cases of larger meets) be designated for the sole purpose of supervising the placement of participants and their movement in the narrow part of the finish chute. This should not be the responsibility of the place pickers who must not take their eyes off the finish line and the approaching runners who have not yet finished the race. It is important that, after finishing a long hard race and being picked for a certain place, the runner does not lose his place because the other runners bypass him in the narrow part of the chute.

C. Courses should be clearly marked with gates (both straights and turns if necessary). A qualified official should be stationed to give verbal as well as visual directions. A qualified official giving verbal and visual directions is going to be more accurate and less confusing than a series of colored flags.

D. The approach to the finish line and the chute area should be roped for crowd control to avoid collisions and provide an open access for runners.

E. A standard order should be adopted in running races at a given meet where junior high, freshman, junior varsity boys and girls, and varsity boys and girls are involved.

1. Working down from the highest to the lowest team level (Varsity, JV, Junior High) as well as from the longest to shortest race (in terms of miles run).

2. Where enough personnel are available, separate JV races should be run. It is recommended that tape be wrapped around the wrist of JV participants when the race is combined.

F. Provision for walking the course - a team desiring to walk the course should appear on the course one hour before the start of the meet. No meet should be held up because a team does not appear on the course in time to walk it.

G. Special attention should be made concerning false starts in cross country. False starts should be called back just like they are in any "track" running event.

H. The rulebook should be followed concerning chute construction and number of officials assigned for good meet management.

I. To qualify for the state cross country meet the runner must meet the following qualifying time, boys 30 minutes, girls 35 minutes

J. To qualify for all-conference, an athlete must finish in the top 10 at the Fall Classic Meet.

K. To qualify for all-state, an athlete must finish in the top 15 at the state meet.

FOOTBALL

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

SEASON

A. Refer to football rules and regulations in the MHSA handbook.

B. The playoff bracket as established by the MHSA shall be used with twelve (12) teams. The top six (6) teams from the Eastern Division and top six (6) teams from the Western Division will qualify for the playoffs.

CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

A. Rosters will be updated and on the shared google drive:

Players listed by number in numerical order
Name
Position
Weight/Height (optional)
Year in School

If information is not received, the host schools should contact away schools to collect.

B. Each conference/division will handle their own statistics.

C. Schools will be responsible for their own headsets.

D. There will be a trained emergency medical group in attendance for all conference games.

E. The home team will wear dark jerseys and the visiting team will wear light jerseys.

F. Film exchange will take place through ***Hudl,*** the agreed upon film exchange software. Each game should be uploaded by no later than noon on Sunday following regular/post season games.

G. All games must be played to be a contender in a tie-breaking situation unless a non-contender is the cause of the forfeit.

H. First-round playoff games will be played on Friday (as long as first-round is not a crossover) The remaining games will be played on Saturday unless mutually agreed upon by the two schools involved.

I. Football playoff prices for all playoff games will be established by the MHSA.

J. In the event that profits are great enough that all travel expenses are covered during a playoff contest, any remaining profits will be forwarded to the MHSA to be equally divided among the teams that qualified for postseason play.

TIE-BREAKER PROCEDURE

A. Tie between two teams

1. If a two-way tie exists the team that defeated the other team will be the winner.

2. If the two teams did not play each other then they will compare records against common opponents:

a. Highest ranking common opponents win-loss. If one team won and the other lost to the highest common opponent then the team that won will be ranked higher. Continue this through all common opponents. If a winner cannot be determined, proceed to 2b.

b. Overall record versus common opponents. If one team has a better overall record against common opponents then that team will be ranked higher. If a winner cannot be determined by records go to 3d, 3e and 3f.

c. If this still creates a tie then the flip of a coin will determine rank. The President of the Western A will flip the coin for the purpose of resolving the tie. The coin flip will take place according to MHSA guidelines.

B. Tie Breaker Procedure between Three or More Teams

Overall Procedures:

• Only one team is seeded into the playoffs in any tie-breaking step.

• If two or more teams remain tied after a third or other teams are eliminated, tie breaker reverts to step one with only those teams until a higher seed is found.

• Once a team is seeded, all the remaining teams from the original tie start the procedure again at step one.

3. If a multiple team tie exists (three or more teams), the following system shall be chronologically applied to determine the order of finish:

a. If one team has beaten all of the others, that team will be seeded the highest. The other two teams will revert back to the beginning of the tie-breaking procedure. If one team cannot be determined, proceed to 3b.

b. If one of the teams has been beaten by all of the other teams, that team will be placed the lowest. The remaining two teams will revert back to the beginning of the tie-breaking procedure. If one team cannot be determined, proceed to 3c.

c. If all of the teams have played each other and if the points for and against each team in the games between the tied teams do not produce any ties, then the team with the highest point total will receive the highest seed. - The maximum point spread to be used for breaking ties is limited to 14 points. The remaining teams will revert back to the beginning of the tie-breaking procedure. If all of the teams have not played each other or if the points for and against result in a tie then proceed to 3d.

d. Strength of schedule – points are awarded based on the wins for each team. A team will receive 13 points for defeating a first-place team, if they beat the 13th place team they will receive 1 point. Placement points will be determined at the end of each season.

e. If the points for and against each team in the games with common opponents including games against each other (if they have all played each other) do not produce any ties, then the top team will receive the highest seed and the others will revert to the beginning of the tie-breaker process.

- The maximum point spread to be used for breaking ties is limited to 14 points. If one team cannot be determined, proceed to 3f.

f. If the points for and against result in a tie between all the teams, then the team with fewest number of points allowed in games with common opponents including games against each other (if they have all played each other) will receive the highest seed and the others will revert to the beginning of the tie-breaker process.

- The maximum point spread to be used for breaking ties is limited to 14 points. If one team cannot be determined, proceed to 3g.

g. If the points allowed between tied teams result in a tie, then lots will be drawn to eliminate one team and the remaining teams will revert to the beginning of the tie breaking procedure.

MEETINGS, ALL-CONFERENCE & ALL-STATE SELECTIONS

A. Each division will have a consistent method of selecting all division teams. A maximum of 94 players could be selected first and second team all-division, including 1 return specialist, 1 kicker and 1 punter. Honorable mention selections will not exceed twice the number of teams in the conference, half of which will be offensive and half of which will be defensive.

B. A maximum of 55 players could be selected as all-state. The number of selections = 2 x the number of teams playing a varsity schedule in the division. (minimum of 22)

   Numbers should be adjusted to reflect the change.

