

allowed one time under this exception.

Exception 12 – A student who turns 18 and moves unaccompanied by his parents from one public school district to another and both principals and the MHSAA complete the Educational Transfer Form. Eligibility is allowed one time under this exception.

There are many common situations that are not exceptions to the transfer rule and eligibility is not immediate – the student sits some period. Some things which are not an exception to the transfer rule: School of choice, returning from a “bad” school of choice to my school of residence, financial or transportation hardships, guardianship (ward of the court is an exception however), not offering or dropping a sport or moving in with an aunt or uncle or grandparent (students must move with the people they lived with).

If a school requests the MHSAA Executive Committee (which meets monthly) may waive the period of ineligibility to permit **9th** or **10th**-grade transfer students **only** who **never** played in **any** high school scrimmage or contest eligibility at the **subvarsity** level **only**. This may not benefit sports sponsored only at the Varsity level.

**Undue Influence** – Also known as the anti-recruiting regulation. This rule renders a student who is recruited by a person directly or indirectly associated with a school or athletic program ineligible for up to 180 school days. The offending person could also be suspended from coaching and the school required to disconnect from that person. The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that it is legal and appropriate for state high school associations to have anti-recruiting rules.

**Amateur Status and Awards** – Participation in high school sports is limited to students who are amateurs – to those who have not received money or valuable consideration for involvement with one of the sports that the MHSAA sponsors a tournament in. Amateurs can't sign a pro hockey contract and then play high school baseball. Amateurs can't receive cash, gift certificates, scholarships to camp, or discounts (including those from sporting goods companies). Amateurs can't receive uniforms or equipment for participation in high school sports, nor keep school issued items (they can purchase at season's end for fair-current market value). The amateur's family can't accept these prohibited items in their place. Amateurs can't pose in school uniform to endorse a commercial product. The rule allows for meals, travel, and lodging to be accepted if in kind, not cash to buy food, but the actual meal is OK. The awards provision has a \$25 cap for **symbolic** awards not including engraving which is often confused with a **cash** limit of \$25. Never can a student-athlete receive cash, merchandise or gift certificates for participation in an MHSAA sponsored sport.

Anything done for an athlete that is not done in the same fashion for non-athletes in the school is likely a violation of amateur status and awards. Championship rings, special discounts for equipment, prizes for selling the most items in a fund raiser are all things that must be open to all students not just athletes so as to comply with the Amateur Status and Awards regulations.

**Limited Team Membership** – There are three parts to this rule. Part A, also known as the Loyalty Rule, states that in MHSAA sports, a student can only **compete** for the school team once the season starts. So in **team** sports, once practice (including tryouts) begins, a student can only play for the school team in that sport until the season ends. Individual sports and hockey (goalie rule) don't activate the rule until participation by the student in the first contest and then students are allowed two non-school events after this during the season. In tennis and skiing the rule is activated once the **team** starts their practice regardless of when the individual begins the season. Once discovered a student is ineligible for, at minimum, the next 3 dates of high school competition, 2 dates for junior high/middle school to a maximum of the entire season. An individual may not knowingly violate the regulations. Part B indicates that students would be ineligible for one school year if after participating in an MHSAA sport they compete in any event which is or purports to be a National High School Championships or All Star Event. Part C involves participation in Olympic Development Programs and National Governing Body teams which both involve special advance allowances that involve school administration.

# 2009- 2010



michigan high school athletic association

# HANDBOOK

*“In other  
Words . . .”*

*MHSAA Handbook  
Supplement and Teaching Tool*

**Issue 6 —  
An Updated  
Eligibility Summary  
(2009-10)**



### *In other words ...*

The following is intended to provide coaches, administrators and others a better understanding of MHSAA Regulations. Schools should review the *MHSAA handbook* using the full text of the rule. This is a teaching tool.

## **AN ELIGIBILITY SUMMARY**

In the *MHSAA Handbook* there are five major regulations depicted by roman numerals. Regulations I and III deal with the eligibility of students at high schools and junior high/middle schools, respectively; Regulations II and IV with contests, practice and competition limitations between schools; and Regulation V covers violations of regulations and sportsmanship.

This brochure will touch the surface of Regulation I – eligibility for sports in MHSAA member high schools. Eligibility is state of being. A student either is eligible or is not eligi-

ble and not knowing the rule does not change this fact. There are several rules that determine eligibility for school sports and over the years they have become increasingly comprehensive. Consult the full context of the rule and school administration and possibly the MHSAA about specific eligibility situations.

**Enrollment** – The first rule of school sports is that a student may only play for the school they are enrolled in. Enrolled means the student is: 1) on the school records for at least 66% of full credit load potential for a full time student and 2) in attendance for one or more classes – or participation in a scrimmage or contest. This rule also requires that eligible students must be enrolled in a school – any school – for the purposes of this rule – by the 4th Friday after Labor Day and the 4th Friday of February.

**Age** – The only rule that by MHSAA constitution is not subject to waiver. Students must be under 19 years old to play school sports except that if students turn 19 on or after Sept. 1 of a current school year, they can finish that school year. This rule takes into account the fact that age is readily measurable and prevents students who are almost 20 from participating with and against 14-year-olds. 7th-graders must be under 14 years of age, 8th graders must be under 15 years old. Those who turn this age on or after Sept. 1 can finish that year. For students who may be too old for their senior year an accommodation is provided called an Eligibility Advancement Application that allows these students to begin high school sports in the 7th or 8th grade and have four years of high school sports.

