

MHSA PRESIDENT'S WELCOME



The best thing about the end of summer vacation is the excitement that comes with the start of a new school year and the beginning of fall activities. It is a joy to watch the students file into the gymnasium and onto the fields and courses as they prepare for the upcoming season. They bring a level of energy, excitement, and optimism as they begin to embark on a new

year and a new season. Their exhilaration always reminds me of why we entered into this profession.

I recently had an opportunity to listen to former NFL player, coach, and ESPN analyst, Herm Edwards. He said, **"If you hope to lead, you must learn to serve. You have an obligation to help young people succeed in the classroom and on the field of play."** While we strive to be successful on the field, we are preparing our student-athletes for their years beyond the playing fields, providing them with life lessons. Through participation, they will learn skills, develop loyalty, overcome adversity, learn the meaning of commitment, and develop work ethics that are essential to being successful in life. Because of this, our roles are important and critical to their success. On behalf of the Montana High School Association, I would like to thank you for your commitment in helping develop these young men and women. They are our future!

It is an honor and a privilege to serve on the MHSA board. I have had the opportunity to work directly with the MHSA staff over the past 3 ½ years. They are dedicated, caring, and knowledgeable and have a work ethic beyond compare. They work for the betterment of our students and our programs. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you have any questions or concerns.

In the words of Herm Edwards, **"Don't be afraid to be great. Know your role; do your job. Do the little things right."** It is my sincere hope that you will have a rewarding and enjoyable new school year.

Positively,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter J. Fusaro".

Peter Fusaro, MHSA President
Principal, Flathead High School
(Kalispell)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The question I ask every August as I write this column is "Where did the summer go?" That question is harder to answer as I get older and, at least it seems, time is really flying by. I once read a quote that stated, "The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot." Even as time flies by, we are in control of what we do with that time. Hopefully you were able to get away and enjoy some summer vacation time and are ready for another school year to begin. The one thing I believe we all have in common (MHSA staff, administrators, coaches, student athletes and officials) is the enthusiasm for the start of the next

sports/ activity season. Charles Schwab said, "A man can succeed at almost anything for which he has an unlimited enthusiasm." And Ralph Waldo Emerson stated, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

I hope you share with me that high level of enthusiasm for the anticipated start of another fall season. As a new fall sports activity season begins I want to remind you once again of the two requirements which have been in place for a few years regarding mandates for coaches, parents, student athletes, officials and schools in general. The requirements are the concussion law enacted in the 2013-14 school year and the switch from the MHSA Coaches Education Program to the NFHS Coaches Education Program. I have sent information regarding these changes multiple times over the past three years and also recently emailed my Executive Director's Update to every administrator, attaching this information once again to that email. If you have any questions on the concussion requirements please contact me or Brian Michelotti. Questions on the coaches' education program can be directed to Joanne Austin.

In regard to the concussion in sports issue, we are excited member schools overwhelming supported the mandate to provide concussion insurance for every high school student-athlete and cheerleader while participating in practice or competition in sports sanctioned by the MHSA. The first year of coverage went well with numerous claims which provided financial assistance to families whose sons or daughters were diagnosed and treated for a concussion. The insurance is in effect for the 2016-2017 school year also. **If an athlete is treated for a concussion please contact me or Brian Michelotti and representatives of the HeadStrong program will make the appropriate contacts to initiate the claim on behalf of the student.**

A few other areas that we can use your help with as we begin another school year include:

- The recruiting and retention of sports officials. Without men and women willing to officiate high school sports, those sports could not come to pass for the thousands of high school players, coaches and spectators. I am pleased to report that the Respect Officials Initiative ("**Without Officials, It's Just Recess**") has been successful to date. Any assistance you can offer to help recruit new members (including high school students to join as associate members; associate members can work junior high and sub-varsity games and the dues are one-half of regular member dues) is greatly appreciated.
- As we prepare for fall season contests, it is important that schools and local officials' pools work together when scheduling officials for contests now and throughout the year. As most of you have come to realize, there is a shortage of officials in some areas and for some sports. If schools and officials pools cooperate in scheduling game times and even possibly adjusting game days, contests can be covered adequately. I have received numerous calls from both school administrators and from officials expressing their appreciation for the cooperation exhibited in the scheduling, and sometimes the rescheduling of contests to accommodate the availability of officials. The MHSA appreciates these cooperative efforts between administrators and officials. But, if there are any major problems or conflicts with the scheduling of contests that cannot be solved between schools and official pools, please contact the MHSA office and hopefully we can help facilitate a solution to the problem.
- Adult Fan Behavior at MHSA Regular Season and Post Season Events – Our student athletes and student cheering sections have

not been a major problem in regard to fan behavior. Unruly adult fans have been a problem in many areas. Continued sharing of acceptable behavior expectations and administering consequences for unacceptable behavior are important. Our new "Conduct Counts" posters are a great resource for this. Also, for post season events our Executive Board approved allowing for additional security to be hired with the cost covered from gate receipts as long as the security is certified or is actual law enforcement.