   Western Division 26

   Eastern Division 22

   Automatic division selections 48

   Total all-state selections 55

C. At the discretion of the coaches the all-state team can be divided into first and second team all-state.

GOLF
(Boys and Girls)

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. For each boys' team and girls' teams, each school may enter five individuals. The four individual boys with the low score each day will determine the boys' team score and the four individual girls with the low score each day will determine the girls' team score. A school may choose to enter only four boys and four girls.

B. Each division (East & West) will hold a one-day eighteen-hole qualifying tournament. The top four (4) teams from each division will qualify for the state tournament. Each state meet will consist of thirty-six (36) holes of medal play.

C. In addition to the qualifying teams, the top eight (8) participants from each division with the lowest score will also qualify for the state tournament. Every participant that is tied within the top eight (8) will qualify for the State Tournament. For example, if 3 individuals are tied for 6th place, those 3 will be the last state qualifiers.

D. Tie breaker for first place ties

1. Individual tie - hole by hole playoff starting with hole #1, or hole determined by course manager.
2. Team Ties – first and if the tie determines which teams advance to state – hole by hole playoff starting with hole #10 or a hole determined by course management. At divisionals, if teams are tied and it determines state qualifiers, they will play together. Each division will determine their own team tie-breaking procedure when a team trophy is to be awarded & when the tie does not determine who qualifies for the state tournament.
3. If a competitor is involved in both playoffs, the individual playoff will be played first.
4. All other tie breaking rules/criteria will be followed in accordance with MHSA rule found in Section II – General Rules for Postseason Golf Meets.

E. Tie breaker for medalist's places 2nd -15th: All individual ties that occur in 2nd - 15th in the each division will be broken by comparing scorecards using the following format:

1. The cards will be reviewed and compared by the golf pro. The golfer's cumulative score for holes 10 thru 18 will be the first criteria used. The golfer with the lowest score on these holes will be given the higher place. If there is still a tie, we will use the scorecard starting at the 18th hole and working back. The lower score on a given hole will determine the higher place.
2. Individual ties will be broken in an order from the highest to lowest place. For example, if there are two ties, one for 3rd place and a tie for 6th place, the tie for 3rd will be broken first.

F. Each of the class 'A' divisions will determine the host site for their conference/divisional tournament.

G. Each school must designate 2 markers for post season tournaments. The marker can be a relative, administrator or spectator as designated by the school. The meet manager will assign a designee to each group to verify scores of every individual in the group.

H. The host club pro will be the sole judge on rules and interpretations. Situations brought to the judge will not include names so the ruling can be as objective as possible.

I. The meet manager must receive entries two days prior to the beginning of the tournament. Entries received after that date will not be accepted for participation in the meet.

J. In case of an emergency, each boys' and each girls' team may be entitled to one substitute to be named before the start of competition.

K. If two 18-hole courses are being used for state tournament competition, one course will be designated as the boys' course and one will be designated as the girls' course.

L. The season will be established by the MHSA calendar.

M. To qualify for all-conference, an athlete must finish in the top 15 and include ties at the divisional tournament. To qualify for all-state, an athlete must finish in the top 15 and include ties at the state tournament.

N. Refer to the MHSA handbook for state golf tournament fees.

O. Class A will use a shotgun start for Divisional and State Tournaments for the practice round beginning at noon. The time can only be adjusted by the tournament manager.

P. Spectators on the course code of conduct:

Golf Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct

The Class A Conferences welcomes and encourages parents and spectators to attend events. It is appropriate for parents and spectators to respectfully applaud good shots by all players and not just the player they are following. Additionally, we require that parents and spectators adhere to the following set of guidelines. To note, if any of the following guidelines are perceived to be broken by a designated tournament official, the spectator will be removed from the event.

1. Spectators attend MHSA events at their own risk.

2. "Advice (Rule 8) is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining his play, the choice of a club or the method of making a stroke." In addition, any conversation between a player and spectator may be construed as advice. This includes any signals, gestures or actions made by the spectator. In any of these instances, the penalty for breach of the Advice Rule will be removal of the spectator from the premises.

3. Spectators are not allowed to converse with a player on-course. Words of encouragement are acceptable, as long as advice is not given.

4. Spectators must always stay on cart paths if available. In the absence of cart paths, spectators should walk at least 40 yards from players at all times and always be aware of the group behind you.
Clarification - The only exception to the 40 yard rule is when players are on the tee box or fairways, where spectators must be 10 yards off from the edge of the green or tee box. When viewing play on the green, spectators must be on the side or back of the green and no closer than 10 yards to the edge of the green.

5. Spectators should stay behind the group they are following except when the group is teeing off. When teeing off, the spectator should observe from behind the tee box. This allows spectators to follow errant shots and help identify where the ball comes to rest. Spectators are encouraged to help in the search for lost golf balls hit by the participants to assist with the speed of play.

6. Spectators are not allowed to make rulings or present potential rule violations to coaches or rules officials. Only fellow competitors and coaches have this right. Spectators will only be brought into a rules situation if asked by an official.

7. Spectators are not allowed to carry or move a player's clubs or bag during the stipulated round.

8. Spectators are not allowed to bring chairs on the course.

9. Spectators must turn off cell phones during all MHSA Golf Events.

10. The MHSA does not allow spectator carts except if the spectator fits under the definition of disabled by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA defines an "individual with a disability" as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Documentation must be presented to the meet manager at each event.

11. The acting rules official(s) is responsible for assessing penalties on spectator violations. If a serious breach has occurred or if a spectator is deemed to be unruly, the spectator will be asked to leave the facility and additional consequences for that spectator may be administered.

12. For your personal safety, spectators are asked to exercise caution at all times. When inclement weather moves into the area, the host course/coach will suspend play. Accordingly, spectators should seek shelter immediately. The schools will evacuate players from the course. Spectators will be required to evacuate as well. Spectators are responsible for their own well-being.

Other information and Items of clarification:

i. Spectators pay a $6 fee per day and will receive a badge that will be required to be worn at all times on the course. After the fee is paid and the spectator receives a copy of the MHSA Spectator Code of Conduct, they will receive a badge. The host school is responsible for making arrangements to collect fees and distribute badges. The spectator fees will be retained by the host school.
2. MHSA Golf Coaches and host course personnel will be responsible for ensuring all rules are being followed.

SOCCER
(Boys and Girls)

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. The Class 'A' Schools are divided into three conferences. In Soccer, up to nine (9) teams can advance to the state playoffs. See Section M for playoff information.