**Physical Exams** – Prior to participation in a tryout or practice every student must submit a statement from an MD, DO, Nurse Practitioner or Physicians Assistant that they are physically able to compete in athletic tryouts, practices and contests and also provide consent to disclosure of information otherwise prohibited by HIPAA and FERPA laws. These statements must be on file in the appropriate school office and must be for the current school year, not necessarily in conjunction with the insurance year. The earliest date that a physical can be dated for use in the coming school year is April 15, 2008.

**Maximum Enrollment and Maximum Competition** – Once students begin the 9th grade, they are allowed eight semesters, or 12 trimesters of enrollment (definition above). In addition they are allowed four first semesters and four second semesters, or in trimester schools, four first, four second and four third trimesters. The 7th and 8th semesters or the 10th, 11th and 12th trimesters must be consecutive – no breaks in enrollment. Students who have been in schools with both trimesters and semesters convert to semesters for determining the maximum semesters of enrollment. For the purposes of this rule, an academic term “counts” if the student participated in a game or scrimmage or if the student continued to be enrolled after a “4th Friday.”

**Undergraduate Standing** – Students who have graduated from high school are not eligible for sports. Students who have enough credits to graduate may continue to play sports provided they are still taking the minimum number of academic classes (66% of full credit load potential for a full time student) and have not yet received their diplomas. A graduate is a student who has accepted a diploma, including a GED or a diploma from a foreign country and is not eligible regardless of age or academic term.

**Previous Academic Credit Record** – New for 2009-10 - A student must have received credit for at least 66% of full credit load potential for a full time student in the previous academic term (either a semester or trimester) in which they were enrolled (e.g. four of five or six classes, five of seven classes). Many schools add to the MHSAA minimum eligibility requirement by increasing the number of classes a student must pass or also require a certain GPA to be eligible. In addition to setting the minimum standard, the MHSAA also sets the period of ineligibility: a trimester, or for students not in trimester schools, 60 scheduled school days. Students returning to eligibility under this rule must be passing 66% of credits on the 61st scheduled school day to become eligible. The student becomes eligible after having made up the deficiency through summer school or in a subsequent academic term when the school accepts the credit or after 60 days of ineligibility in semester schools. A student's reinstatement would be when the new credits are

posted to the transcript, or if the student is sitting, then on the first day that classes are held in the new trimester or on the 61st scheduled school day provided the student is passing. Students whose eligibility is reinstated for fall sports (either through making up the deficiency or having sat out) would become eligible on the first day of practices for the start of the school year. In this transition from 20 credit hours and 90 days to “66% of full credit potential and 60 days”, consult special notices on mhsaa.com - resources for administrators.

**Current Academic Credit Record** - The same minimum standard, passing 66% of full credit load potential for a full time student (four of five or six classes, five of seven classes) must be checked periodically by the school before the end of the semester or trimester. Current academic credit checks must occur at least once in 10 weeks for a semester school and once in 7 weeks for a trimester school. Some schools check weekly, biweekly or at the time of their progress reports. When a student is not passing the minimum 66% of full credit load potential for a full time student (or a higher standard which the school may set) the student is not eligible for at least the next Monday through Sunday and so on until the student is passing 66% of classes from the start of the semester or trimester through the most recent eligibility check.

**Transfer Regulation** – A student already enrolled in grades 9-12 who changes schools (transfers) is not immediately eligible in the new school **UNLESS** that student meets one of the 15 stated exceptions. **When** students who do not meet an exception become eligible depends on **when** the student enrolled in the new school. If students change schools before the 4th Friday after Labor Day, they are eligible on Dr. Martin Luther King Day (Jan. 18, 2010); if the change of schools is after that but before the 4th Friday of February they are eligible on August 1 to start fall sports. The 15 Exceptions break down as follows: 8 are residency exceptions which must be full and complete (a very specific definition by interpretation), 5 have to do with the status of the school – school closing, new school opening, and 2 involve the status of the student such as an incoming 9th-grader. In addition, a full and complete residential change which would grant immediate eligibility, must be from one public school district to another district – regardless of the type of school attended before. When students do change schools under the regulation they are eligible only at the school of residence or the closest non-public or charter school to their new residence. Multi school districts like Detroit and Lansing treat each school attendance area like its own school district.

Because family situations have become more complicated, so has the transfer rule. A coach should never play a student new to the school whose eligibility under this rule is not clearly determined by school administrators and often verified in writing by the MHSAA via a written interpretation.

Four of the more common exceptions all involving some form of residential change which grants immediate eligibility are summarized below. Again get clarification from school administrators before changing schools and before participating in athletics.

Exception 1 – A student makes a full and complete residential change from one public school district to another with all the people they lived with during the previous academic term. The previous residence must be vacant, sold or rented to non-family and not occupied for any residential purpose by the student, his parents or siblings. More is required to establish a full and complete residential change.

Exception 2 – A student was **not** living with his or her parents and moves from one public school district to another to reside with the “parents, single parent if divorced, or only living parent” who already reside in that district. Eligibility is allowed one time under this exception.

Exception 8 – A student whose parents are **divorced** (not separated) and the student moves with or to one of the divorced parents – again – from one public school district to another – and eligibility is only at the public school of residence or the closest non-public or charter school. Under this exception a student must have completed an Educational Transfer Form signed by both principals and the MHSAA prior to participation. Eligibility is