



MHSAA 2026-27 Bowling Coaches Manual

ACADEMIC STANDARDS – Students must meet the MHSAA minimum academic standard of passing a minimum of 66% of a full class load in both the current and previous semester to maintain eligibility. Local schools may have higher academic standards than the MHSAA minimum; in this case, students must meet their school's academic requirements to be eligible. NOTE: Students are only eligible to compete for a school team at the school in which they are enrolled. Bowlers at schools that do not sponsor bowling may not compete for another school's program. Additionally, middle school and junior high athletes are not enrolled high school students, and therefore may not compete on high school teams. Again, only students meeting ALL essential eligibility requirements may compete on a school team during the MHSAA season.

ADMISSION – Schools, leagues & conferences may establish their own admission policies and ticket pricing for regular season competition. Admission for MHSAA Regional tournaments will be \$7 and \$11 at the MHSAA Finals.

ALCOHOL/TOBACCO – Alcohol may not be sold to or used by spectators during school competitions. Smoking, vaping, or using e-cigarettes is not permitted during school competitions. Coaches are prohibited from using alcohol or tobacco. It is preferred that bowling centers refrain from selling alcohol during school competitions. The area of a bowling center where a high school bowling competition is being held should be clearly defined to restrict the sale and use of alcohol and tobacco.

Use of alcohol or tobacco, including e-cigarettes or other smoking devices, is prohibited at MHSAA tournament events by players, coaches, and spectators. Managers should stress in coaches meetings that they are not to use tobacco, vaping devices or e-cigarettes at the tournament venue.

ALL-STAR RESTRICTIONS/NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS – Neither students nor coaches can participate in any event that purports to be an All-Star contest or a national high school championship. Such participation will result in a loss of eligibility for one calendar year. Coaches should review the All-Star and National Championship restrictions, as well as relevant MHSAA Handbook interpretations, with their school's athletic director to avoid potential violations. Events that are called "All-Star" and have a selection process that does not include open tryouts are indications of types of competition that can result in loss of eligibility.

AWARDS / AMATEUR STATUS / PBA-NIL / SCHOLARSHIPS – Students participating in MHSAA-sponsored sports must maintain amateur status in accordance with

Regulation II, Section 11 of the MHSAA Handbook. Students may not receive compensation based on athletic performance or participation or sign a professional athletic contract. MHSAA rules do, however, permit certain Promotion, Branding and Activity (PBA) opportunities, commonly referred to as Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) activities. A student may receive compensation for legitimate work or promotional activity involving the student's name, image or likeness, provided the compensation is for the activity performed and not for athletic performance, participation, achievement or as an inducement to attend or remain at a particular school.

Awards

- Students may not accept cash, gift certificates, merchandise, equipment or other valuable consideration as an award for athletic performance or participation, except as specifically permitted by MHSAA rules.
- Students may receive permissible symbolic awards, such as trophies, medals, plaques and T-shirts, within the value limitations established by MHSAA rules.
- Players may purchase and keep equipment, such as uniforms, at fair market value without affecting eligibility. The school's athletic director should be consulted regarding fair market value.
- Violations of MHSAA Amateur Status regulations may result in loss of eligibility. Questions regarding a particular award should be directed to the school's athletic director before it is accepted.

PBA/NIL Opportunities

MHSAA PBA rules allow students to earn compensation for legitimate promotional or commercial activities involving their name, image or likeness.

Examples could include a bowler being paid to:

- Appear in an advertisement or social media promotion for a bowling center or business.
- Make a personal appearance or participate in an autograph session.
- Promote a permissible product, service or business.
- Provide other legitimate services for which compensation is reasonably related to the work performed.

MHSAA rules allow student-athletes to receive both money and in-kind exchanges (like free gear, products, or services) through Personal Branding Activities (PBA/NIL). Cash payments and in-kind exchanges are allowed for endorsements, social media posts, appearances, or running independent camps/clinics.