B. 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. No overtime games will be played during the regular season.

C. Twelve (12) soccer games will be the maximum limit for schools including invitational tournaments but are exclusive of association-sponsored tournaments. These game limits apply to each squad – varsity, junior varsity, b-squad, freshman, etc. No team may play more than two games in one day during the regular season.

   1. Any soccer team that receives a forfeiture may be allowed to schedule and play a make-up game(s), but the team that gives the forfeit must count forfeited game(s) as one of the season's game limit 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; i.e. a participant who plays in a preliminary contest can not start in the varsity or next game in the same day/evening,

D. The home team will wear dark jerseys, and the visiting team will wear light jerseys. In the event that neither team can wear the designated jersey, they must notify the other team at least 24 hours prior to the contest.

E. The association prohibits students of member schools from entering a preliminary contest and then starting in a varsity contest or the next game the same day.

F. Schools must participate in the soccer schedule and play the majority of their scheduled games to be eligible to participate in the MHSA tournaments.

G. By state association adoption, if a game is suspended because of conditions, which make it impossible to continue play, and less than one-half of the game has been played, the game will be rescheduled from the start.

H. By state association adoption, the official time is kept by the head referee. The use of stadium clocks is encouraged. When stadium clocks are used, it is recommended that the time run to the two-minute mark; then the clock be stopped.

I. Twenty-Three (23) schools comprising sixteen (16) teams are classified as Class A. These sixteen (16) schools will be divided into three (3) distinct divisions:

EAST	**SOUTH**	**NORTH**
Billings Central	Corvallis	Bigfork
Laurel	*Frenchtown/Loyola (co-op boys only)	Columbia Falls
*Park/Sweetgrass	Hamilton	*Libby/Troy
Lone Peak	*Loyola/Valley Christian (girls only)	*Thompson Falls/Plains
Lockwood	*Stevensville/Florence-Carlton	Whitefish
East Helena	Polson	

* Indicates cooperative sponsorship agreement.

J Each team will play each conference opponent twice. All three conferences would combine to fill in the remaining six games or pick up AA opponents as scheduling allows.

K. Conference scoring - Each conference contest will be scored as follows:

Win	3 points
Tie	1 point
Loss	0 points

L. Tie breaker – In the event that two conference opponents are tied in the conference standings, the following criteria will be used to satisfy the tie and establish seeding:

1. Head to head competition between tied opponents based upon win/loss ratio.

2. Goal differential between tied opponents in both conference contests using both goals scored and goals scored against with a maximum goal differential of 5 goals.

3. Head-to-head competition with the next highest common conference opponent based upon win/loss ratio. If the next highest common conference opponent is also tied with another team(s), use the opponent that has the better conference record as the “next highest”. If the next highest common conference opponent is still tied with another team(s), use the opponent that has the better overall record as the next highest.

4. Goal differential between tied opponents and the next highest common conference opponent using both goals scored and goals scored against. If the next highest common conference opponent is also tied with another team(s), use the opponent that has the better conference record as the “next highest”. If the next highest common conference opponent is still tied with another team(s), use the opponent that has the better overall record as the next highest.

5. Coin toss by class ‘A’ soccer chair or his/her designee with the winner taking the higher seed.

M. The championship series will consist of nine (9) teams, three (3) teams from the Southern division and Northern division, and three (3) teams from Eastern division, unless the criteria from #2 below is in effect. (bracket should reflect the 2021 bracket, east to the top and east has play-in)

1. The higher seed will host each playoff game. If like seeds play each other, the bracket determines the host site.

2. If the two (2) seed has beaten the three (3) seed twice during regular season conference play, then there is no play-in game.

N. Mercy rule (game over) is at 10 goals, no progression on removing players after 8, 9 goals.

O. By state association adoption, a winner shall be determined in all playoff/tournament games with overtime play as follows:

1. There shall be two full ten-minute overtime periods (not sudden victory). A coin toss shall be held and the winner shall choose a goal to defend or to kick off first. The loser of the toss shall be given the remaining choice. At the end of the first ten-minute period, the teams shall change ends.

2. If the score remains tied after both overtime periods, goal kicks will be taken as outlined on pages 67-68 of the National Federation Soccer Rules Book.

STATE TOURNAMENT

A. Trophies will be awarded by MHSA for 1st and 2nd places and to semi-finalists for both girls and boys teams.

B. Prices for play-off games will be determined by the MHSA.

MEETINGS, ALL-CONFERENCE & ALL-STATE SELECTIONS

A. Each conference will choose its all-conference consisting of 11 first team selections (including at least one goalie), 11 second team selections and honorable mention selections less than or equal to the number of teams in the conference..

B. Only first team all-conference/division individuals are eligible for all-state.

C. The maximum number of all state selections for soccer is 25 with 7 from each conference/division and 1 additional selection for each conference/division that has a team make the semi-finals.

D. The all-state team may be divided into first and second team all-state at the discretion of the coaches. The combined number on the first and second team all-state cannot exceed the maximum number established

E. Designated administrator to attend and mediate at these selection meetings.

SOFTBALL

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. The Class “A” schools are divided into four conferences. The top six teams from each super divisional qualify for the state tournament.

B. The Class 'A' schools are required to play every school in their conference twice during the regular season. Conference records are used to determine conference standings. In the case teams are unable to complete their conference schedules they should defer to their conference tie-breaking system to determine their seeding.

C. 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 has to be approved by the Executive Director.

D. On defense the positions of pitcher, third (3^{rd}) base, and first (1^{st}) base must wear a protective mask. The mask must be a single solid color (excluding padding) and unadorned.

E. Each conference has the option of conducting a divisional tournament. The top three placing teams (if separate district tournaments) or top six placing teams (if combined divisional tournament) will advance to the state tournament. Seeding at the conference/divisional tournament will be based on conference records.

F. If the divisional tournament cannot be played, the three teams that will be seeded at the state tournament will be based on their seeding entering the tournament. If the tournament cannot be completed then the three highest seeded teams remaining will advance to the state tournament and be seeded accordingly.

    1. If the tournament is canceled before the second round games are completed (or its equivalent), the state tournament will be seeded by the three/four highest seeds entering the conference tournament.
    2. If the tournament is canceled after the second round games (or its equivalent) are completed, teams that qualified for the undefeated game will be seeded (one and two according to their seed entering the conference tournament) along with the next highest seeds from the consolation bracket.
    3. Games will continue to be played until they can’t be played any longer (weather/field conditions/darkness). Tournaments cannot be extended beyond 3 days, not on a Sunday or the week of the state tournament.

TIEBREAKER

A. Head to head competition using the conference schedule. If unequal number of games played among those tied, use the first game played to determine seeding through the tiebreaker system.

