

# 400.00

## ADMINISTRATION OF ATHLETIC PROGRAM BYLAWS

Purpose: The following bylaws are intended to provide direction and assistance in the administration of League-sponsored activities.

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The most current version of the Official Handbook is always posted on the League website — [www.MSHSL.org](http://www.MSHSL.org).

# 400.00 BYLAWS: ADMINISTRATION OF ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

**BYLAW 401.00****CHEERLEADING**

Cheerleaders will be required to qualify under the following eligibility bylaws: Age, 101.00; Credit Requirements, 103.00; Enrollment, 104.00; Physical Examination, 107.00; Seasons, 109.00; Semesters, 110.00 and Chemical, 205.00.

**BYLAW 402.00****CONTEST RULES**

The following rules, except as modified by the League, shall govern all interschool competition in the respective sport or activity. League rule modifications are printed in the current Athletic Rules and Policies Manual in the section designated for each activity. The Rules and Policies Manual is available on the League website. Under “Activities” select desired sport, scroll down the page and then under Resources select Rules and Policies.

## 1. National Federation Rules Books:

Baseball	Lacrosse, Boys’
Basketball	Soccer
Cheerleading (Spirit)	Softball, Girls’ Fast-Pitch
Cross Country Running	Swimming and Diving
Football	Track and Field
Gymnastics, Girls’	Volleyball, Girls’
Hockey	Wrestling

## 2. Sport Association Rules Books:

Badminton, Girls’ .....	United States Badminton Association’s Official Rules of Play and Court Officials Handbook
Golf .....	United States Golf Association
Tennis.....	United States Tennis Association
Lacrosse, Girls’.....	US Lacrosse endorsed by the NFHS
Skiing .....	Federation International de Ski & National Collegiate Athletic Association
Synchronized Swimming, Girls’.....	United States Synchronized Swimming Association as modified and approved by the League Board of Directors

## 3. Dance Team, Girls' .....

Competition rules as adapted by the League Board of Directors

## 4. Adapted Bowling.....

Competition rules as adapted by the League Board of Directors

**BYLAW 403.00**

## **COOPERATIVE SPONSORSHIP OF AN ACTIVITY BY TWO OR MORE MEMBER SCHOOLS**

1. Cooperative sponsorship of an activity by two or more member schools will be considered under the following conditions. Class A and Class AA refers to the school size for placement into Administrative Regions and does not refer to the tournament classification to which a school may be assigned for a particular sport. For purposes of administering this bylaw, the largest 128 schools shall be Class AA, and the rest of the schools shall be Class A.

A. When any member school cooperatively sponsors an activity with any other member school(s), 100% of the total enrollment of the largest member school in the co-op and 50% of the enrollment of the other member school(s) in the co-op school be combined to determine the appropriate competitive classification.

**Cooperative sponsorship between two or more member schools.****MSHSL Sponsored Activities:**

Badminton, Girls’	Football	Softball, Adapted
Baseball	Hockey, B/G	Softball, Girls’ Fast-Pitch
Basketball, B/G	Lacrosse, B/G	Swimming and Diving, B/G
Bowling, Adapted	Music	Synchronized Swimming, Girls’
Cross Country Running, B/G	One Act Play	Tennis, B/G
Debate	Skiing, Alpine, B/G	Track and Field, B/G
Dance Team, Girls’	Skiing, Nordic Ski Racing, B/G	Visual Arts
Golf, B/G	Speech	Volleyball, Girls’
Gymnastics, Girls’	Soccer, B/G	Wrestling
Floor Hockey, Adapted	Soccer, Adapted	

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## 2. **Newly formed Cooperative Sponsorships**

- A. Each school that wishes to cooperatively sponsor an MSHSL activity must provide:
- 1) the documented need for the co-op.
  - 2) a summary of the steps each school has taken to promote participation in the activity for which a cooperative sponsorship is proposed.
  - 3) a written review and comment regarding the proposed cooperative sponsorship from:
    - a) the AD of each member school of the conference/conferences in which the proposed cooperative sponsorship school(s) participates.
    - b) the AD of each school in the most current competitive section or sub-section in which the proposed cooperative sponsorship will participate.
    - c) the Secretary of the Region Committee in which the largest school in the proposed cooperative sponsorship competes as reviewed at a Region Committee meeting OR by contacting the Region Committee members, individually, for their response.

In each instance in letters a-c above, a simple majority of the schools in the conference, section(s) and the Region Committee must approve the proposed cooperatively sponsored activity before any of the required information can be submitted to the MSHSL office.
  - 4) a completed copy of the most current Student Interest Survey of the Interscholastic Athletic Activities as found on the MSHSL website from each school in the proposed cooperative sponsorship.
  - 5) any other information as may be deemed informative for the MSHSL Board of Directors in making a final determination regarding the proposed cooperative sponsorship.

B. **Appeal to Add a Cooperative Sponsorship:**

The League Board of Directors will provide a hearing process for any member school requesting an exception to any cooperative sponsorship not approved per MSHSL Bylaw 403.2.A or 403.4.B. The request for a hearing shall be submitted in writing and sent to the Executive Director of the Minnesota State High School League prior to the first day of that sport season.

C. **Appeal to Review an Existing Cooperative Sponsorship:**

Prior to every two-year competitive placement cycle, any conference or school(s) within the section in which members of the cooperative sponsorship competes can request a review of any existing cooperative sponsorship to the Executive Director of the MSHSL provided that the reason for the request fully details why the Board of Directors should consider such review of the cooperative sponsorship.

## 3. **Cooperative Sponsorship with Charter Schools (Non-Exclusive Cooperative Sponsorship)**

Charter schools who are members of the Minnesota State High School League and who are organized as prescribed by M.S. 124E.03 may have multiple non-exclusive cooperative sponsorships in the same League-sponsored activity with public schools provided that:

- A. The Charter School does not have its own team in that activity;
- B. The Charter School student(s) return(s) to the public school in the attendance area of the public school where the student(s) officially resides with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s);
- C. The Charter Schools, on behalf of the student(s) officially enrolled in the Charter School, comply with all of the eligibility and financial requirements prescribed by the public school in the attendance area where the student(s) officially resides with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).
- D. The boards of education of the public school(s) and the Charter School agree to cooperatively sponsor the activity and complete the required League cooperative sponsorship form(s).

## 4. **Application Procedure**

- A. Each member school participating in a cooperative sponsorship must register and pay as an individual school to participate in each cooperatively sponsored activity.
- B. The governing boards of participating member schools must jointly make the application to the League Board of Directors.
  - 1) The request must include a resolution adopted by each board of education stating the purpose for sponsoring a joint team or activity.
  - 2) Each application for a cooperative sponsorship must include a review and comments as identified in 403.2.A.
  - 3) **Deadline for Application:** Requests for a cooperative sponsorship must be submitted to the League not later than 30 days prior to the first day of practice for that sport season to be considered for that sport season. Decisions for applications for cooperative sponsorship activities will be determined by the League at the next Board of Directors meeting.
- C. Cooperative sponsorship agreements must be for a minimum of two years. Cooperative sponsorship agreements will be continuous following the first two-year agreement unless an application for dissolution is submitted as outlined in MSHSL Bylaw 403.8.
- D. Any member school(s) who add a co-op later than 30 days prior to the first day of practice in that sport may request the Board of Directors to review the request as identified in 403.2.B.

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#### 5. Transfers Between Schools with Cooperative Programs

When a student transfers from one school to another school that cooperatively sponsor a program or programs the student shall remain fully eligible in all programs that are cooperatively sponsored. MSHSL Bylaw 111—Transfer and Residence, shall be used to determine the student's eligibility for the programs that are not cooperatively sponsored.

