



SPRING 2020 PANDEMIC CLARIFICATIONS **Athletic Directors & Coaches (Volume 1, April 8, 2020, Updated 5-3-2020)**

Due to the Governor's orders to close schools and MHSAA actions to cancel 2019-20 winter and spring sports, physical practices and competitions in all sports are not permitted for the next several weeks until the ban is lifted by the Governor. The Governor's order bans activity at all school facilities, and non-school activity as well. For the most part, MHSAA regulations remain in place unless waived by the Executive Committee or Representative Council, some of which are known now, others will be dealt with in the weeks ahead. Updates will be posted as necessary (on the MHSAA website). This is a summary and not intended to replace the MHSAA *Handbook*.

Virtual Contact Between Coaches and Student-Athletes:

If local school administration permits, coaches (Fall, Winter and Spring) may have voluntary virtual (non-physical) communication with any number of their students so long as there is no physical contact, organizing or bringing people physically together whatsoever. Communicating INDIVIDUAL workout plans and other incentives are within the rules just as conditioning is allowed. During this time, a coach may remotely show video, films, DVDs, videotapes, conduct internet-based remote meetings or use other remote digital programming with instruction to students. This currently applies to all fall, winter and spring coaches during the pandemic.

During these difficult times, virtual connections from coaches may greatly serve to reassure student-athletes as well as to encourage them to support one another. Coaches could organize google hangouts as a way for teammates to connect and encourage players to communicate about individual workouts they are performing to keep each other motivated. Connections also serve as a reminder of the need to continue to be a great teammate by the act of supporting and showing care for each other. Additionally, it provides student-athletes with the reminder that parents, coaches and other trusted adults wish to support them. Visit the MHSAA Health and Safety page for additional mental health resources that can be forwarded to students.

In early May, decisions will be made by the Representative Council regarding possible changes to out-of-season and summer coaching regulations that may change summer allowances when the all-clear is given.

Out of Season, During the Summer: Provided a statewide all-clear occurs, summer activity may resume. Currently, summer rules begin on Monday, June 1, 2020, when the four-player period ends. Up to 15 dates of voluntary competition are allowed with school coaches and any number of players during the summer in all sports but football, which allows seven, 7-on-7 events. Under current rules, summer dates of competition or practices may include participation by graduating seniors if the local school administration permits. Voluntary practices are permitted in all sports with school coaches and any number of players (7 in football). If the statewide all-clear is issued, this activity may occur under the rules. Neither school competition uniforms nor transportation may be used. School funds may not support summer activity, but fundraised money (e.g., booster clubs) may be used to the limit of \$200 per student, per sport.

Non-School Team Participation: Under the Governor's orders, there will be no in-person group physical activity – practice or competition – until the ban is lifted. This is against the law and endangers lives. MHSAA regulations have always allowed for individuals to participate on non-school teams out of season, and once the ban is lifted, students may participate on non-school teams which should be operating within the law.

Because spring sports have ended, if a statewide all-clear is issued, spring sport athletes could participate on non-school teams at any time this spring/summer without concerns under the Limited Team Membership or Loyalty rule.

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Non-School Team Participation Continued: If a fall sport non-school team expands its competition schedule into next school year, this could be a concern. **In-season in team** sports, the Limited Team Membership rule activates once a student **practices** with the school team. For example, a high school volleyball player who practices in the fall with her school team cannot play a non-school competition in that same sport during the school season. Practice is permitted; just no competition during the school season.

Coaching Requirements for Spring Sports 2020: All spring 2020 coaching requirements (rules meetings for head coaches and assistant coaches, CPR and CAP requirements) are suspended for this spring. Next school year in 2020-21, coaches will need to fulfill all requirements as in years past. The need to attest for CPR and sub-varsity/assistant coaches is not necessary for the spring 2020 season. Spring sports officials' ratings will not be collected this spring.

Winter Sports Officials Ratings & Concussion Reporting: The deadline for submitting official's ratings for **winter sports** has been extended to May 1, 2020. We also ask administrators to be sure to complete their concussion reporting for winter sports as soon as possible before May 1, 2020. **If no winter sports concussions occurred please report zero.**

Enrollment: Students are still considered to be enrolled in the school they are attending even though classes are not in the building, but online or virtual. Students who took online courses from another source but did not withdraw from their high school are not considered transfer students: they did not change schools, they just took outside online courses.

Extra Semesters of Enrollment: There is no change to the maximum enrollment and competition rules. **No extra semesters or trimesters of enrollment (fifth-year seniors) will be allowed due to the pandemic crisis.** Under the rules, once a student starts the 9th grade at any school, he or she is allowed 8 semesters or 12 trimesters, whether online, traditional or home school. The 7th and 8th semesters or 10th-12th trimesters must be consecutive. Semesters "count" under the rules, whether or not a student plays in a scrimmage or contest. In addition, students who graduate from any high school have exhausted their eligibility.

Academic Eligibility Regulations: There is no change to the MHSAA minimum academic standard that a student must have passed 66 percent of a full-time student's course load (generally four of five or six classes) during the most recent previous semester or trimester, including the second semester of 2019-20 impacted by the pandemic. MHSAA rules only require receiving credit, so "pass or fail" without a letter grade is acceptable. A school may determine on its own to waive rules or standards that are stronger than the MHSAA minimum, e.g., not requiring a GPA or that a student pass all classes.

As always, a student can make up a deficiency of credit in the summer or in a subsequent term (online), as long as the school accepts the credit. It is not required that courses used to make up a deficiency of credit be the same as a course not passed in the previous term. The Current Academic Credit rule, (e.g., weekly grade checks) has no bearing on eligibility in the pandemic crisis until students return to school in the fall. A summary of the academic eligibility rules is available here <https://www.mhsaa.com/Portals/0/Documents/AD%20Forms/Regulations%20Simplified%20-%20Academic%20Classes.pdf?ver=2014-06-05-154407-113>

Transfer Rule: There is no change to the sport-specific transfer regulation as a result of the pandemic crisis. A student who, after starting the 9th grade, changes schools (unless he or she meets the stated exceptions such as a full and complete residential change) is not eligible in a sport "participated in" during the previous season or school year. A fall or winter athlete who participated as above and changes schools will not be eligible unless an exception is met. Participation under the rules means playing in or entering one scrimmage or contest against another school. Simply practicing with a team is not considered participation under the transfer rule. A spring sport athlete who never got into a scrimmage or a game this spring could change schools and be eligible next spring in his or her sport. More information on the transfer rule is available <https://www.mhsaa.com/portals/0/Documents/AD%20Forms/Regulations%20Summarized%20Transfer.pdf>

This is a summary and is not in the *MHSAA Handbook*. Please consult the school athletic director or MHSAA staff for *Handbook* clarification. The MHSAA Representative Council will be considering other actions as a result of the pandemic at its early May meeting. Future updates will be forthcoming.