B. Run differential in head to head conference competition with a maximum of 10 runs. If the tie is broken return to #1. If it is still tied go to #3.

C. Average runs allowed in conference games.

D. Coin flip by division president or neutral officer. The team with the higher seed the previous year will call the flip. (Must take higher seed).

MEETINGS, ALL-CONFERENCE & ALL-STATE SELECTIONS

A. Each conference/division will have a consistent method of selecting all conference/division teams.

B. Only first team all-conference/division individuals are eligible for selection to all-state.

C. Maximum number of all state selections in softball is 32 with 7 from each conference and 1 additional all-state selection awarded to each conference represented in the top 4 at the state tournament.

D. All-conference selection criteria:

First team all-conference - 10 players (includes utility)
Second team all-conference - 9 players
Maximum 19 players
Honorable Mention all-conference – less than or equal to the number of conference teams

E. The committee recommends these selections be made by position, but will leave this decision up to the coaches. The conference president will be responsible to see that this criteria is adhered to and strictly followed. The conference president will be responsible to release the results the Monday after the state tournament to the media and secure certificates for the players.

STATE TOURNAMENT

A. Bats will be compression tested at the State 'A' Softball Tournament prior to competition. The bat must pass the compression test or if it fails it must exceed the threshold listed on the most current USA Softball NonLinear Compression List.

B. If the bat fails the compression test and is not on the most current list it is not legal.

C. Saturday play during the State 'A' Softball Tournament will be a 10:00am start time.

SWIMMING

(Boys and Girls)

The sport of swimming in Montana is an activity combined with both A/B and AA schools in competition from the start of practice through the finish of the state meet.

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

RULES

A. The Montana High School Association recognizes swimming as an interscholastic sport for both boys and girls. Rules in the current year will be those established by the NFHS unless modified by the MHSA.

B. The season of swimming will be defined by MHSA beginning with the first day of practice and closing with the end of the state meet. Boys and girls will swim during the same season. All high school students participating in swimming shall meet all MHSA eligibility requirements and participate in 8 days of practice prior to their first meet. A participant may be given credit for the 8-day rule if the participant is in post-season play of another sport, which overlaps the start of swimming practice.

C. A maximum of 10 meets per school may be held excluding Association sponsored tournaments. MHSA executive board will set the date for the state swim meet. The state meet format is one day of prelims and one day of finals and consolation finals. Individual meets held through-out the season are established by individual high schools.

D. Six (6) individual places are awarded at the state meet. 'A'/"B" and "AA" compete together during the prelim rounds of swimming. The top six (6) Class 'A'/"B" will swim in the 'A' finals. The points earned in the finals will determine the Class 'A'/"B" team point champions. General rules for awards shall be followed for the number of trophies presented. In an individual meet where 'A'/"B" and "AA" schools compete together, the points are separated per class.

E. All swimmers on a team shall wear suits and caps of identical color, pattern, and decent appearance. Boys' suits must completely cover the buttocks. Girls' suits must completely cover breasts and buttocks.

F. Each swimmer is allowed to compete in four events of which no more than two may be individual events in a meet of standard format. i.e. (two individual events and two relay events or one individual event and three relays). In a Pentathlon type meet, individuals may enter an unlimited number of events. (In a relay meet a swimmer may swim one or all relay events. In a state meet each team is permitted a maximum of four entries per individual event and only one entry per relay event.

G. The NFHS Rules Book defines in Section 5: Conduct and penalties for conduct violations.

H. Lap counters for a swimmer in the 500-meter freestyle shall count from lap 1 to lap 17 then display the fluorescent orange card on the final lap. The person counting will not turn the card to the next number until the swimmer has made their turn at the starting end. A swimmer can be disqualified for improper counting created by the person using the lap counter.

I. Racing Starts: diving platforms shall be no more than 30 inches above the water level. In order to use diving platforms the water depth at the starting end shall not be less than four (4) feet deep. For water 3 ½ feet to 4 feet deep swimmers may start from the deck or in the water. For water less than 3 ½ feet deep, swimmers will start in the water.

J. Competitors will not wear any jewelry or objectionable attire during competition and a coach will verify with the meet referee that his/her competitors are legally attired and not wearing jewelry. Medical and/or religious jewelry must be taped to the body.

K. The top six (6) places in each event at the state meet will be considered all-state.

TENNIS
(Boys and Girls)

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. Sites for the conference tournament shall be determined by each conference.

B. For state meet organization and bracketing refer to MHSA handbook.

C. Each Class 'A' school choosing to participate in their state tennis tournament will be required to share proportionately the cost of the tournament at a maximum rate of $20/participant.

D. The MHSA shall solicit bids for the State tournament in a geographically central location.

E. The number of doubles teams advancing to the conference tournament is three (3).

F. Schools competing in tennis need to have a school uniform with teams in their school colors. Appropriate uniform(s) are school approved and/or issued. Inappropriate uniforms include but not limited to spaghetti straps, strapless, midriffs and low cut sides. Headgear may be worn if the hats or athletic sweatbands are in school color (s), do not advertise drugs or alcohol or contain offensive material as deemed appropriate by the meet director or tournament manager. No bandanas, no bobby pins, no hair clips.

G. Enforcement – All Conference/Division and State Managers

    a. Uniforms
        1. First Violation: Warning for the individual and the team
        2. Second Violation: The individual forfeits the match and the team is deducted (1) team point.

    b. Competitors Conduct
        1. During the match, the players are under the point penalty system of warning, point, game, mat
        2. All tennis players in MHSA sanctioned tournaments shall be penalized one team point (on the first infraction) and removed from further play (on the second infraction) for any unsportsmanlike conduct on site after a match or before the next match or at the end of the tournament.

H. Class 'A' conference tennis singles bracket

    a. Participants that lose in the second round will be cross bracketed within their half of the bracket. Below is a list of those second round matches and their cross bracketing.

Loser of match # 25 will cross to play in match # 36.
Loser of match #26 will cross to play in match # 35.
Loser of match #27 will cross to play in match # 34.
Loser of match #28 will cross to play in match # 33
Loser of match #29 will cross to play in match # 40
Loser of match #30 will cross to play in match # 39
Loser of match #31 will cross to play in match # 38
Loser of match #32 will cross to play in match # 37

b. Cross bracketing from the top of the upper half of the bracket to the lower half of the bracket will occur in the quarterfinal round.