#### 6. Home Schools and Charter Schools

Home schools and Charter schools joining the League and entering into cooperative sponsorship agreements after September 1 will be allowed a late registration provided they can show evidence from their local school administration that they had no knowledge of the League deadline dates, process, etc.

#### 7. Identification of Cooperatively Sponsored Teams

The official school identification in tournament programs and press releases for cooperatively sponsored teams will be listed as indicated on the cooperative sponsorship resolutions submitted by the schools.

#### 8. Reviewing, Amending, Dissolving a Cooperative Sponsorship

- A. Cooperative Sponsorship agreements must be reviewed by representatives from all schools involved every two years. Amendments to the cooperative sponsorship may not be unreasonably denied by the participating schools.
- B. If either or any of the schools involved in the cooperative sponsorship wish to dissolve the agreement, they may do so provided a minimum of one year's notice is given to the other school(s) unless the schools involved mutually agree to discontinue the cooperative sponsorship agreement.
- C. Requests to dissolve the cooperative sponsorship must be submitted to the League not later than the first day of practice for that sport season. Decisions on all applications will be determined by the League at the next Board of Directors meeting.
- D. The dissolution request must include a resolution stating the purpose for dissolving the cooperative sponsorship.
- E. Any conference or competitive section school(s) in which the members of the cooperative sponsorship activity competes may ask the MSHSL Board of Directors to review the co-op approval as identified in 403.2.C.
- F. The Board of Directors may establish a committee to review all requests.

#### **BYLAW 403.00 INTERPRETATION**

**Q.** *What procedure should be followed when an additional school is to be added to an existing cooperative sponsorship agreement?*

- A. *Cooperative sponsorship is an agreement between two or more member schools. When a third or fourth school is to be added to an existing cooperative sponsorship agreement, a new application must be submitted on behalf of all of the schools that are going to be involved in the new agreement. At the same time application for dissolution should be submitted for the existing agreement.*

#### **BYLAW 404.00**

#### **LOCAL CONTROL**

Member schools may, if they so desire, prescribe eligibility bylaws that are more restrictive than those of the League. They may not adopt bylaws which lessen the effect of or change League bylaws except as noted in 302.00

#### **BYLAW 405.00**

#### **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN LEAGUE-SPONSORED TOURNAMENTS**

**Team:** A member school must schedule a minimum of three interscholastic varsity games, meets or matches to qualify for League-sponsored tournament participation in that sport.

**Individual:** Nordic and Alpine skiers must compete in at least three separate high school meets to be eligible to enter section competition.

#### **BYLAW 406.00**

#### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Group and individual physical development programs open to all students between the close of one season and the opening of the next season are encouraged. The use of high school gymnasiums and other athletic facilities during the same period is also encouraged. Coaching of sport techniques and skills to students who have participated on high school teams is a violation of the bylaw and should not be included in a program which emphasizes physical development rather than skills and techniques of specific sports. Chalk talks/"skull sessions" emphasizing sport skills and techniques are a violation of the bylaw. There shall be no requirement for athletes to participate in the program as a criteria for being on a high school team. Activities conducted by secondary students and sanctioned camps or clinics are exceptions to this bylaw.

**BYLAW 407.00****PROTESTS AGAINST DECISIONS OF CONTEST OFFICIALS**

1. Protests against decisions of contest officials will not be honored.
  - A. League officials will render an interpretation to all parties involved as to the proper application of contest rules in cases protested if the complete facts are presented, in writing, to the League office. Such interpretations, however, will not alter the outcome of the contest. The decisions of contest officials are final.
  - B. It is recognized that errors in interpretations and application of bylaws and in judgment situations are inevitable. However, the orderly and sportsmanlike conduct of high school activities requires that officials' decisions must be honored and be final.
  - C. Video recordings will not be used to overrule an official's decision or change the outcome of the game, meet or contest.
2. It is strongly recommended that contest officials be agreed upon well ahead of the date for all dual and tournament contests. School officials are expected to employ the best-qualified contest officials available and to place the operation of the contest entirely in their hands. Contest officials include referees, umpires, judges, timers, scorers and others responsible for the direct operation of a contest.

**BYLAW 408.00****REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF LEAGUE BYLAWS**

1. Any protests against a member school for violation of League bylaws shall be made in writing to League officials. The protest shall:
  - A. be made within 24 hours after receipt of information, and;
  - B. set forth the known facts, sources of information, witnesses and the time such data became known.
 Failure to make the report as required will not relieve the offending school of its responsibility. Such negligence may jeopardize the standing of the official and or the school for withholding evidence.
2. League officials shall make an immediate report of the information received to the superintendent or principal of the school in which a violation is suspected.
3. If there is insufficient time to complete an official investigation and to rule on it prior to the next contest or contests, the student(s) may participate subject to the condition that the full penalty of the bylaw will apply to such contests and to the student(s) if the charges are substantiated. The school must determine who is responsible for the violation and censure the responsible party or apply other administrative sanctions as may be appropriate. The school must notify the League of its action.
4. Nothing in this section may be considered as voiding the responsibility and duty of League officials to investigate eligibility of students or violation of bylaws received in an unofficial or less official form.

**BYLAW 409.00****RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS,  
STUDENTS AND SPECTATORS**

1. **Faculty Representative**  
Contesting teams or individual contestants shall be accompanied by a member of a school's administration, faculty or coaching staff. The school representative shall be responsible to act on behalf of the member school.
2. **Conduct of Teams, Students and Spectators**  
School officials shall be held responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held.
3. **School Responsibility to Inform and Enforce League Bylaws**  
The member school has a responsibility to educate student-athletes, coaches, and other appropriate persons on League bylaws and policies that could affect their participation in League sponsored activities. Further, the member school should monitor its compliance with League eligibility requirements.

**BYLAW 409.00 INTERPRETATION**

- Q. What action should be taken if the coach of a school team who is the only coach present at a contest, is ejected from the contest and removed from the immediate playing area?**
- A. With no remaining coach present, the school may not continue to participate. The contest should be terminated and forfeited to the opponent, and a Special Report should be filed with the League by the officials involved.

**BYLAW 410.00****SANCTIONS**

Cross Reference: 400 Bylaws Board Policies (Sanctions Out-of-State)

**1. Intrastate Tournaments and Multiple Meets:**

No sanction form is required. The administrator of the tournament or multiple dual meet shall be responsible for adherence to the limitations and requirements as listed in MSHSL Bylaw 413.

**2. Interstate Tournaments and Multiple Meets**

Sanctions must be secured for the following interstate tournaments and dual meet contests.

- A. Interstate dual contests requiring more than 600 miles round trip travel.
- B. All interstate tournaments or contests in which three or more teams participate in team sport activities (i.e., basketball, volleyball, hockey, wrestling, soccer, lacrosse, softball and baseball).
- C. All interstate tournaments or contests in which five or more schools participate in track, tennis, golf, cross country, gymnastics, swimming, synchronized swimming and skiing unless both of the following conditions exist:
  - 1) participants are all Minnesota schools or members of another state high school athletic association affiliated with the National Federation of State High School Associations, and no more than one is not a member of a state league affiliated with the NFHS; and
  - 2) only teams of a conference or within a radius of 100 miles of the site participate.