However:

- Compensation cannot be based on bowling performance or results. A student cannot be paid for bowling a particular score, winning a tournament, making the MHSAA Tournament, earning All-State honors or achieving another athletic result.
- Compensation must be for legitimate work or services performed and should be reasonably related to the value of those services.
- A PBA/NIL arrangement cannot be used as an inducement for a student to attend, transfer to or remain at a particular school.

- Schools, administrators and coaches must remain separate from a student's PBA/NIL agreement. They should not negotiate, arrange, solicit or broker compensation on behalf of a student.
- All PBA/NIL agreements must be disclosed to the MHSAA using the [MHSAA PBA Disclosure Form](#). Students and families are responsible for reporting these activities through the required MHSAA disclosure process. Disclosure allows the MHSAA to review the arrangement for compliance with PBA/NIL and Amateur Status regulations. Disclosure does not constitute MHSAA approval or endorsement of the agreement.
- Students may not use MHSAA or school intellectual property, including uniforms, logos or other protected marks, in a PBA/NIL activity without appropriate authorization.
- Labeling compensation as a “sponsorship,” “endorsement,” “NIL deal” or similar arrangement does not make otherwise prohibited athletic prize money permissible.

The key distinction: A student may be compensated for legitimate work or promotional activity. A student may not be compensated for bowling performance or participation. Visit the [MHSAA NIL/PBA page](#) for more information on the policy.

Prize Money, Adult Tournaments & Adult Leagues

- Although some USBC playing rules apply in competition, only MHSAA rules govern interscholastic bowling eligibility.
- The USBC Rule 400 Consent Form protects only a bowler's USBC Youth Membership; it does not override MHSAA Amateur Status rules or safeguard MHSAA eligibility.
- Students may not compete in adult tournaments or leagues that offer prize money, jackpots, brackets, or other cash games.
- This prohibition applies even if prize money is:
 - Deferred or held in escrow.
 - Designated for education or charity.
 - Converted to “scholarship funds” or USBC SMART points.
- To reiterate, prize money won during an adult tournament is prize money. Winnings redirected as scholarships or SMART points remain cash for performance and are not permissible.
- Violation: Accepting prize money in any form results in loss of eligibility for all MHSAA sports for one calendar year.
- Reinstatement: Eligibility may be restored only if the student forfeits and returns all winnings from the prohibited event.

Youth Bowling Tournaments, Scholarships & SMART

- Students may participate in youth bowling events, offering USBC SMART Scholarship points
- Youth bowling events would feature students competing only against other youth bowlers, in a separate category from adults – again, students may not compete with adults and simply have their winnings converted to SMART points.
- For a scholarship to be valid under MHSAA rules, it must be a true scholarship program with multiple criteria (e.g., academics, citizenship, service) – following all USBC

certification processes and be consistent with NCAA, USOC, and MHSAA amateur status policies.

- MHSAA rules apply equally to bowling, including out-of-state and local “scholarship” events – families should use caution when entering youth tournaments outside Michigan.

Note: Questions regarding all MHSAA regulations should be directed through the school athletic administration to the MHSAA. Coaches, students, and parents should consult the state USBC youth leadership regarding SMART Points and scholarship programs.

For supplemental information, go to the [Awards, Amateur Status & Scholarships - FAQ](#).

BACKPACKS – Spectators are prohibited from bringing backpacks, large purses, totes, or coolers into bowling centers during MHSAA competition.

Athletes and coaches are allowed to bring large backpacks and bags into the bowling center prior to competition. Large athlete backpacks must be kept in the paddock area, not in the bowlers' area. While athletes are restricted from having large backpacks in the bowlers' area during competition, each athlete is permitted one small bag, such as a drawstring bag, to transport and store bowling equipment. Coaches are allowed to carry large backpacks on the concourse during competition. Exceptions will be granted for athletes who require bags to carry medical supplies.