Loser of match #41 will cross to play in match # 52
Loser of match #42 will cross to play in match # 51
Loser of match #43 will cross to play in match # 50
Loser of match #44 will cross to play in match # 49

I. Class 'A' conference doubles tournament bracket

a. Cross bracketing from the top of the upper half of the bracket to the lower half of the bracket in both the doubles and singles bracket will occur in the Quarter-Final round.

STATE TOURNAMENT

A. State brackets to be added upon approval by MHSA

a. Matches for the State Tournament shall be numbered 1-80.

b. Scoring for the state tournament will be 10,7,5,3,1.

c. The host school must provide the 1st requested court monitor. For all remaining matches requiring a court monitor, the coach(or his/her designee) of the previous request must serve as the court monitor. For example:

1st request - provided by host school.
2nd request - coach or his/her designee of 1st request.
3rd request - coach or his/her designee of 2nd request, and so on.

CONFERENCE AND STATE TOURNAMENTS

A. ONLY IF NEEDED: Due to inclement weather or other necessary calamities. Matches will be shortened by starting each set of the match at 2-2 and playing 2 of 3 sets. This shortening of sets must include the scheduling rain-delay on Saturday.

B. There is a four game match limit for regular play at State and Divisional Tournaments.

C. If the 4 game match limit is met by both competitors at the State and/or conference tournaments, the matches will be shortened by starting each set of the match at 2 – 2 and playing 2 of 3 sets. There is no match limit per day for shortened matches.

All-state will be considered places 1-6.
All-conference will be considered places 1-4.

TRACK & FIELD
(Boys and Girls)

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. For purposes of administration and scheduling, the 'A' conference has been divided into two divisions. The top eight (10) in the Eastern Division and Western Divisions in each event will advance to the State Meet.

B. The divisional meet site will be determined by conference rotation schedule.

C. The number of qualifying relay teams for the state track meet will be ten (10) from the Eastern and Western divisions.

D. In order for an individual to be eligible to qualify for state in the high jump or pole vault, they have to clear opening height at the divisional meet if they are not using a qualifying standard to advance to state.

E. Ten (10) individuals from the Eastern and Western divisionals will qualify for the final in the 100m at the divisional meet. If an individual false starts in the 100m final at the divisional meet, they will still advance to the state meet but will be seeded at state with NO Time (NT) unless they have a qualifying standard time they can use to seed State.

F. The Eastern and Western divisions will have the same opening heights for high jump and pole vault at their divisional meets. Opening heights can be raised by coaches at the divisional meet meeting, but opening heights can not be lowered by coaches.

   a. Starting Heights:

High Jump	Boys - 5’4”	Girls - 4’4”
Pole Vault	Boys - 9’6”	Girls - 6’0”

G. Seeding will be done by the meet manager.

H. Each division will set their own divisional qualifications.

I. Divisional scoring and advancement to the state track meet in adverse weather conditions.

   1. If an event has not started and cannot be completed at the divisional meet the competition will not be team scored or individuals placed at the divisional meet.

   2. If an event has started but cannot be completed at the divisional meet the competition will be scored (team and individual) based on how the event was seeded going into the divisional meet.

3. If an event cannot be completed or started at the divisional meet the individuals qualifying for the state meet will be seeded for the state meet based upon qualifying marks during the regular season and the next best 10 marks including any ties, these best marks include results during the divisional meet.

ADMINISTRATION

A. Refer to general rules of boys and girls track in the MHSA handbook.

B. Participants may also qualify for the state track meet by meeting or exceeding established qualifying standards during designated fully automatic timed (F.A.T) meets, for track events. Field events can qualify at any meet.

C. Top 6 places in each event at the divisional meet and the top six (6) relay teams will be considered all-conference. Individuals who have met the Qualifying Standard during the season or at divisionals (if the time, distance, or height is within the Top 6 at the divisional meet), will also be considered all-conference.

D. Top 6 places in each event at the state meet will be considered all-state.

VOLLEYBALL

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

Conference Rules

A. Home teams shall provide volleyballs for team warm-up.

B. Adequate protection must be given to the valuables and personal belongings of the teams.

C. All bench officials will be properly clothed and instructed according to the national federation handbook.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

A. Conference standing for the purpose of seeding will be determined by the division.

B. Each division will develop a schedule by spring for the following season. The conference recommends one "showcase" tournament for each division.

C. Schools having dual equipment and facilities may want to reschedule concurrent junior varsity and freshman matches to reduce the loss of school time for traveling teams.

D. Varsity teams must have a minimum of 20 minutes warm-up prior to the game.

E. On days when school is not in session, it is recommended that the visiting team’s locker room be open at least one hour prior to the start of the first game. When school is in session, the locker room will be available at least 30 minutes prior to game time.

F. Program information should be sent to all schools at least one week prior to a scheduled game(s), and includes the following: number (in numerical order), name, height, position and year in school.

G. It is recommended that only master/certified officials be used for varsity games.

TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURES

A. Two-team tie-breaking procedure:

1. The team with the best head to head record will receive the higher seed.

2. If the two teams split during the season, then the team with the best total head to head game win-loss record will receive the higher seed.

3. If the teams are still tied the sum of all game points for the head to head matches played will determine the seed, the higher total will receive the higher seed.

4. If the teams are still tied, records versus the highest common conference opponents will be used to determine the higher seed.

5. If there is still a tie, a representative for each school will meet or contact each other and flip a coin. The team with the higher seed the previous year will call the flip. (Must take higher seed).

B. Three-team tie-breaking procedure:

1. If one team has defeated the other two teams, that team will receive the higher seed and then the two-team tiebreaker will be used.

2. If two teams have defeated a third team that team will receive the lower seed, and then the two-team tiebreaker will be used.

3. If the three teams split during the season, then the team with the best total head to head game win-loss record will receive the higher seed and then the two-team tiebreaker will be used.

4. If the teams are still tied the sum of all game points for the head to head matches played will determine the seed, the higher total will receive the higher seed and then the two team tiebreaker will be used.

5. Records versus the highest common conference opponents will be used to determine the highest seed and the two-team tiebreaker will be used.

6. If there is still a three way tie, a representative from each school will meet and flip a coin, after the flip, the odd team out must take the higher seed and the two way tie breaker will be used to determine the other two seeds. The team with the higher seed the previous year will call the flip.

C. Four or more team tie-breaking procedure:

1. If one team has defeated the other teams, this team will receive the higher seed and three team tie-breaking procedures will be used.

2. If the other teams have defeated one of the teams, that team will receive the lowest seed and the three-team tiebreaker will be used.

3. Records versus the highest common conference opponents will be used to determine the highest seed and the three-team tiebreaker will be used.