**3. Limitations and Requirements for Intrastate/Interstate Tournaments and Multiple Meets**

The Board of Directors has the authority to establish policies for intrastate/interstate tournaments and multiple meets. The following minimum conditions will apply:

- A. Contests must be sponsored by or be under the control of:
  - 1) a member school of the League,
  - 2) a college or university,
  - 3) a high school that is a member of another state high school athletic association affiliated with the National Federation of State High School Associations, or
  - 4) a member of a recognized High School Athletic Association.
- B. All participants must be:
  - 1) members of the League and or
  - 2) members of a recognized High School Athletic Association.
- C. There are no limitations to the number of participating teams for intrastate tournaments, or interstate tournaments, which are scheduled in a bordering state — Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota — and the adjacent Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Ontario.
- D. Interstate tournaments scheduled in all other states and Canadian provinces are *limited to four teams*.

**4. Procedure for Securing Interstate Sanctions**

The sponsoring school must request and complete sanction forms and return to the League office a minimum of 30 days before the contest.

**BYLAW 411.00****SCHEDULING OF CONTESTS**

1. All contests in which member schools participate shall be scheduled and arranged by the official representative of the schools concerned. Contests may be scheduled and played only when all of the Bylaws of the League are observed.
2. Member schools may schedule contests with non-member schools, provided that:
  - A. The non-member school follows all of the eligibility guidelines and bylaws of the state high school athletic/activity association in the state where the school is located; and
  - B. The state high school athletic/activity association is a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations and offers the athletic activity as one of the state association's official list of competitive activities; and
  - C. The participation by the non-member school has been approved for competition by that state high school athletic/activity association and the MSHSL.
3. All contests in which member schools participate shall be covered by a contract signed by the official representative of the schools involved. Such contracts may be canceled only:
  - A. by written mutual consent of the official representatives of the school parties to the contract;
  - B. by written approval of the Region Committee or Board of Directors respectively for subsection, section and state contests.
4. Member schools shall not:
  - A. schedule or play contests with schools under suspension from League membership (violation of this bylaw is sufficient grounds for suspension of the offending school from League membership),
  - B. schedule or participate in games with any "all-star" team or teams,

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- C. schedule or play a preliminary game to a professional contest,
  - D. schedule or participate in a contest, game or meet following the state tournament in that sport,
  - E. schedule a game or practice on Sunday, (dance team and cheerleading may request an exception to the policy to perform at a national event),
  - F. schedule their J.V. or B-squad to participate in a game, meet or tournament against another school's varsity unless all participating schools count that contest/tournament as one of the total allowed varsity contests,
  - G. engage in any meet or meets, training, practice or other activities between the end of the season and the opening of the next season in that sport.
5. Precinct Caucus Day
- Games, meets or contests are not to be played after 6:00 p.m. on Precinct Caucus Day. Precinct Caucus Day is established as the first Tuesday in February in all even-numbered years.
6. Election Day
- Public secondary schools. Except for regularly scheduled classes, public secondary schools, located in the political subdivision in which an election is held, may not hold a school sponsored event between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the day that an election is held. National, state and local elections apply equally.
- A. "regularly scheduled" election is one which:
    - 1) is a primary election; or
    - 2) is a general election; or
    - 3) is a township election.

*Please Note: Beginning in 2020, presidential nomination primary elections will take place on the first Tuesday in March of a presidential election year unless the major party chairs agree on a different date by March 1 of the previous year.*
  - B. NOT included in the above is an election which:
    - 1) is a special election; or
    - 2) is a postponed election; or
    - 3) is an election whose date is difficult to anticipate.
7. Sundays and Legal Holidays
- A. Sundays: League bylaws prevent the scheduling of practice, games, meetings, pictures or scrimmages on a Sunday for all League-sponsored activities including dance team and cheerleading.
  - B. Legal Holidays: League bylaws do not prevent scheduling games on a legal holiday; however, the Board discourages schools from scheduling games on legal holidays and withholds sanctions for those events requiring a sanction.
8. Jamborees
- A. All Jamborees may be conducted following five separate complete days of organized practice. Participation in a jamboree will not count as a game or match.
  - B. Basketball, football, hockey, lacrosse, girls' volleyball: Each participating team is limited to a maximum of one-half of the length of a regulation contest. It is strongly recommended that all squad members have an opportunity to participate.
  - C. Wrestling: Each individual contestant will be limited to one two-minute match (period).
9. Lightning/Threatening Weather
- When weather conditions present a threat to the safety of participants and spectators, the host school superintendent or his/her designee has the authority to postpone or suspend the contest. The policies for each sport would determine whether and how the contest would be resumed.
10. Definitions:
- A. End of the Week:  
Thursday shall be defined as being the end of the week for purposes of scheduling the first game of any sport season. Contests can be scheduled for that Thursday.
  - B. Practices Required Before Game:  
This bylaw does not apply to an individual athlete but is a team requirement. Obviously there should be great concern in deviating from the team policy for individuals. This is a health and safety regulation and compromise on it could raise serious questions should an injury be associated with inadequate conditioning or training.
  - C. End of Season:
    - 1) Student Participation on a Non-School Team While the Season is Still in Progress:
      - a) The season shall end when the student or the student's team has been eliminated from further participation in a League tournament series.

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b) Students who have been eliminated from further participation in a League tournament series may participate as an individual or as a member of a non-school team in that sport.

2) School Team Practice and Competition

The “end of season” shall be defined to be the last date of the state tournament in that sport.

a) Schools may continue to conduct practice and training for all squad members, including the students who have been eliminated from further individual competition in a League-sponsored series, until completion of the state tournament conducted by the League in that activity.

b) Dual contests may be scheduled after the start of the official League tournament series providing the school does not exceed the maximum number of games/matches/meets permitted in that activity.

D. Practice:

Practice shall be defined as sport-specific training and instruction involving students from your school and the approved coaches and instructors from your school.

E. Contest:

Any event involving two or more schools as identified in the MSHSL-approved sport-specific rules book and which follow the MSHSL rules, policies and Bylaws. All contests will count as one toward the maximum number of games allowed during that sport season.

F. Inter-School Scrimmage:

Any sport-specific training, instruction or interaction that involves members of your high school program with individuals or students who are not members of your high school program and who are not students at your school.

The intent of the scrimmage rule has always been to allow interscholastic scrimmages. By definition, an interscholastic scrimmage involves high school students only. Scrimmages or practices with college, community college or other non-school programs are not allowed.

Each athletic program is allowed three calendar dates to hold three days of scrimmages or two days of scrimmages and one jamboree day.

Schools participating in scrimmages:

- MAY—use a time clock in order to approximate certain game situations during which coaches may want to give instruction to their athletes.
- MAY NOT—participate in sessions that approximate or equal actual game conditions. For example, a hockey scrimmage cannot have three, seventeen minute periods.
- MAY—use officials.
- MAY NOT—use a scoreboard or other device to keep score or show points scored.
- MAY NOT—keep an official or unofficial score.
- MAY NOT—keep an official or unofficial scorebook.
- MAY—use practice jerseys.
- MAY NOT—use game uniforms or any other school identifying apparel.
- MAY NOT—advertise or promote the scrimmages.
- MAY NOT—charge admission of any kind, or accept free will donations.

G. Alumni Participation in Practice:

- 1) Alumni from your school may participate in your school’s sport-specific practices and not count against one of your three allowable scrimmage dates.
- 2) All alumni practice participation must be approved in advance by the athletic director. **MSHSL catastrophic insurance will not cover any participation that involves current students from your school and alumni from your school.**
- 3) An Alumni game, if not played under the conditions described in F, must count toward the limit of games allowed.