- Continue to encourage our high school students to resist specializing in sports and share the benefits of participating in multiple sports and activities during their high school years.
- The revised online Sportsmanship Clinic will be ready for viewing soon. The information is appropriate for administrators and coaches. I will send an email with a link when it is finalized. The NFHS website, www.nfhs.org has other free sportsmanship videos that are appropriate for parents, coaches and student participants. These resources could be used when individuals need a "refresher course" on what good sportsmanship is and what the expectations are.

The latest edition of the Executive Director's Update was emailed to all school contacts, activity directors, principals, and superintendents recently with, hopefully, a variety of useful information for Activity Administrators. Included in the Update is information on the online rules clinic format, the online requirement for the new administrator's workshop, coaches' education, concussion law implementation, MOA items, and information regarding other changes that have been enacted by the Executive Board or by the membership for this coming year. I can never stress enough the importance of closely checking the eligibility of all student activity participants. It would be devastating to an individual participant and to the team he/she participates on if that student was declared ineligible and the team had to forfeit games because of eligibility rules violations. The Executive Director Update includes the "Quick Checks" for sports eligibility (located in the Fundamentals of Athletic Regulations) and for non-sport activities. Also the New Administrators Workshop has the information presented with responsibilities and deadlines detailed in a month to month format along with a resource page where related forms etc. can be easily accessed. Please take time to review this information if you haven't already done so, or if you didn't receive the email please contact the office.

The MHSAs staff is eager to assist you with any activity related items and issues. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any comments, concerns and/or questions. Have a great 2016-2017 school year!

Mark Beckman, Executive Director

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE REQUIREMENT REMINDER

This is a reminder that the initial required amount of practices (ten (10) for football, basketball, tennis, soccer, cross country, track and field, softball, volleyball, wrestling, swimming and spirit/three (3) for golf) for each individual must be completed as a comprehensive, regularly scheduled team practice with the full coaching staff present.

MHSA HANDBOOK TO BE PUBLISHED

The MHSAs Handbook will be printed soon and mailed to each member school in September. One copy will be sent to each school contact and one copy will be sent to each city superintendent. Additional copies are available through the MHSAs office for \$10 each. The Handbook is also posted on the MHSAs website (www.mhsa.org) where all coaches and staff can access the information.

2016-2017 DIRECTORY INFORMATION REQUESTED

The 2016-2017 Roster of School Personnel forms were sent to each school electronically in the first week of August. Electronic submission is preferred, but you may submit the form by fax or by mail. If you have not already done so, please return this form to the MHSAs office as soon as possible. **The directory cannot be printed until information is received from ALL MHSAs member schools.**

JOSTEN'S CALENDARS HAVE BEEN MAILED

Once again, the Josten's Company is providing the MHSAs Activity Calendars, which were sent to each member school under separate

cover in early August. We ask that you express appreciation to Josten's representatives when you have the opportunity.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION FORM IS ENCLOSED

The MHSAs pre-participation physical examination form is enclosed. This form was updated several years ago to include questions concerning the cardiac history and cardiac health of the student (question 6-15). The MHSAs Medical Advisory Committee strongly recommends that if any of those questions are answered affirmatively that a student be referred to the appropriate medical professional for further screening.

This is a reminder to all member schools that physical exams are mandated for all students who are going to participate in MHSAs sanctioned sports. These exams must be completed before they practice and must have been performed after May 1, 2016. Examinations must be certified by a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice for the current 2016-2017 school year and the schools must use the MHSAs standardized pre-participation exam form.

The MHSAs is committed to the safety and health of our student activity participants and believe this form will facilitate that objective. In addition to the copy of the form enclosed, you may access this form any time at mhsa.org. Please feel free to copy the form and distribute it appropriately. Please contact the MHSAs office if you should have any questions, or direct any questions from physicians. According to HIPPA, schools should note that these physical forms must be kept in confidential private files.

PROCEDURE FOR ACTIVITY NEWS/QUICK BITS MAILINGS

One copy of *Activity News* plus enclosures and all pertinent rules books will be sent via US Postal Service to each school contact, and one copy plus enclosures will be sent to each superintendent who is **not** listed as the school contact.