4. If there is still a four- way tie, a representative from each school will meet and flip a coin, after the flip, the odd team out must take the higher seed and the three- way tiebreaker will be used to determine the other two seeds. The team with the higher seed the previous year will call the flip.

PLAYOFF PROVISIONS

A. Each conference/division of class 'A' will determine its own tournament site and manager and is authorized to present the tournament in accordance with general rules and finance plan of MHSA. Tournament sites require official courts.

B. Seeding into the conference tournament will be based on conference standing at the end of season play. Seeding for divisional tournaments will be determined by each division. Possible options include:

1. All teams advance to the divisional tournament.

2. Play-off games in which the number of teams advancing from each conference are determined by the division.

3. Conference tournament. Each conference will be responsible for determining the number of conference games each school must play for conference tournament seeding including the breaking of any ties in conference standings. The top four (4) placing teams will advance to the divisional tournament.

4. Both the Eastern Division and Western Division will hold a tournament to determine advancement. The top five (4) teams from the Western Division and the top four (4) teams from the Eastern Division will advance to the State Tournament.

C. Conference/divisional tournament game times will be determined by each division.

D. The tournament host for any 'A' conference/divisional tournament should furnish 24 volleyballs for warm-up prior to each game.

MEETINGS, ALL-CONFERENCE & ALL-STATE SELECTIONS

A. Each conference will choose its all-conference teams at the district/divisional tournament, 6 first team selections and 6 second team selections for a total of 12 and honorable mention selections less than or equal to the number of teams in the conference.

B. Only first team all-conference individuals are eligible for selection to all-state.

C. Maximum number of all state selections in volleyball is 20 with 4 from each conference and 1 additional selection for each conference that has a team that places in the top 4 at the state tournament. Each conference should rank their next 4 all-conference selections to ensure they are able to name additional all-state selections if awarded.

WRESTLING
(Boys and Girls)

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

CONFERENCE RULES

A. The first practice date and date of the first match will be set by the MHSA calendar.

Administration - Dual Meets

A. Weigh-in times for dual meets shall follow NFHS rules and MHSA guidelines.

B. The order for wrestling each weight class in a dual meet shall follow the MHSA guidelines.

C. The following provisions will be used when three or more schools take part in a double dual meet wrestling competition held in two separate schools/towns that are located less than 30 miles apart:

1. One weigh-in will be used for the multiple competitions that day.

2. Each dual meet wrestled will be counted as one match toward season match limitations.

AWARDS

A. Pairing posters from the divisional meet will be presented to the weights division champions.

B. To qualify for all-conference, an athlete must finish in the top 6 at divisionals. To qualify for all-state, an athlete must finish in the top 6 at the state tournament.

DIVISIONAL TOURNAMENTS

A. In Wrestling, each division will hold a tournament to establish seeding into a sixteen (16) team bracket by weight class established by the MHSA. The top eight (8) in the Eastern Division and the top eight (8) in the Western Division will advance to the State Tournament to fill out the 16-team State Tournament bracket.

B. Only mats which meet minimum standards set forth in the rulebook may be used. The tournament host must provide 4 mats.

C. A minimum of two (2) official scales must be used for weigh-ins for the tournament. Scales to be used must have been tested and bear the seal of the state division of weights and measures. Testing must be done no more than two weeks prior to the season. More than two scales may be used providing they meet the above standards. At least one of the official scales must be made

available for contestants prior to the weigh-in and continuously during the tournament until the final weigh-in. Scales so available must be adequately supervised. Weight classes should be assigned each scale for weigh-ins. However, a wrestler may legally make weight on any of the scales, which have been designated as "official".

D. Weigh-ins - as stated in the MHSA handbook.

E. The host school must provide an adequate workout area for those teams from 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Friday preceding the tournament. Selection of officials shall be as indicated in the MHSA handbook.

F. Class A Divisional Seeding Criteria:

1. Coaches must submit a season summary to the tournament manager. Tourney manager will compile team list and season summary for each wrestler in each weight class.
2. Wrestlers will be put in a weight class by the coach. Once the seeding at that weight is determined the wrestlers must make weight and compete at that weight.
3. More than one wrestler from a school may be seeded. The wrestlers have to accept the seed. We will seed all wrestlers that meet seeding criteria in each weight class and the rest are drawn in, randomly. (No separation of teammates)
4. All schools will use Track Wrestling for compiling stats for the season.
5. It is understood that there are times that conference record is not the best criteria. Disputes and ties shall be settled using the following criteria:
    a. Head to Head.
    b. Common Opponent.
    c. Win/loss percentage against all Class ‘A’ Varsity opponents.
        - Must wrestle a minimum of seven matches against Class ‘A’ opponents.
        - Wrestler must have won 50% of his/her matches or more.
        - Wins by forfeits will count as win against an 'A' opponent.
    d. State Champion in the same weight class.
    e. State Place winner in same weight class.
    f. Divisional Champion in the same weight class.
    g. Divisional Place winner in the same weight class.
    h. State Champion any weight class.
    i. State Placer in any weight class.
    j. Divisional Champion any weight class.
    k. Divisional Place winner any weight class.
    l. Refer to seeding committee.

G. Coaches motion to seed higher.

1. Coaches will have two minutes to present their case.
2. The head coach’s vote of simple majority is used to seed higher.

a. If the coach of the originally higher seeded wrestler concedes to the challenge of the seeding order, a simple majority vote is not taken. If any other school in the division objects to the seeding order change, a simple majority vote by all the school not involved in the seeding switch will be taken to determine the seeding order.
b. If a simple majority cannot be reached, a coin toss or drawing lots will be used to determine seeding order
c. Considerations:
    - Head to head results
    - Most of wrestlers losses were against higher seed(s)
    - Wrestler did not have the opportunity to wrestle seven matches
    - Due to injury, illness, etc., wrestler's competition was limited

3. The top 8 places at divisional shall wrestle. Divisional tournaments will be pre-seeded on Class 'A' record as the #1 criteria.

STATE TOURNAMENT

A. A coaches meeting for the state 'A' wrestling tournament will be held on the evening prior to the first day of the tournament.

FORENSICS

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

SEASON

A. The season for interschool speech and drama meets shall extend from the first weekend in October and conclude with the MHSA state speech and drama meets the last weekend in January.

ADMINISTRATION

A. Debate: Team/Lincoln-Douglas

For invitational tournaments the state pairing system will be used.

1. Invitational tournament directors recommend use of the debate team-rating list published by the debate committee to determine first round pairings.