H. Alumni Coaches:

All alumni or any other individuals who volunteer to assist with the coaching or instruction of student athletes at your school must be approved in advance by the athletic director and must be identified as volunteer assistant coaches for your school. Minnesota Statute 123B.03 subdivision 1, requires background checks for all individuals who provide athletic coach services for your programs.

Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 123B.03, subdivision 1, as amended by Laws 2008, chapter 75, section 1, is amended to read: “*Subdivision 1. **Background check required.** (a) A school hiring authority shall request a criminal history background check from the superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension all individuals who are offered employment in a school and provide athletic coaching services or other extracurricular academic coaching services in a school regardless of whether any compensation is paid.*”

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I. Summer:

Summer shall be defined as the period from the Saturday following the fourth Friday in May through Labor Day. Summer for the sport of Soccer shall be defined as the day following the fourth Friday in May through the Sunday immediately prior to the official starting date of the MSHSL high school Soccer season. Note: Students may participate in activities during the summer, as defined above, even though their high school sport season in the same sport has begun, i.e. students may play tennis tournaments or participate in road races through Labor Day. Soccer is excluded from dual participation as defined above.

J. Shared Facilities:

Two or more schools sharing a facility for sport-specific training and instruction will be defined as a practice as long as there is no interaction between the students from each of the schools. For example, if two schools share a swimming pool it will be a practice if school A trains in lanes 1-3 and school B trains in lanes 4-6.

**BYLAW 411.00 INTERPRETATION**

1. Q. *Is an alumni game counted as a scrimmage?*

A. The information in Bylaw 411 clearly defines scrimmages and contests. Depending on how the participation with the alumni is set up it will either be a practice or game. Scrimmaging against alumni does not count toward the three allowable calendar dates for scrimmages.

2. Q. *Can we use paid officials for a scrimmage?*

A. Yes. Officials can be compensated at a rate mutually agreed upon by the official and the school.

**BYLAW 412.00**

**SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

1. **Competitive Activities:**

Adapted Bowling	Alpine Skiing	Girls' Hockey
Adapted Hockey	Soccer	Girls' Lacrosse
Adapted Soccer	Swimming and Diving	Girls' Nordic Ski Racing
Adapted Softball	Tennis	Girls' Alpine Skiing
Baseball	Track and Field	Girls' Soccer
Basketball	Wrestling	Girls' Fast-Pitch Softball
Cross Country Running	Girls' Badminton	Girls' Swimming and Diving
Football	Girls' Basketball	Girls' Synchronized Swimming
Lacrosse	Girls' Cross Country Running	Girls' Tennis
Golf	Girls' Dance Team*	Girls' Track and Field
Hockey	Girls' Golf	Girls' Volleyball
Nordic Ski Racing	Girls' Gymnastics	

\* *Girls' Dance Team, in its current form, may not rise to the level of a gender equity activity for the purpose of Title IX. Schools may individually seek approval from the Minnesota Department of Education to have Girls' Dance Team programs recognized as a sport. (See Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Statement below)*

Competitive activities for students with disabilities, the number and type of activities along with modifications necessary to adapt the activities to the identified students, shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors.

2. **Non-Competitive Activities:**

Cheerleading

Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Statement: Determining whether an activity is a sport:

In determining whether an activity is a sport, OCR will consider on a case-by-case basis:

- Whether selection for the team is based upon objective factors related primarily to athletic ability;
- Whether the activity is limited to a defined season;
- Whether the team prepares for and engages in competition in the same way as other teams in the athletic program with respect to coaching, recruitment, budget, try-outs and eligibility and length and number of practice sessions and competitive opportunities;
- Whether the activity is administered by the athletic department; and,
- Whether the primary purpose of the activity is athletic competition and not the support or promotion of other athletes.

OCR may also consider other evidence relevant to the activity, which might demonstrate that it is part of an institution's athletic program. Such evidence that may be considered includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Whether organizations knowledgeable about the activity agree that it should be recognized as an athletic sport;

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- Whether the activity is recognized as part of the interscholastic or intercollegiate athletic program by the athletic conference to which the institution belongs and by organized state and national interscholastic or intercollegiate athletic associations;
- Whether state, national and conference champions exist for the activity;
- Whether a state, national, or conference rule book or manual has been adopted for the activity;
- Whether there is state, national, or conference regulation of competition officials along with standardized criteria upon which the competition may be judged; and,
- Whether participants in the activity/sport are eligible to receive scholarships and athletic awards (e.g. varsity awards).

**BYLAW 413.00****GAME OFFICIALS**

1. The League may register officials for high school athletic contests and may adopt rules and regulations governing their qualifications for membership and advancement.

2. Use of Registered Officials:

Registered officials shall be employed for all varsity-level interscholastic contests in:

Baseball	Lacrosse	Track and Field
Basketball	Soccer	Volleyball, Girls'
Dance Team, Girls'	Soccer, Adapted	Wrestling
Football	Softball, Adapted	
Gymnastics, Girls'	Softball, Girls' Fast-Pitch	
Hockey	Swimming and Diving	
Hockey, Adapted Floor	Synchronized Swimming, Girls'	

When registered officials are not available, the Board of Directors may in case of emergency grant any member school a limited number of waivers. Unless a waiver is granted, only registered officials may work in a varsity contest.

3. Suspension of Officials:

The Board of Directors may suspend the registration of any game official for a violation of the standards prescribed by the League or for conduct unbecoming high school athletics.

*The number of registered officials for varsity level regular season contests:*

Baseball	Minimum: Umpire-in-chief (1) and one (1) field umpire. Optional: Umpire-in-chief (1) and two (2) or three (3) field umpires.
Basketball	Minimum: Referee (1) and an umpire (1). Recommended: Referee (1) and two (2) umpires.
Dance Team, Girls'	Routines in dual or triangular competitions must be judged by a minimum of two (2) judges, with one (1) serving as the superior judge. Routines in competitions where there are four (4) teams or competitions with four (4) teams or less, where teams perform multiple times must have three (3) to five (5) judges, with one (1) serving as the superior judge. In competitions where there are five (5) or more teams/routines, there shall be a minimum of five (5) judges, with seven (7) or more recommended. One (1) judge shall serve as the superior judge.
Football	Minimum: Four (4) official crew – referee, umpire, linesman and line judge. Recommended: Five (5) official crew – referee, umpire, linesman, line judge and back judge.
Gymnastics, Girls'	Minimum: Two (2) judges per event, one (1) superior judge. During non-conference non MSHSL qualifying meets or tournaments and with the consent of all participating coaches, one (1) judge per event may be used.
Hockey, Adapted Floor	Minimum: Referee (1). Recommended: Two (2) referees. Optional: Two (2) referees and one (1) linesman.
Hockey	Minimum: Two (2) official system consisting of two (2) referees. Recommended: Three (3) official system consisting of one (1) referee and two (2) assistant referees, two (2) referees and one (1) linesman, or one (1) referee and two (2) linesman. Optional: Four (4) official system consisting of two (2) referees and two (2) linesman.
Lacrosse, Boys'	Minimum: Two (2) officials. Recommended: Three (3) official system.
Lacrosse, Girls'	Minimum: Two (2) officials. Recommended: Three (3) official system.
Soccer, Adapted	Minimum: Referee (1). Recommended: Two (2) referees.
Soccer	Minimum: Two (2) official system – one (1) head referee and one (1) referee. Recommended: Three (3) official system – one (1) referee and two (2) assistant referees or the three (3) whistle system.
Softball, Adapted	Minimum: Umpire (1). Recommended: Two (2) umpires.