Quick Bits is generally a smaller publication that is sent via e-mail. The same individuals who receive the *Activity News* will be sent the electronic version of *Quick Bits*.

All of these publications, including most enclosures, will be posted at www.mhsa.org.

RULES CLINICS MANDATORY FOR ALL COACHES

The MHSAs/MOA rules clinics are presented in an online format for coaches and officials. **All coaches, including the head coach and all assistant coaches and all school-approved volunteer coaches, are required to view the sport-specific rules clinic(s).** An information sheet explaining the procedure on accessing these clinics was linked to the Executive Director's Update emailed to schools recently. The information sheet is also available on our website, www.mhsa.org, under the clinics tab and is enclosed with this mailing. If you have any questions, please contact the MHSAs office.

RECORDS OF TRANSFER MANDATORY

Any student who transfers to your school and desires to participate in athletics at any level of competition has to be reported to the MHSAs office on a Record of Transfer Form. This form and other related forms are available on our website.

The Record of Transfer form is required in reporting transfer students and certifying in writing to the MHSAs office that the transfer student meets the MHSAs eligibility requirements stated in Article II of the Association By-Laws. These forms **must be filed before** the student participates on **any** high school athletic team in any (sub varsity or varsity) Association contest. The forms can be emailed (if signed) or faxed without hard copies having to be mailed. If you have any questions regarding transfer students please contact Mark Beckman.

Please review the more detailed information regarding eligibility in the recently emailed Executive Director's Update.

AWARENESS EVENTS

When requested, the MHSAs permits a school to modify certain uniform/apparel from the NFHS Rules and/or school colors for one (1) week during the regular season to be designated for charitable awareness events, such as Breast Cancer Awareness week. This interpretation will be applied to all sports. **The school must request**

permission from the MHSAs to conduct these events. Should you have questions, please contact the MHSAs staff liaison for the particular sport.

FOOTBALL

COACHES' EDUCATION

COACHES' EDUCATION UPDATE

Please refer to the enclosed information regarding the MHSAs Coaches' Education requirements, including instructions on concussion awareness. Once the concussion course is viewed, the requirement is met for the particular school year. However, users may review the course again at any time, but after 90 days users are required to "order" the course again in order to access the content.

If you have any questions about the Coaches' Education program, please contact Jo Austin at the MHSAs office.

EXECUTIVE BOARD ITEMS

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

The next regular meeting of the MHSAs Executive Board will be held in Helena beginning on Monday, September 12, 2016, at 8:30 a.m. in the MHSAs office. The Board meeting will continue Tuesday, September 13, if business has not been completed.

If any member school administrator wishes to have an item placed on the agenda for the Board to consider at this meeting, he/she must furnish the same to the Association office **ten (10) days** prior to the meeting. If any member school wishes to meet with the Executive Board concerning any items, request for appointment must be made in advance.

Major agenda items for Executive Board Meeting:

1. Review and approve Auditor's report.
2. Hear spring activity reports.
3. Review spring activity financial reports.

MEETING DATES SET FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD

The MHSAs Executive Board has established dates for their regular meetings for the 2016-17 school year. While the Board is required by MHSAs By-Laws to hold a minimum of four (4) meetings, they can also hold special meetings in person, or the Board can conduct business by conference phone calls.

2016-17 Board Meeting Dates

September 12-13, 2016 - Helena
November 21-22, 2016 - Helena
January 14-16, 2017 - Great Falls
April 10-11, 2017 - Helena

ANNUAL MEETING IN GREAT FALLS

The next MHSAs Annual Meeting will be held in Great Falls on January 16, 2017. The Best Western Plus Heritage Inn is the host facility. Reservations may be made by calling 406-761-1900 and asking for group code MHSAs.

CROSS COUNTRY

CROSS COUNTRY MATERIALS FOUND IN THE ENCLOSURES

For the 2016 season, we have listed the major NFHS and MHSAs Rule changes and also some other important MHSAs cross country information, see enclosure. Please contact Kip in the MHSAs Office if you have any questions.

VOLLEYBALL

VOLLEYBALL MATERIALS FOUND IN THE ENCLOSURES

For the 2016 season, we have listed the major NFHS and MHSAs Rule changes and also some other important MHSAs volleyball information, see enclosure. Please contact Kip in the MHSAs Office if you have any questions.

MAJOR FOOTBALL REVISIONS FOR 2016

There are several major changes to MHSAs and NFHS rules that will go into effect for the football season, including new rules on the number of required preseason practices, a revised MHSAs Mercy Rule; NFHS rule changes and other important MHSAs football safety issues. Please review the enclosed football information and distribute it to all affected personnel. Please feel free to contact Brian Michelotti if you have questions on the enclosed football materials.