2. The procedures for pairing team debate at the state 'A' tournaments:

3. In case of fewer than 24 teams competing, pairing shall be adjusted by the state chairperson so the higher-placed teams will meet lower-placed teams from a different division. If a bye is necessary, it will be given to the first place team as determined by lot.

4. Rules for pairing of Lincoln-Douglas Debate at the state tournament shall include:

a. Debaters from the same school will not meet until finals.

b. If possible, the four preliminary rounds should be paired so that all contestants debate two negative rounds. When pairing, if the contestants have met before, the person doing the pairing will move to the contestant directly above in the bracket and will continue with this procedure until a valid pairing can be made. Each bracket shall be determined by the following:

(1) Win-loss record. (2) Total speaker points.

c. No contestant shall debate the same contestant a second time until quarterfinals. In the event that a contestant has met another contestant before, the contestants will switch sides.

d. Byes: contestants winning in the first round by a forfeiture or bye will be ranked according to the original tournament seeding for round one.

B. Judges:

1. Every effort should be made to acquire qualified judges at all tournaments, especially the state tournament.

2. The tournament director at the state tournament should, in selecting judges, avoid conflicts of interest by not using teachers who know hometown competitors or by using parents or close friends of any of the competitors. Judges should be made aware that they are obligated to disqualify themselves if such a conflict of interest occurs.

3. Unless a student has been out of school for at least two years, he/she may not be used to judge at the state tournament unless approved by a vote of the coaches attending.

4. Every effort should be made to keep judges from knowing the identity of the school from which the contestant comes.

5. As soon as a round is tabulated, results should be available for coaches.

C. Tournaments:

1. Tournament directors must include all sanctioned speech and drama events but have the option of including selected experimental events at invitational speech and drama tournaments.

2. Tournament directors must use the scoring system for events as outlined in the forensic and drama handbook. Experimental events shall not exceed regular event contest points.

3. Tournament directors have the option of restricting the size of their own tournaments by inviting the schools of their choice.

4. Individual contestants or teams, which are dropped at registration, will result in a five-dollar ($5.00) fine for each person dropped.

D. The Divisional Tournaments

1. Each high school must have registered with the Montana high school association to enter contestants in the divisional speech and drama tournament. All class A high schools in Montana shall be eligible to register for participation in any individual event whether or not they participate in any other speech or drama event.

2. Each member school may enter up to three entries in each speech and drama event provided that the total registration for that school does not exceed 35 students.

3. The divisional tournaments must finance themselves. Should there be a deficit, it will be borne by the host school.

4. The divisional director, with the consent of the schools in the division, shall make such arrangements as are needed for the divisional meet.

5. All entries for the divisional speech and drama tournaments shall be in the hands of the divisional tournament director at least ten days prior to the date set for the divisional meet.

6. The director will provide certification of affirmation for oratory and expository to all participating schools.

7. At divisional meets an entry fee of up to $5.00 for each participant in the competitive events in speech and drama may be charged by the host school.

8. With the exception of debate, there shall be no judging of more than one round of an event by any judge at a tournament.

9. The top twelve places in each event at the divisional meets shall qualify for the State Tournaments.

10. Divisional tournament managers must register the qualifying entries from their division no later than the day after the divisional tournament with the director of the state tournament.

11. The speaking order at divisional tournaments shall be drawn by tournament officials to give each contestant an early, middle and last speaking order in successive rounds. Speaking order in the semi-final and final rounds shall be determined by listing the student code numbers on paper and drawing them at random. No changes will be made in the drawn speaking order, even if contestants from the same school are back to back. The principle of pairing students from the same school in preliminary rounds, and in any round previous to the final round shall be avoided as much as possible.

12. The procedural options for divisional meets - Individual and Duo Events.

    a. There will be three preliminary rounds if there are twelve or more contestants in an event.

    b. Two preliminary rounds may be allowed if there are fewer than twelve contestants.

    c. One semi-final round may be composed of sixteen or fewer contestants from the preliminary rounds.

    d. There will be one final round composed of eight or fewer contestants from the previous rounds.

    The options that are open to the divisional tournament manager are:

    1. 1, 3, & 4
    2. 1 & 4
    3. 2, 3, & 4

13. Debate - Divisional Tournaments

    a. Each coach will submit novice, varsity and Lincoln-Douglas Debate records one week in advance of the divisional tournament to his divisional tournament director. Teams

will be seeded one (1) through the total number entered according to the following priorities:

1. Varsity record in four or more tournaments by at least one member. In case of ties, it will be weighted according to the number of rounds competed.

2. Varsity record in fewer than four tournaments. In case of ties, it will be weighted according to the number of rounds competed.

3. Novice record in four or more tournaments. In case of ties, it will be weighted according to the number of rounds competed.

4. Novice record in fewer than four tournaments. In case of ties, it will be weighted according to the number of rounds competed.

E. State Tournament

1. The top twelve places in each event at the divisional meet shall qualify for the state A tournament.

2. Divisional tournament managers must register the qualifying entries from their division no later than the day after the divisional tournament with the director of the state tournament.

3. In the case of death or illness coaches will notify the divisional chairperson who will, if possible, arrange for the substitution of 6th and 8th place competitors at the state tournament.

4. At the state tournament, an entry fee of $5.00 for each participant in the events may be charged by the host school.

5. The procedural option for the state A individual and duo events are:

a. There are four preliminary rounds in all individual and duo events.

1. The preliminary round in all events, except debate, shall consist of four sections of eight entries per round.

2. These preliminary round selections shall be organized as follows:

a. First through fourth place students shall not compete against students who placed at the same level in a different division.

b. In preliminary rounds students shall not compete against the same student more than twice.

c. Adjustments in the scheduling may be made at the discretion of the tournament director.

3. In preliminary rounds, the speaking order at state tournaments shall be drawn by tournament officials to give each contestant an early, middle or late speaking order in successive rounds.

    a. The semi-final round is composed of sixteen contestants who have an accumulative score that is best.
    b. The final round is composed of eight or fewer contestants who have the best accumulative scores from the preliminary and semi-final rounds.

    c. The procedure established for determining speaking order in the semi-final rounds is listed under "General Rules".

    d. The placing of the contestants is determined by the best cumulative score from all of the preceding rounds.

    e. At the state tournaments, in all events except debate, the poorest round score in the preliminary rounds shall be dropped.

    f. With the exception of debate, there shall be no judging of more than one round of an event by any judge at a tournament.

    g. The "General Rules" section explains the procedure to be followed in pairing, ranking, tie breaking, timing, as well as in awarding sweepstakes points.