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Softball, Girls'	Minimum: Umpire-in-chief (1). Recommended: Umpire-in-chief (1) and one (1) field umpire. Optional: Umpire-in-chief (1) and two (2) or three (3) field umpires.
Swimming and Diving	Minimum: Referee/starter (1), may serve as diving referee. Recommended: Referee (1) and starter (1), either may serve as diving referee.
Synchronized Swimming, Girls'	Minimum: Three (3) competitive judges, one (1) of whom must be a referee.
Track and Field	Minimum: One (1) official (either the referee or starter). Recommended: Two (2) officials – referee (1) and starter (1).
Volleyball, Girls'	Minimum: First referee (1) and second referee (1).
Wrestling	Minimum: Referee (1). Optional: Referee (1) and one (1) assistant referee.

Registered Officials Not Required for Varsity ("A") Squad Contests:

- Badminton, Girls'
- Cross Country Running, Boys' and Girls'
- Golf, Boys' and Girls'
- Nordic Skiing, Boys' and Girls'
- Alpine Skiing, Boys' and Girls'
- Tennis, Boys' and Girls'

Note: While registered officials are not required for the above activities, schools are encouraged to secure individuals with a thorough knowledge of the rules in that activity.

Use of Non-Registered Officials or Less Than the Minimum Required

When there has been a determination that less than the minimum number of officials as stated above or a non-registered official has been used as an official in a varsity contest, without the school having received a waiver from the MSHSL office, the following will occur:

- The home team or whoever is responsible for hiring the officials will be fined: \$250 first offense, \$350 second offense (during the same school year), \$500 third offense (during the same school year).
- Activities/Athletic Administrator will be censured.
- When an unregistered official is used, the offending person will be suspended from completing the registration process, as a minimum, for the next four consecutive varsity, interscholastic contests or four weeks (28 calendar days), whichever is greater.
- When an Assignor is involved they will be censured and the Association will drop to probationary status as a Charter/Legacy Association—no official may be recommended to the State Tournament and the association may not have representation at MSHSL Meetings for one calendar year.

In order to avoid situations in which non-registered officials are used, officials must double check to make sure they are fully eligible, and that their partners are fully eligible, before working any varsity assignment. Assignors must check the MSHSL Directory (after the registration deadline) to make sure they only assign officials who are listed in the directory. Schools must check to make sure that only officials listed in the MSHSL Directory actually work their varsity events.

To aid in this process, all officials will be required to show proof of their eligibility by showing a copy of their MSHSL eligibility card, which includes a recent photo. This can be downloaded and printed from the Official's Corner or can be shown with a phone or other digital device. Someone representing the home school shall ask the officials to show their ID prior to working a varsity event. This can be done by the Athletic/Activities Director; site manager; coach, or other authorized school personnel. An event shall not start until all officials have proven that they are currently eligible in that sport; or a waiver to use less than the minimum required or a non-registered official has been granted by the MSHSL.

## 400.00 BYLAWS: ADMINISTRATION OF ATHLETIC PROGRAMS BOARD POLICIES

### **WOMEN IN OFFICIATING: EMPLOYMENT**

It is the policy of the Minnesota State High School League to work affirmatively to encourage, promote and ensure fair and equal treatment in the employment of women as officials for high school activities and sports contests at the local level through League tournaments.

### **CLASS COMPETITION (1/10/96) (12/2/10)**

A. Criteria for Sponsorship of an MSHSL State Tournament: At least one of the following criteria must apply:

- 1) A sufficient number of teams have registered for an activity as defined below.
- 2) The Board of Directors, at their discretion, may approve a state tournament if substantial evidence indicates that the conduct of this event would encourage equitable and statewide growth in that activity.

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B. Criteria for Sponsoring State Tournaments if Fewer Than 32 Teams Participate:

- 1) The Board of Directors may choose to cease sponsorship of a state tournament when the number of participating teams is fewer than 32 for three (3) consecutive years or at any time as deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors.
- 2) The tournaments in that activity will terminate at the conclusion of the regular season.

C. Criteria for Limiting Tournament Competition at the Section Level When More Than 32 Teams Participate:

- 1) The Board of Directors may sponsor a state tournament in an activity which is an exception to the bylaws if it is determined that non-school competition and training opportunities have not created statewide competitive inequities for the high school program.
- 2) The Board of Directors may elect to discontinue League sponsorship of a state tournament which is an exception to the bylaws if it is determined that the non-school competition and training bylaws have created statewide competitive inequities for the high school programs; or

D. Class Competition

1) Philosophy

The philosophy of tournament competition for the League is to extend the opportunity for student participation in a variety of activities at the section and state level. Region committees conduct contests, meets and tournaments in accordance with League rules and regulations which advance student participants to the next level of competition. (4/28/83)

2) Classification Formula for Administrative Regions

Effective with the 2011-2012 school year, the largest 128 schools shall be assigned to Class AA administrative regions. The rest of the schools shall be assigned to Class A administrative regions. Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, these assignments shall be in place for a minimum of four (4) years.

3) Multiple Class Tournament Competition

The Board of Directors may request input from the member schools to assist in determining the classification and format of any League-sponsored tournament, but the Board of Directors shall have sole discretion for determining the classification of schools and the tournament format(s). Input regarding tournament formats may be submitted to the League office by any interested party(ies).

Recommendations regarding multiple classes in any League-Sponsored activity may be forwarded to the Board of Directors by:

- a) Five (5) member schools' designated representatives; or,
- b) Any member of the Board of Directors; or,
- c) The Minnesota State High School Coaches Association; or
- d) The advisory committee for that activity.

The Board will consider the following information, but they are not limited in their tournament format decisions:

- a) Administrative Region management of section tournaments
- b) Anticipated loss of class time
- c) Classification issues
- d) Existing format/structure/history of the tournament
- e) Facility availability
- f) Financial implications for member schools and the League as a whole
- g) Implementation date
- h) Input from school administrators
- i) MSHSL staff input
- j) State tournament management issues, including quarterfinal and consolation play
- k) Tournament enhancements

Each recommendation will be evaluated on its merits.

4) Classification Formula for Activities Conducted in Multiple Classes

Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, tournament competition may be conducted in multiple classes as identified below:

- a) 32-63 teams competing within a class shall have a four (4) team tournament.
- b) 64 or more teams competing within a class shall have an eight (8) team tournament.

Currently Girls' Badminton and Girls' Synchronized Swimming do not meet the required number of registered teams for state tournament consideration. Girls' Dance Team shall be an exception to the classification formula and shall be classified each placement cycle as determined by the Board of Directors.

**ONE (1) CLASS TOURNAMENT:**

**Option 1:** When there are a minimum of 32 teams registered for a League sponsored activity, a four (4) team state tournament may be held.

**Option 2:** When there are 64 or more teams registered for a League sponsored activity, a single eight (8) team, or a festival formatted State Tournament may be held.

**TWO (2) CLASS TOURNAMENT:** When there are 96 or more teams registered for a League sponsored activity the divisions will be identified as follows:

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**Option 1**

CLASS AA: 128 registered teams with the largest enrollment.

CLASS A: The rest of the registered teams.

**Option 2**

Divide the registered teams either by the top 64 teams by enrollment or by the bottom 64 teams by enrollment, provided that activity meets the minimum requirement for two classes.

**THREE (3) CLASS TOURNAMENT\*:** When there are 288 or more teams registered for a League sponsored activity, the divisions will be based on enrollment as follows:

Class AAA: The 96 largest teams by enrollment

Class AA: The next 128 largest teams by enrollment

Class A: The balance of the registered teams

**FOUR (4) CLASS TOURNAMENT\*:** When there are 320 or more teams registered for a League activity, the divisions will be based on enrollment as follows:

Class AAAA: The 64 largest teams by enrollment

Class AAA: The next 64 largest teams by enrollment

Class AA and Class A: If fewer than 256 teams remain, the classes will be divided equally. If more than 256 teams remain,

Class AA will be the largest 128 teams and the remainder of the teams will be Class A.