MOA

THE HIRING OF OFFICIALS

ATTENTION: All administrators and coaches — please make sure all officials whom you hire for varsity contests are members in good standing with the Montana Officials' Association. Per MHSAs/MOA rules, schools must go through the local official's pool when hiring officials unless the official is not in a pool (an approved non-pool affiliated official). To be a member in good standing, officials must have passed the qualifying exam for the respective sport or pay to take the exam that will be given at the start of the season. We had a few non-MOA's work varsity contests in the past few years which is a serious violation of MHSAs/MOA rules and schools will be penalized accordingly for any violations.

In compliance with the Dylan Steigers' Protection of Youth Athletes Act, any sports official working an athletic contest in your district must have completed concussion education. This includes all varsity contests (for which MOA officials must be used) and any other contests, including sub-varsity, middle school, and elementary. The local district is responsible for ensuring that officials who are working all athletic contests have completed concussion education.

Also, please remember to be on hand to greet officials, assist the crew at half-time and to insure that security and locker rooms etc. are provided for them from the time they arrive until the time they leave the premises.

SPIRIT

SPIRIT REMINDERS

National Federation Spirit Rules Books and a copy of the Spirit Section of the MHSAs Handbook have been sent under separate cover to cheer coaches and to dance coaches. Please note that National Federation Spirit Rules and rules found in the MHSAs Handbook's Spirit Section are to be followed during all spirit related activities. Violations of the rules are subject to penalties as found in the By-Laws under General Penalties.

If your school will field cheerleaders only during the winter season, or if your school will not be fielding a cheer team at all during this school year, please advise Janie Holmes @ jholmes@mhsa.org as soon as possible.

Also, remember all cheer and dance coaches must complete or be current with the AACCA Safety Certification course if their squad does any stunting. The AACCA Safety Certification is offered online through the National Federation's web site and directions to access that course were included in the rules book mailing.

Concussion management is a primary area of emphasis for schools. Each coach (spirit and dance) must also take the online NFHS Concussion Course, for your use in adhering to MHSAs rules as well as Montana's concussion legislation. Directions to access that course were included in the rules book mailing.

FINE ARTS

MUSIC COMMITTEE FALL MEETING

The MHSAs Music Committee will meet in August. Anyone wishing to have items put on the agenda or meet with the committee should contact Jo Austin at 406-442-6010 or jpaustin@mhsa.org.

FORENSICS & DRAMA BOOKLET UNDER PRODUCTION

The Speech & Drama booklets will be sent to schools in September. Each coach will receive a copy.

Also, administrators are asked to encourage their speech & drama coaches to utilize the information on the MHSA website. All ballots and the tentative schedule are currently posted. Whenever possible our mailings will be sent to coaches electronically.

SOCCKER

SOCCKER MATERIALS SENT SEPARATELY

Coaches will be receiving a separate envelope with soccer rules books and pre-season guides. Please ensure that the materials are received.

ENCLOSURES

[2016-2017 Events Calendar](#)

[2017-2018 Events Calendar](#)

2016-2017 Ready Reference Activity Dates

2016-2017 National Testing Dates

[2016-17 MHSA & NFHS Cross Country Information](#)

2016-2017 Football Rules Book (1)

[2016-17 NFHS Football Rule Changes](#)

NFHS Football Rules Poster

[MHSA and NFHS Football Changes and Information](#)

[NFHS Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention Statement](#)

2016 Volleyball Rules Book (1)

[2016-17 MHSA & NFHS Volleyball Information](#)

[2016-17 NFHS Volleyball Rule Revisions](#)

NFHS Volleyball Rules Poster

[Athletic Pre-Participation Physical Exam Form](#)

[Coaches' Education Handout](#)

[Online Rules Clinic Instructions](#)

Staff Members

Mark Beckman, Executive Director

Joanne Austin, Associate Director

Brian Michelotti, Assistant Director

Kip Ryan, Assistant Director

Janie Holmes, Business Office Manager

Theresa Stanisich, MOA Coordinator



Executive Board Members

Peter Fusaro, Principal, Flathead High School (Kalispell)
(President)

Mark Ator, Activities Director, Colstrip High School
(Vice President)

Luke Kloker, Superintendent, Fairview Schools
Dennis Murphy, Activities Director, Havre High School

Drew Blewett, Governor's Appointee, Great Falls

Lance Voegelé, MTSSA Appointee, Belgrade

Don Wetzel, Jr., State Superintendent's Appointee, Helena