BAKER FORMAT/ABSENT BOWLER – For regular season meets when the Baker format is used, the MHSAA substitution rule will be applied. Absent or late bowlers will be given a zero for their scheduled Baker frame. Example: If the bowler scheduled to bowl frames 1 & 6 is absent, the team receives a score of zero for frames 1 & 6. The team cannot place the absent bowlers zero scores in frames 1-2. All other USBC Baker format rules will be followed.

BAKER FORMAT/BOWLING OUT OF TURN – Situations in which a bowler bowls out of turn during a Baker game shall be handled in accordance with USBC Rules 8 – a dead ball is declared, the initial delivery is voided, and the correct bowler is to bowl the complete frame.

BOOSTER CLUBS – Booster Clubs are an extension of the school and may not engage in activities that the school itself is prohibited from doing. Booster Club funds raised for transportation, uniforms, etc. should be coordinated with school administration with full knowledge of the use and source of funds.

BOWLING BALL CLEANING – Players may not alter the surface of the ball with abrasives once competition begins. Cleaning with a dry cloth or polishing a ball is allowed. Using resin for grip is allowed, but the ball must be wiped clear.

BOWLING BALL LIMITS – Participants shall be limited to a maximum of **SIX** bowling balls in the bowling center, and two balls in the bowler's area. Equipment changes will be allowed during competition. All balls must be brought into bowling center prior to the start of competition. No one – bowlers, coaches, or parents – may leave the center to get or exchange balls after the start competition. Bowling balls must be on the [USBC approved ball list](#) to be used in MHSAA competition.

NOTE: New USBC standards for urethane bowling balls took effect January 1, 2026. As with the USBC equipment changes in 2022, MHSAA will rely on the USBC Approved Ball List to determine whether a ball is legal for competition. If a ball is removed from the Approved Ball List because it does not meet the new standard, it will no longer be legal for MHSAA competition. If the ball remains on the Approved Ball List, it will continue to be legal for both MHSAA regular-season and postseason competition.

Bowling Ball Holes – A bowler who does not use the thumb during delivery cannot have a thumb or balance hole. All holes drilled must be used for gripping purposes on every delivery. A bowler using a House Ball is exempt from this requirement. A bowler using a teammate's ball is NOT exempt from this requirement.

House Balls

House Balls may be used even though they are not specifically posted on the [Approved Ball List](#)

A ball can be determined to be a House Ball provided the ball is:

1. Provided by the bowling center in which the event is being held.
2. A Non-High-Performance ball (as defined in the Bowling Ball Approval Specifications section).
3. Not custom drilled for the bowler's hand.

NOTE: A ball left in a bowling center by a bowler for public use is not considered a House Ball.

House Balls are exempt from the drilling requirements listed under item 7 of the [2026-27 UBSC Rule Book Chapter 8: Equipment Specifications](#).

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES – Bowlers are prohibited from playing music with or without headphones, using cell phones, or electronic devices that would assist a bowler in receiving outside coaching or instruction at any time during the competition, including during warm-ups, in the competition area. Bowlers who violate these electronics guidelines will receive a warning to discontinue use. Continued violations following this warning may result in disqualification from the competition.

Coaches are allowed to have electronic devices, but their use should be limited. Electronic devices such as iPads, tablets, or smartphones may be used to track stats. Coaches may not record and play video in the competition area for coaching purposes. Any electronic devices being used to record and play video must be used outside of the competition area.

CHANTS/CHEERS – Coaches and bowlers should be aware that there are reasonable limits to team and spectator cheering. While enthusiastic support of teammates is natural and permitted, coaches need to communicate to athletes that they may not run out on the approach to celebrate, nor should athletes scream, shout, or chant so as to disrupt others. Orchestrated chants to intimidate opponents are not allowed by bowlers or spectators. Profanity, taunting, intimidation, or offensive language will not be tolerated. Noisemakers may not be used.

Only two bowlers will be allowed to stand during a match if seating is available – the one player who is bowling and the one who is on deck. Coaches and tournament managers should make this a point of emphasis in player and coach meetings prior to competitions.