**MORE THAN FOUR CLASSES IN A TOURNAMENT:** Tournament formats for more than four classes shall be determined by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis.

- 5) Tournament Formats/Reduction in the Number of Classes/Enrollments for Classification Purposes/"Opt-Up" Requests/Classification Appeals
- a) When the number of competing schools in an activity falls below the minimum number for multiple-class tournaments, the classes will be reduced to bring the activity into compliance with the classification policy unless the classification divisions are otherwise determined by the Board of Directors.
  - b) Unless otherwise determined by the Board, all tournament formats shall be in place for a minimum of four (4) years and shall be completed in three (3) calendar days. Recommendations for format changes will be received by the Board of Directors two (2) years prior to any proposed implementation date.
  - c) Enrollments for classification shall be determined every even-numbered year by the Board of Directors using the most current MARRS Report to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. From those enrollment numbers the Board of Directors shall subtract 40 percent of the free/reduced lunch count reported to the MDE for each school for the same time period.
  - d) Students whose attendance is included in the enrollment information provided by the Minnesota Department of Education, but whose educational programming prohibits them from participating in athletic and/or fine arts activities in any school during the school year, shall not be counted toward the final enrollment of that school for purposes of administrative or tournament classification.
  - e) Schools which have all male or all female students shall have their enrollments doubled.
  - f) The assignment of schools into competitive sections and classifications shall be for a two-year period. League staff shall have authority to balance the section assignments each year with approval from the Board of Directors.
  - g) Schools may "opt-up" to a higher classification in an activity sponsored by their school according to the following criteria:
    - 1.1 A request must be made in writing to the League Office with the rationale for the "opt-up" request.
    - 1.2 The request to "opt-up" must be a two-year commitment to compete in the new classification.
    - 1.3 Application period will coincide with the competitive placement cycle.
  - h) Prior to any classification determination, schools who believe their school demographics unfairly place their team sports (Football, Hockey, Basketball, Baseball, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, and Volleyball) in a larger tournament classification may appeal their placement to the MSHSL office provided that the criteria below is met:
    - 1.1 The schools' free/reduced lunch counts provided to the League office by the Department of Education exceeds 50% of the school's grade 9-12 enrollment.
    - 1.2 The appeal must be documented in writing and shall include, but is not limited to the following: travel distance; community/region economic conditions; attrition; unique school population; other specific school community information that will support the school's presentation for a classification reduction
    - 1.3 The information regarding the school's appeal shall be presented by the designated school representative(s) to the Athletic Directors Advisory Committee who will review the request and provide a recommendation for the MSHSL Board of Directors.
    - 1.4 The MSHSL staff will record the minutes of the meeting and will provide the recommendation from the Activity Directors Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors for their consideration.
    - 1.5 The decision of the Board is final, and there shall be no appeal.
- 6) Placement of Teams in Competitive Sections
- Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, schools shall be placed into competitive sections for a minimum of two (2) years.

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- a) Criteria for Competitive Section Placement shall include, but will not be limited to the following:
    - 1.1 Geographic/contiguity
    - 1.2 Section balance
  - b) The Differential in Number of Assigned Teams in Competitive Sections at the time of placement shall be as follows:
    - 1.1 Two Class
 

Class AA: Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, in the initial year of the two-year assignment, the differential shall not exceed two (2) teams in each competitive section.

Class A: Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, in the initial year of the two-year assignment, the differential shall not exceed four (4) teams in each competitive section.
    - 1.2 Multiple Class (three or more)
 

Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, in the initial year of the two-year assignment, the differential shall not exceed two (2) team for any class.
  - c) Prior to confirmation by the Board of Directors, Competitive Section assignments will be reviewed by the Athletic Directors Advisory Committee.
  - d) The Competitive Section Placement Shall be the Decision of the Board of Directors.
    - 1.1 Schools may not appeal their competitive section placement.
    - 1.2 The League staff will assign late registrations.
  - e) Process for Competitive Section Placement
    - 1.1 Schools annually submit their October 1 Average Daily Membership (ADM) to the MDE as required by the MARRS reporting requirement.
    - 1.2 The MDE submits reported enrollment data to the League Office and the final enrollment data shall meet the criteria identified in this policy.
    - 1.3 During the school year prior to the end of a competitive section placement cycle, the League office uses the student enrollment data for grades 9-12 for each member school. Alternative learning center (ALC) and similar alternative enrollment data are omitted from the total student count.
    - 1.4 As soon as the MDE information is verified, the League office will consider the number of registered teams for each sport/activity and make the determination about the numeric division between the classes.
    - 1.5 The League office will divide each class into competitive sections. When feasible, sections will be balanced to avoid a bye or a "pig-tail" game. League staff will make the placements and the Athletic Directors Advisory Committee will review the placements for balance and geographic contiguity. The League Board of Directors will affirm the placement of each school in each activity.
    - 1.6 All placements shall be final.
    - 1.7 The competitive sections will be announced to the member schools and to the general public as soon as they are approved by the Board of Directors or the Board's designee.
    - 1.8 Changes in the assignment of and number of teams in any competitive section will occur only in the event of co-op dissolutions or additions; new registrations; or the discontinuation of an activity by a school. Competitive Section assignments will be reviewed annually and recommendations for a change in assignments may be made to the Board of Directors by League staff in August of each year. Placement will be made by MSHSL staff.
    - 1.9 All enrollment data during the two-year placement cycle shall be based on the school's enrollment at the initial placement for the cycle (1.3 above).
- 7) Placement of Schools in Administrative Regions
- The Board of Directors will place schools into administrative regions when the enrollment data is available from the MDE.
- a) The criteria for placement into administrative regions shall be as follows. The criteria are weighted in the order of importance with [1] given more weight than [2], etc. (4/20/94)
    - 1.1 Administrative Region Placement Criteria
      - [1] Enrollment
      - [2] Statewide representation
      - [3] Geographic contiguity
    - 1.2 Criteria for Classification
      - [1] AA: The largest 128 schools
      - [2] A: The rest of the schools
      - [3] Schools registered for basketball
      - [4] Nearly equal distribution of schools.
    - 1.3 Schools not registered for basketball will be assigned to an administrative region based on their geography.
  - b) Administrative region assignments will not be limited to a specific differential due to the registration of home schools, charter schools, and small non-public schools that do not sponsor competitive programs on their own but must be placed into an administrative region.

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- c) The recommended placement of a school into an Administrative Region is four (4) years, but the Board of Directors has the sole responsibility to determine the length of time a school is placed into an Administrative Region.

### **COACHES**

Two or more schools may share the same head coach in a given activity. It is to be understood that all athletes, while being coached by the same coach, would compete under the name of her/his resident high school. (4/7/76)

### **BOARD POSITION STATEMENT: CODE OF ETHICS FOR COACHES**

Statement of Philosophy. The Minnesota State High School League has established policies and standards which will cultivate the ideals of good sportsmanship. It shall be the responsibility of each member school to ensure that all individuals employed or directly associated with the interscholastic program conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. The coach is an official representative of the school at interscholastic athletic activities. It is the responsibility of the head and assistant coaches to serve as role models for students and the public.