F. Meetings:

1. There shall be a one-day fall meeting to finalize the tournament schedule and to act upon pertinent items of business. This meeting shall take place according to the MFEA Constitution in a city located near the center of the state.

2. The 'A' forensic committee shall meet with the 'A' principals' forensic committee concerning actions and recommendations of 'A' business.

MUSIC

GENERAL RULES

A. This activity shall be conducted in accordance with the by-laws, rules and regulations of the MHSA as printed in the official handbook.

ORGANIZATION/GOVERNANCE

A. District Music Festivals, State Solo and Ensemble Festivals, and the All-State Festival fall under the jurisdiction of the general governing guidelines of the MHSA activities as stated in the complete edition of the MHSA handbook. Please refer to Section X of these music rules and regulations for other activities.

B. In the interest of uniformity, standing rules may be formulated by the music committee and the board of control. Such rules may be used as a guide for the conduct of district and state music festivals and inter-school music activities.

C. The music teacher is the official representative of the school at interscholastic music events. It is the responsibility of the music teacher to serve as the role model for students and the public.

   1. A music teacher will be in violation of this policy by making degrading/critical remarks or verbally assaulting adjudicators or festival management during or after a festival event.

   2. Festival managers should report conduct in violation of this policy to the administrator of the host school who will in turn notify the MHSA office. A letter of reprimand will be sent from the MHSA office to the teacher in violation of the policy and his/her administrator.

D. There are twelve music festival districts and two state festival areas. Schools which desire to be permanently assigned to a different festival district or state area may petition the music committee and the board of control by November 1st of any school year for such permission. Petitions must be in writing and must state specific reasons for requesting the change. If the petition is granted, the change will be effective for the next school year.

E. District and state festivals must finance themselves. Should there be a deficit, it will be borne by the participating schools. Should there be any net proceeds from fees, they will remain in the respective district treasury for use in conducting future festivals. The committee in charge will have the responsibility of determining a reasonable method of liquidating any and all deficits. Excess fees from state festivals will be remitted to the MHSA office. Each festival chairperson will be responsible for furnishing a complete financial report and audit of the district finances, (MHSA Form 11 – music festival financial report) to the executive director of the Montana high school association, within 30 days after the close of the district and state festivals. Copies of this report shall be distributed to all principals and participating music directors of the district by the district-organizing chairperson.

ELIGIBILITY

A. When participating in any activity where school musical groups or students are involved, (pep bands, tours, invitational festivals, contests, etc.) local school administrators are to be held responsible for assuring the MHSA office that participation in the district music festival by all major performing groups of that school for the year has been, or will be, a fact.

B. Only high school students from member schools of the Montana high school association may take part in the district music festival except as provided in music activities rules and regulations, II-eligibility, (6).

C. In order for a pupil to be eligible to represent his/her school in an all-state music group which may qualify for a state solo and ensemble festival, he/she must be a bona fide undergraduate member of his/her school in good standing; he/she must be passing in at least twenty periods per week of prepared class work or its equivalent; he/she shall have passed in at least twenty periods of prepared work or its equivalent during the last preceding semester in which he/she was in attendance. Furthermore, students performing for district or state festival in groups of two or more must be from the same school unless a cooperative sponsorship of activities has been approved by the MHSA board of control.

D. No make-up work shall be permitted after the close of the semester for the purpose of becoming eligible and a "condition" shall, for the purpose of determining eligibility, count as a failure.

E. In order for a student to be eligible to participate as a vocal or instrumental soloist at any of the Montana high school association music festivals, he/she must comply with all four of the following requirements:

    1. He/she must be a bona fide undergraduate in good standing in a member school or the Montana high school association.

    2. He/she must be enrolled and in good standing in the high school or junior high school ninth grade music program that is being taught by a teacher certified by the Office of Public Instruction, except as provided by music rules and regulations (see C immediately following and/or (6) below.)

    3. Any student participating in instrumental and/or vocal events at the district and state music festivals or other inter-school music activities must be a member of a major performing group, and that group must participate in the district festival*. The piano soloist must be a member of a major school music organization (see exception E below) or an accompanist of a major performing group. In exceptional cases where a member school does not have a high school music program, any student studying with a private teacher may enter the district and state music festivals with the approval of the local school administrator provided the appropriate MHSA dues are paid.

    INTERPRETATION: "Major Performing Group" refers to all concert bands, choirs, and orchestras. These represent the curricular study of music and promote ensembles such as Pep

Band, Jazz Band, Swing Choir, Show Choir, etc., outgrowths of the "Major Performing Groups."

4. He/she must be approved for participation in the music festival by the administrator of the member school where the student is in attendance.

5. In schools using full immersion block schedules, students who earned or will earn a full credit in a major performing group are granted the same eligibility as students who participate in a major performing group for an entire year in schools following traditional schedules.

F. Grade school pupils through grade eight of the same school system may be permitted to participate in high school band, orchestra, chorus, or other instrumental or vocal ensembles without affecting their eligibility after they become high school pupils. However, students below the ninth grade may not participate at the state level. A county high school and a public elementary school in the same city shall be considered parts of the same school system.

G. Ninth grade students enrolled in accredited junior high schools that are administered as separate units apart from the senior high schools and elementary schools are eligible to participate in non-athletic activities in music, speech and drama on the same basis as ninth grade students in accredited four-year high schools unless a local school rules otherwise. If a local school makes a ruling to prohibit its ninth grade students from the junior high school from participating in these non-athletic activities, such action by the local school will not be subject to review by the MHSA or its executive board.

DISTRICT MUSIC FESTIVALS

A. Solo and ensemble preparation remains the time-honored foundation for improving and demonstrating personal music skills within the school context. As such, adjudication of solos or chamber music is stimulating and educational for student musicians and their directors. District music festivals are provided to encourage independent adjudication to these ends. District festivals provide the only forum in Montana in which large ensembles such as bands, orchestras and choirs are adjudicated for a rating.

B. It is recommended that two days be used for the district event. The amount of time used in preparation of festival groups, the individual efforts and interest of students, music directors and parents, and the expense involved in transporting groups to a central location should be a major consideration when scheduling the district festivals.

1. The state shall be divided into a convenient number of music districts and the Montana high school association shall supervise and control inter-school music festivals and inter-school activities in those districts. Member senior high schools and accredited junior high schools are eligible to participate.

Note: Sections III – XII of the MHSA handbook provide additional guidelines for all MHSA member schools regarding music festivals (rules and regulations, ratings) and information

regarding state solo and ensemble festivals and all-state. It is the responsibility of each member school to be aware of these additional guidelines and procedures.