COMPETITION FORMAT – REGULAR SEASON – For all regular-season competition, it is required that all competition consists of two Baker games and two regular games for league/conference and school vs. school competition. Local leagues/conferences may determine the order (Baker first or regular games first). All competition shall be “scratch”. Other formats may be used for invitational or other types of competition. When reporting results and determining conference/league standings it is recommended that a match victory be considered a win or loss and not reported with “points” or individual games won or lost. A league/conference MAY request a waiver with the MHSAA to modify the regular season competition format for the regular season season.

COACHING RESTRICTIONS – During both the regular season and MHSAA Postseason Tournament competition, **two (2)** school coaches are allowed in the bowlers' seating area.

At the MHSAA Finals, two coaches per team are allowed in the bowlers' area. For Finals singles bowling, if a school has only one bowler, only one coach is permitted. If the school has two or more bowlers in singles, then two coaches are allowed.

During both the regular season and MHSAA Postseason Tournament, if a team has two coaches present in the bowlers' area during competition, only one coach is permitted to stand at any given time. Any additional coaches beyond the allowed two must remain in the spectator area. Coaches are not permitted on the approaches.

Coaching and instruction are allowed between frames. Mid-frame advice from the coach is allowed, but all communication must stop once the ball thrown appears on the ball return. Coaches must ensure that any coaching, instruction, or behavior does not slow the pace of play.

COMPETITION AREA – Only the bowlers who are in the lineup and are currently competing are allowed in the bowlers' seating area. Substitute bowlers should be in a nearby area and ready to enter competition in a timely manner.

CANCELLATIONS/POSTPONEMENTS – Competition may be delayed or re-scheduled for health/safety issues, legitimate transportation, or weather problems that schools experience at the discretion of the schools involved and/or the host school manager or athletic director. Teams may not bowl without an opponent and later “match” that score against another team's score that bowled without an opponent.

DATES OF COMPETITION/MEET LIMITS – School teams are allowed a maximum of 24 dates of competition for the regular season and an individual bowler may not participate in more than 24 school meets during the regular season. MHSAA Regional tournament dates do not count against the regular season limit. **There is no weekly limit for meets.** If a school conducts multiple meets against several schools in one day, it counts as one date of competition.

Individual students are allowed a maximum of 18 games in one day, and no more than eight games on a school day (Monday-Thursday). For the purposes of this rule, five Baker games constitute one game. When a school team or individual students represent their school using one of the 24 allowed dates of competition, a school-designated coach must be present and all students competing for the school must be eligible athletes from the same school. For example, school dates of competition may be used for school teams participating in weekly youth leagues, but the use of school dates for such competition must be done properly with the coach and school involvement.

DELAY, STALLING, PACE OF PLAY – Bowlers should be standing and ready to bowl when the preceding bowler is completing his/her frame. Intentional stalling or undue delay is considered unsportsmanlike. Bowlers should be warned about such conduct and may be penalized if there are repeated violations.

DISQUALIFICATIONS/SUSPENSIONS FOR COACH & PLAYER

Coach – Unless a school or the MHSAA applies additional conditions, suspension from coaching requires at least that the coach not be at or near the team bench before, during or after the contest, not be in or near the locker room before, during or after the contest, and not give instructions directly or indirectly to coaches or players from any position in or near the competition surface.

If a school fails to enforce a suspension which is required by the MHSAA, tournament management shall require the coach to comply with the terms of suspension and shall report the school to the MHSAA for further action. If the coach fails to comply with the terms of suspension, tournament management shall report the school and coach to the MHSAA, which shall prohibit the school from the remainder of the current tournament and impose additional penalties as circumstances warrant.

Player – Unless a school or the MHSAA applies additional conditions, a suspended player is treated as an ineligible player, which means that student shall not participate. It is permissible but is not recommended, that the player may sit with the team, even in uniform. The minimum requirement is that the suspended student shall not enter the contest as a participant.