Code of Ethics. A coach will be in violation of the standards for good sports established by the Minnesota State High School League by:

- A. making degrading/critical remarks about officials during or after a contest either on the field of play, from the bench, through any public news media, social media or other electronic media;
- B. arguing with officials or goes through motions indicating dislike/disdain for a decision;
- C. detaining the officials following the contest to request a ruling or explanation of actions taken by the official; or
- D. being ejected from any contest.

Actions and Response. Negative actions by a coach shall be reported to the League by the school and by the head contest official. The school shall document the results of their investigation and actions taken, where necessary and appropriate. Penalties for violation of these standards may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, censure, fines, or other actions as deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors.

Commentary. It is within each individual's ability to treat others with dignity and respect. The League and its member schools expect each individual to assure the responsibility for their actions.

### **re BYLAW 401.00 - CHEERLEADING**

Cheerleading is an extracurricular activity designed to serve as a component of the athletic program. Its primary purpose is to foster school spirit, sportsmanship and a positive atmosphere at competitive events. Cheerleading, as an extracurricular activity, is not a competitive activity as sponsored by the Minnesota State High School League.

### **MEDIA INTERVIEWS AT MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE TOURNAMENTS**

- A. Team/Individual locker rooms will be closed to all media (print and electronic) for all Minnesota State High School League-sponsored tournaments.
- B. Coaches and players will be available for interviews in areas outside of their locker room.
- C. Because state tournament games are played in a very competitive and electric atmosphere, it is natural that disappointment will follow a loss and excitement will accompany a victory. In fairness to the emotions of the players and coaches, and in respect for the unity that follows a contest, the Minnesota State High School League strongly recommends that media honor a five-minute "cooling off" period before interviewing representatives from the participating teams.

### **CERTIFIED MEDICAL PERSONNEL AT GAMES**

- A. The Board strongly recommends the presence of a certified medical personnel at all interscholastic games/contests. Certified medical personnel include:
  - 1) Licensed Physician (M. D.)
  - 2) Athletic Trainer
  - 3) Emergency Medical Technician (E.M.T.)
  - 4) Paramedic
  - 5) Persons who hold current Red Cross, Advanced First Aid Cards (75-hour course)
  - 6) Certified head coach
- B. The role of certified medical personnel shall be:
  - 1) To protect the health and safety of the athlete.
  - 2) To provide appropriate medical care by functioning within the levels of their medical education/training when dealing with: First aid; Triage; Return to Play/Action decisions.

### **BANDS AT ATHLETIC EVENTS – PEP BAND AND MARCHING BAND PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES**

The League recommends that individual schools develop performance guidelines that meet the expectations of their school and community. Guidelines should be developed with the input of band director(s), school administration and others as may be appropriate for your school. The following areas should be considered when developing these guidelines:

- A. The number of appearances at athletic events should be set in advance, excluding post-season events. This could be done on a per season or per year basis. A limitation for the number of performances within a week, or a limitation on which nights of the week are used, may also be considered/included.

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- B. Guidelines as to when the band will play for post-season events (section and state tournaments) should be established. These guidelines may need to include when a pep band will play and when a marching band or the “full” band will play.
- C. Weather guidelines should be developed to help in making decisions as to when to cancel outdoor performances. The Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA) recommends that bands not perform outside at a temperature of 40 degrees or below.
- D. How long a band will perform at an event should be pre-determined.
- E. A schedule of when the band will perform should be set well in advance—by the season or by the year.
- F. The band director should coordinate or be consulted regarding any musical performance at an athletic event that involves high school band members.
- G. Bands should perform at an equal number of boys’ and girls’ events.

**re BYLAW 409.00 – RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS, STUDENTS AND SPECTATORS**

Host schools are responsible for providing appropriate supervision, other than the coach(es), when crowd control may be a factor.

**re BYLAW 410.00 – SANCTIONS (OUT-OF-STATE)**

Schools may participate in out-of-state meets or tournaments, but to do so must complete the sanction forms as required by NFHS Interstate Competition Guidelines. Schools are discouraged from scheduling tournaments during the regular season which would cause students to be absent from classroom activities.

**re BYLAW 411.00 – TRAVEL FOR OUT-OF-STATE PRACTICE AND SCRIMMAGES**

If a member school’s League-sponsored athletic team requests out-of-state travel for a practice or a scrimmage for the varsity, junior varsity or “B” squad teams, the school board must complete the following steps PRIOR to any travel by the team.

The school board must:

1. Review a complete copy of the itinerary planned for the school team.
2. Review the financial aspect of the trip including the funds to be received from and expended by the school team.
3. Identify the manner in which the school board will comply with Title IX relative to travel opportunities for each gender.
4. Approve travel for the school team at a regularly scheduled school board meeting.

Once complete, the Designated School Representative shall notify the League office, in writing, and identify the team(s) that has/have been approved for out-of-state travel in order to practice or scrimmage and affirm that all of the above steps have been completed. Notification to the League office must be completed at least 21 days prior to any travel by the approved team(s).

**DISTRICT FOOTBALL**

**Definition:** District Football is the official name given to the method of scheduling all regular season football games in Minnesota. In this system, each school is assigned to a district based on geography, enrollment and “like schools” with natural rivalries preserved whenever possible. This system for scheduling covers the regular season only. The post-season Section Football system remains in place.

**District Football vs. Section Football:** Section classifications are determined by enrollment and geography (as determined by MSHSL Board policy), with a balanced number of schools in each section. These classifications are strictly followed. District scheduling also uses school enrollment as a key factor in placing schools in districts, but Districts are not confined to enrollment classifications, as in section football, and are also not restricted to a specific number of schools, thus allowing each district to be formed in a way that best works for the schools of a similar size in a particular geographical area.

**District Assignment and Realignment:** Schools will be assigned to Districts every two years, with the assignments finalized no later than the June MSHSL Board Meeting. This will be done in even numbered years, opposite of when sections are realigned. A District Placement Committee is made up of ten AD’s, coaches and/or other administrators, who represent different geographical regions of the state and a variety of school sizes. The committee will be selected by League staff in consultation with the Minnesota Football Coaches Association and the AD’s Association. The final committee will be approved by the MSHSL Board of Directors. After the initial District Assignments in April of 2014, the placement committee will be kept intact for the re-districting process that takes place in 2016. After that process has been completed three - four members of the committee will rotate off each cycle, with each member staying on the committee for at least four years—two rounds of realignment.

**Enrollment Data:** Enrollment data from October 1 of the school year in which the placement process is completed will be used as criteria for District placement. Enrollments will be calculated using the enrollment for grades 9-12 (grades 7-10 to determine 9-man classification) as provided by the Minnesota Department of Education, less 40% of the free and reduced lunch number.

**9-Man:** Prior to the initial alignment process and for all future realignment processes, schools that qualify for 9-man Football must declare whether or not they will compete in 9-man football for the two years for which the new realignment will be in effect. Class A schools who do not qualify for 9-man, may appeal to play 9-man during the regular season. This appeal will be go the District Placement Committee. That committee will make recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, who will make the final decision. Schools allowed to play 9-man during the regular season must play 11-man in the Section playoffs. Schools may appeal to play 9-man football as per current MSHSL Board Policy for appeals.

**School Information and Input:** During each realignment process all schools will be given the opportunity to file an information form that will allow them to share specific information about their program; indicate schools that they feel they must play; and provide any other information that will be helpful to the committee during the placement process. These forms must be filed by the established deadline.

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**Placement Process:** The District Placement Committee will meet at least two times to assign schools to Districts. Their final recommendation will go to the Athletic/Activities Directors Advisory Committee for review at their May meeting. The AD's Advisory Committee will review all placements and pass these placements on to the full Board of Directors with any recommended adjustments. The Board will review and give final approval at the June meeting in even numbered years.

