

Dance Team FAQ – March 2009

Disclaimer:

The following FAQ's are intended to help guide Dance Team coaches so that they do not violate MSHSL rules and policies. These questions and answers are not meant to be inclusive. Covering all possible questions/scenarios is impossible. However, this information should help guide both coaches and Athletic/Activities Directors, by answering common questions, and giving interpretations that can be applied to other similar situations. Coaches who have any questions or are not sure whether or not something is "legal" should consult their Athletic/Activities Director. The AD's may contact the League Office if they are unsure of the correct interpretation.

FAQ's:

How is the Winter Competitive Season Defined?

The winter competitive season begins on the date of the first allowed practice, which is on Monday, 17 weeks prior to the state tournament. The winter competitive season ends on Saturday of the state tournament. Coaches can work directly with team members during this entire season. Team members may compete on studio teams as soon as their high school team has been eliminated from post season competition.

Can I meet with team members outside of the competitive season??

Yes you may conduct a pre-season meeting to review team registration, MSHSL rules, tryout information, off-season training opportunities, or other administrative items. You could also meet individually with students to set goals; plan for the season; set expectations for the season, etc. You cannot coach or instruct in the skills, techniques, or strategies of dance.

Our team is getting new uniforms. Is it OK to meet with members of the team outside of the regular season to assist in designing the uniforms and/or to assist in fitting uniforms?

Yes, a coach may meet with members of the team to design and/or fit uniforms. Coaches can meet with team members as long as dance techniques, team choreography or other strategies are not taught or discussed.

As a coach I will be finalizing the music for the competitive season. Can I meet with members of the team to assist in deciding the music?

Yes – this could be done at anytime, but student athletes cannot choreograph routines for this music, and coaches may not work with any number of student athletes in the development or practice of choreography until 2 weeks prior to the start of the season. Routines used for the competitive season may not be developed until choreography sessions begin, and these routines cannot be practiced until the season begins.

Can I have the music professionally prepared during the summer or early fall?

Yes – a member of the coaching staff may finalize the music and may have the music prepared professionally. Coaches and students are not allowed to develop their choreography prior to the two weeks before the start of the winter competitive season. Teams who violate the rules regarding choreography and the practicing of routines will be required to develop new music and new routines/choreography

Can I use the spring try-out time frame to select members for our fall dance program?

No – coaches may only conduct try-outs for the winter competitive season. Winter competitive coaches may not be involved in the selection of team members for any spring or fall programs. Winter team members cannot be required to participate in fall programs. Winter team tryouts cannot be used to choose members of the fall team.

How long may I run tryouts?

Coaches may conduct tryouts for 1 week, following the state tournament and prior to June 15. The maximum number of days would be six, as you cannot have contact with student athletes on a Sunday. These six days (or less) must be within a one week time frame.

Can I work with my student athletes at all outside of the times mentioned above?

Yes you may conduct off-season conditioning programs, if the programs are open to any student who attends your school; only includes exercises and drills designed to increase/improve strength, endurance, flexibility, aerobic conditioning, etc. Specific dance skills cannot be taught. Coaches may not require student athletes to participate in such programs as a condition for being on a winter competitive team.

I am a coach of the winter competitive team. As long as I don't coach the dancers, may I "manage" or "organize" and run the fall program?

No – Coaches of the winter competitive team may coach at two times during the year: 1) during the winter competitive season; and 2) during the summer waiver period – June and July. Outside of these two time frames, the competitive team coaches may not plan, organize or coach any kind of off-season program other than an off-season conditioning program as outlined above. Coaches may share information about programs with student athletes, but may not require students to be involved in any of these programs. (See Undue Influence Bylaw included in this FAQ)

As coach of the winter competitive team may I train coaches who are coaching the fall program?

You may provide training to other coaches in regard to basic skills, fundamentals, and techniques of dance. You may teach them drills; and basic strategies that they could use at a practice. You may not plan the practice sessions. You may not attend practices and then give feedback or strategies to either coaches or dancers. You may not talk to individual student athletes in order to train them or coach them.

As a coach can I be involved in planning, organizing, and conducting a "Revue" as a fund raiser for our team?

No - coaches cannot do this unless the planning, organizing and the event itself take place after the start of the winter season or during the summer. A team can sponsor a Revue to raise money at any time – as long as the coaching staff is not involved in any way.

Can "teams" participate at another school's revue??

Yes – if the revue is held during the winter competitive season. A "fall team" or group could perform in a revue if winter coaches are not involved in coaching, planning, organizing or running the event.

