

## In Simple Terms:

# MHSAA Regulations Covering Live Video Streaming of Athletic Events

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As a member of the MHSAA, your school's governing board annually adopts the rules and regulations in the MHSAA Handbook as its own. One of those rules prohibits member schools' athletic events from appearing on live video on any platform (over-the-air-TV, cable TV, internet), with a small carve out which allows schools producing their own games to show them live under certain circumstances. The rule is designed to keep national television networks – which tend to focus only on high-profile sports and athletes rather than the entire program for both girls and boys - from coming in and exploiting schools, teams and athletes to the benefit of the network and its sponsors.

Schools participating in the NFHS Network's School Broadcast Program, showing their events on MHSAA.TV live on a subscription basis, have an automatic waiver of the rule and can show **both** regular-season and MHSAA tournament games live. SBP member can also show events not involving their own school's team.

There are other ways for schools producing their own games to qualify for an annual waiver of the rule to show **only their own team's** regular-season games live on a subscription or password-protected basis on the internet, or on a PEG channel on the local cable system dedicated to the school. **Any tournament games must be shown on a delayed basis after the event is over.** An administrator at the school must submit a request, in writing, to the MHSAA every school year.

We're going to focus on streaming video over the internet here, because that's where most of the interest seems to be. Here are some examples:

- School Website – Can be password protected or subscription. You work with your own IT staff to set up a web solution.
- The following services can be contracted to stream your video on a password protected or subscription basis. Financial terms vary from free with embedded ads from their advertisers to charges per event, month, or year:
  - Meridix.com
  - UStream.com
  - LiveStream.com
  - Boxcast.com
  - YouTube
  - StretchInternet.com

The school would be required to create the necessary account, and the administration would have to have oversight of its operation. Here are some examples using different platforms:

- Facebook Live is an option, but it would be required that the school creates a page to stream on that is a closed group, and the administration has oversight for its operation. In other words, the school approves everyone who gets to watch. During MHSAA tournaments, the live streaming of audio only is allowed with advance permission.
- Periscope has a similar option available, where people must follow using a Twitter account and be approved by the account originating the streaming. Like with Facebook Live, it would be required that the school creates the account and has oversight for its operation.
- Meridix offers the ability to stream on a password-protected and a subscription basis. A number of MHSAA member schools use Meridix to stream audio only; and Meridix is the audio platform for MHSAA Network events.
- YouTube is used by some schools, which create a private URL for each event, and then distribute it only to fans which have signed up to be on a mailing list.

Under no circumstances may a third-party of any type – local radio station/newspaper, internet provider, companies which stream sporting events (For example, and this is not an all-inclusive list - Flosports, Livebarn, BallerTV) – be allowed to stream. And the intent of the rule is not to permit single-day waivers to allow multiple game events (i.e., **dual** competition in soccer, basketball, wrestling, etc.) in which the school receiving the waiver is not participating to be shown.

Regardless of the option you choose, the school must be in control and be accountable for the operation of your streaming. The MHSAA will work with schools to answer questions, and steer you into compliance with the rules whenever possible. For more information, contact John Johnson at the MHSAA Office – [john@mhsaa.com](mailto:john@mhsaa.com).