The committee will work to place schools according to geography, and "school size." While the membership of districts may include schools that are more than twice as big as another school, the Placement Committee recommends that when developing sub-districts, Districts should not place schools with enrollments more than twice as large as another school, in the same sub-district; unless smaller school approves of that placement, or such a placement will work based on competitive balance.

The goal will be to have Districts with at least sixteen schools (although that may not always be possible), and all will have an even number unless there is an odd number of 9-man teams or an odd number of 11-man teams. When there is an odd number, that district may use the Zero Week concept to make sure that all schools have a full schedule. Another option may be to find a school from an adjacent state to fill in the bye weeks; or schools may choose to have a bye and only play seven games. All schools within a District must have an eight game regular season schedule, unless there is an odd number of schools and the District members decide to only play seven games. Districts will have flexibility in how those schedules are developed.

**District Structure:** Schools within each District will determine the "structure" of their District and how they will schedule regular season games. Once Districts have been assigned, a District Committee, made of Athletic/Activities Directors from the schools of that District shall meet and determine, with the input from all District schools, the best way to form sub-districts. Each District shall have a minimum of two sub-districts, with sub-districts named Red, White, Blue, Maroon; or sub-districts may be named by "direction," for example 9-man South District may name their sub-districts East and West. Final sub-district alignment shall be voted on by all member schools, with a two-thirds majority (of those voting) needed to pass.

**Schedules:** Regular season schedules will be developed with all of the schools in a sub-district playing each other. Games scheduled to fill out the schedule will be cross-over games with schools in another sub-district of the District to which they are assigned (Intra-District games); or with permission from the MSHSL Placement Committee, these games may be played against schools in another District (Cross-District games). Once the District Committee has determined the schedule for all District Schools, all members of the district will have the opportunity to vote on this schedule, with a two-thirds majority (of those voting) necessary in order to approve the schedule. Once the original two-year schedule has been approved, if there is a need to adjust schedules based on changes with co-ops, or schools adding or dropping programs, those adjustments may be made by the District Committee.

**Sub-Varsity Schedules:** District football governs varsity schedules only. Schools within each District will decide how to schedule sub-varsity levels. These schedules may be aligned with the varsity schedule, or schools may schedule sub-varsity on their own. Sub-varsity schedules are not restricted to District opponents. The procedures for scheduling sub-varsity, and rules and policies to govern sub-varsity shall be included in District Bylaws.

**Sub-District Champions:** A champion will be determined for each sub-district. Trophies for Sub-District Champions shall be purchased directly from the MSHSL Trophy vendor by the championship teams. Each District may also name an all-district team based on their sub-districts. The criteria for these awards and any other awards (Coach of the Year, MVP, etc.); and how these award winners are selected, is to be determined by the District Committee and included in the District Bylaws. Each District shall determine what the awards will be (trophies, plaques, certificates, etc.) and shall arrange for the purchase of the awards, with each school paying for the individual awards they receive.

**District Committee:** Membership on the District Committee shall be determined by each District, with equal representation (as close as possible) from each sub-district. Members of the District Committee shall elect a chairperson from those that are on the committee. The recommendation is to have seven or nine members of the District Committee. Each committee shall finalize the Bylaws for their District, as per the model provided by the MSHSL. Bylaws shall be approved by a vote of all members of the District, with a two-thirds majority (of those voting) needed to pass. The Bylaws shall be on file in the MSHSL office. Districts are to operate without having a separate financial structure. If there is a need to collect and disburse funds, a procedure for doing so must be included in the Bylaws. Those funds must be accounted for through the financial operation of a school that is a member of that district.

**Resolution of Issues:** The District Committee is expected to resolve issues that may occur within their district. They may contact MSHSL staff for guidance. If necessary, the District Placement Committee will mediate and assist in resolving any internal conflicts. Conflicts that cannot be resolved at the District level or with assistance from staff and/or the District Placement Committee will go to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The decision of the Executive Committee is final.

MSHSL member schools who choose to not participate or do not fully cooperate with District Football Policy will not be allowed to participate in the Section Playoffs.

## **MINNESOTA STATUTE 122A.15 – TEACHERS, SUPERVISORY AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL, DEFINITIONS, LICENSURE**

### **Subdivision 1. Teachers.**

The term "teachers" for the purpose of licensure, means all persons employed in a public school or education district or by a service cooperative as members of the instructional, supervisory, and support staff including superintendents, principals, supervisors, secondary vocational and other classroom teachers, librarians, counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers, audio-visual directors and coordinators, recreation personnel, media generalists, media supervisors, and speech therapists.

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Subdivision 2. Supervisory personnel.

"Supervisory personnel" for the purpose of licensure means superintendents, principals, and professional employees who devote 50 percent or more of their time to administrative or supervisory duties over other personnel, and includes athletic coaches.

**MINNESOTA STATUTE 122A.33 – LICENSE AND DEGREE EXEMPTION FOR HEAD COACH**

Subdivision 1. Employment.

Notwithstanding section 122A.15, subdivision 1, a school district may employ as a head varsity coach of an interscholastic sport at its secondary school a person who does not have a license as head varsity coach of interscholastic sports and who does not have a bachelor's degree if:

- (1) in the judgment of the school board, the person has the knowledge and experience necessary to coach the sport;
- (2) can verify completion of six quarter credits, or the equivalent, or 60 clock hours of instruction in first aid and the care and prevention of athletic injuries; and
- (3) can verify completion of a coaching methods or theory course.

Subdivision 2. Annual contract.

Notwithstanding section 122A.58, a person employed as a head varsity coach has an annual contract as a coach that the school board may or may not renew as the board sees fit.

Subdivision 3. Notice of nonrenewal; opportunity to respond.

A school board that declines to renew the coaching contract of a licensed or nonlicensed head varsity coach must notify the coach within 14 days of that decision. If the coach requests reasons for not renewing the coaching contract, the board must give the coach its reasons in writing within ten days of receiving the request. The existence of parent complaints must not be the sole reason for a board not to renew a coaching contract. Upon request, the board must provide the coach with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the reasons at a board meeting. The hearing may be opened or closed at the election of the coach unless the board closes the meeting under section 13D.05, subdivision 2, to discuss private data.

**MINNESOTA STATUTE 122A.58 – COACHES, TERMINATION OF DUTIES**

Subdivision 1. Termination; hearing.

Before a district terminates the coaching duties of an employee who is required to hold a license as an athletic coach from the commissioner of education, the district must notify the employee in writing and state its reason for the proposed termination. Within 14 days of receiving this notification, the employee may request in writing a hearing on the termination before the board. If a hearing is requested, the board must hold a hearing within 25 days according to the hearing procedures specified in section 122A.40, subdivision 14, and the termination is final upon the order of the board after the hearing.

Subdivision 2. Final decision.

Within ten days after the hearing, the board must issue a written decision regarding the termination. If the board decides to terminate the employee's coaching duties, the decision must state the reason on which it is based and include findings of fact based upon competent evidence in the record. The board may terminate the employee's duties or not, as it sees fit, for any reason which is found to be true based on substantial and competent evidence in the record.

Subdivision 3. Nonapplication of section.

This section shall not apply to the termination of coaching duties pursuant to a district transfer policy or as a result of the nonrenewal or termination of the employee's contract or the employee's discharge, demotion or suspension pursuant to section 122A.40 or 122A.41. This section shall not apply to the termination of an employee's coaching duties before completing the probationary period of employment.