As the Winter Competitive Coach can I plan, organize and work with my Dancers on a fund-raising program that is run outside of the regular season?

Yes – IF it does not involve your winter dancers dancing; IF the fund raiser is not mandatory; IF your school approves the fund raising activity.

What are some other things that I cannot do?

Direct athletes to participate at a specific studio, or to attend a specific camp or clinic

Place dancers on a team or roster, organize a team roster; or influence the placement of athletes on a team for tournaments, camps or clinics – except for athletes with whom you work with under the summer coaching waiver.

Direct students to participate in open gym, captain’s practice; or non-school teams, camps, clinics or any other off season training programs.

Organize, supervise, direct or otherwise participate in the organization of captain’s practices.

Require students to participate in fund raising in order to be on a team – fees may be charged, and fund raising may be one opportunity for the student athlete to pay the fee; but required fund-raising would be a violation of the bylaw on “Undue Influence.”

UNDUE INFLUENCE: (From MSHSL Official Handbook)

BYLAW 307.00

UNDUE INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS

1. It shall be a violation for any school representative to exert undue influence on students to participate on non-school teams or to participate in camps, clinics, open gym, captain’s practice or other activities. A School representative shall not require or demand participation in a camp or clinic or on a non-school team as a condition of membership for a school team.
2. An alleged violation will require a letter of inquiry from the League office. On the basis of the response from the member school to the letter of inquiry, the Board of Directors may choose to appoint a committee to conduct a full investigation. It shall be an obligation of the member school to cooperate with this investigating committee and to provide all information pertinent to the investigation.
3. **Penalty:**
A confirmed violation will result in a fine to the member school.
 - A. On the first offense, the fine shall be \$500.
 - B. On the second offense, the fine shall be \$750.
 - C. On the third offense, the fine shall be \$1,000.
4. **Appeal:**
All appeals by school representatives, including coaches, who have been found to be in violation of this bylaw shall be heard by an independent hearing officer at the local level.

Coaches must keep in mind both the language of this bylaw and its intent. Coaches can encourage and motivate their athletes to participate in off season programs, condition, train, go to camps, etc. But cannot require that for participation. Remember this is high school – students need to have the freedom to participate in other sports, activity and/or academic programs – or just take time off.

STUDIOS:

Can a member of my Dance Team also be a member of a Studio program or team?

Students involved in MSHSL sports are free to participate and/or compete on other teams or in other programs. The only exceptions are during the winter competitive season. Dance Team is different

than other sports in that students may PARTICIPATE on a non school team during the winter season – but – just like in other sports, they may not COMPETE with a non school team during the winter competitive season. They may compete in forms of dance that are significantly different from Jazz or High Kick. How do you know if it's significantly different? – if you are not sure, it is not significantly different.

Can I coach our winter competitive team and also coach at a local Dance studio?

Yes – but you must be careful not to coach members of your high school team in Jazz; High Kick; or related skills, except during the winter competitive season and/or the summer waiver period. Once a student participates in the grades 10-12 Dance Team program at your school, they would fall under this limitation.

BOOSTER CLUBS:

Can a booster club provide funding for our dance team to attend a summer camp?

No – students or their parents must pay for attending any camp. Students may fund raise with the funds going toward paying for a camp or clinic. If this is done all fund raising must be tracked individually for each student athlete.

May a booster club provide funding for uniforms, assistant coaches, transportation, etc. ?

Maybe – this will depend on school policy. These expenditures should always be approved by your school. All funding should go to the school. The school can then make the appropriate expenditures. Booster clubs can provide funding for assistant coaches if allowed by your school. The school must still hire the coach, with the funding given to the school, and the school paying the coach.

May a booster club provide funding for technique classes or an in-season clinic?

No – while it is legal to have technique classes or clinics for students either during the season or out of season, funding must be provided by the school program (during the season only) or by the student athletes. As with attending a summer camp, students may fund raise to earn money towards this cause. Funds raised could go through the school activity account and those funds could be used to pay for camps, clinics, etc.

May I Video Tape Other School's Dances?

No – you only can video tape your own team dancing. You may not video tape the routines of other schools at a competition in which you are competing or a competition at which you are not competing. You can watch other schools routines, analyze those routines, and take notes but you cannot record. One of the reasons for this rule is that video taping the dances of other schools can be a violation of copyright laws.

What about having and using video of other teams by purchasing a DVD from a competition?

If video is taken of all of the routines at a competition, and that video is made available to all competing schools – either free or for purchase – it is legal to have that video and use it for “scouting” purposes.