If a school fails to enforce a suspension required under MHSAA regulations with respect to one of its students, tournament management or any representative of a member school who becomes aware of the violation shall report it to the MHSAA for further action, which shall include (but not be limited to) forfeiture of the contest and thus elimination from the remainder of the tournament.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct in Previous Contest – A player who is ejected during a contest for sportsmanlike conduct shall be withheld by his/her school for at least the next day of competition for that team. If a school fails to enforce the subsequent disqualification with respect to one of its students, the tournament managers or any registered official or representative of a member school who becomes aware of the violation shall report it to the MHSAA, which shall prohibit the school from the remainder of the current tournament.

Under Regulation V, Section 3(D) 8., a coach or player must complete a designated online course sportsmanship course and provide a certificate of completion to the school athletic director prior to being allowed to return from the required suspension following an ejection. – See [MHSAA Disqualification Guidelines](#)

Coach and Player – Any coach who is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct two or more times during a season, any player who is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct three or more times during a season, and any coach or player who is ejected for spitting at, hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing or intentionally and aggressively physically contacting an official/tournament manager at any time during that season, is not eligible to participate in the MHSAA tournament for that sport that season. If the tournament disqualifying ejection for that individual occurs during the MHSAA tournament, that player or coach is ineligible for the remainder of that tournament.

The school of the disqualified coach or player must prohibit that person from being present on the property of the tournament venue for the remainder of the tournament series. If that school fails to enforce this, the tournament manager, any registered official or representative of a member school who becomes aware of the violation shall report it to the MHSAA, which shall prohibit the school from the remainder of the current tournament.

ELIGIBILITY – All bowlers must be on the school's Master Eligibility list and meet all MHSAA and school eligibility requirements to compete in a scrimmage or meet. Coaches may not intentionally use ineligible athletes. Each individual school district may determine policies for allowing ineligible athletes to **practice** with the school team.

FIRST PRACTICE/TRYOUTS – MHSAA regulations allow school programs to begin practice three Mondays before Thanksgiving: **Monday, November 9, 2026**. Tryouts are considered part of practice, i.e. tryouts may not begin prior to the first date of practice.

FIRST COMPETITION –The first school contest may not be held prior **Saturday, November 28, 2026**. Schools may begin regular season meets anytime on or after the first contest date.

FINALS QUALIFIERS –The top **two** teams and top **seven** individuals from each Regional in each Division will advance to the Finals. Each division Finals field will consist of **56** singles players and **16** teams in both boys and girls competition. All ties for advancing teams & individuals will be broken. (See tiebreaker policies)

FORFEITS – When a team does not show for scheduled competition, a forfeit is declared. A team may begin competition with less than five players, but no fewer than 3, with the absent bowler receiving a zero score for each frame missed. Absentee scores or pre-bowled scores are not allowed. When teams compete with less than 5 bowlers, individual scores of the bowlers who do compete may be used for individual honors, averages, awards, post-season awards, etc. at the discretion of the league or conference. **Competition may be delayed or re-scheduled for legitimate health/safety, transportation, or weather problems that school**

teams experience at the discretion of the schools involved and proper coordination and communication with athletic directors of the participating schools.

GIRLS ON BOYS TEAMS – Girls are eligible to try out for and participate on a boys bowling team. The following policies apply:

- During the regular season, a girl may compete on both a boys team and a girls team, provided she does not exceed the applicable daily or season limitations on competition.
- **Postseason MHSAA Team Tournament:** A girl may compete on either the boys team or the girls team at the MHSAA Team Regional, but not both. Once she competes for a team in the MHSAA Tournament, she is committed to that team for the remainder of the postseason and may not subsequently compete for the other team. The student must be included on the school's tournament roster and Master Eligibility List.
- **Postseason Singles Tournament:** A girl may enter either the Boys Singles Tournament or the Girls Singles Tournament, but not both. Her Singles Tournament designation is independent of which team she represents in the Team Tournament. For example, a girl may compete for her school's boys team in the Team Tournament and still enter the Girls Singles Tournament.
- Schools must designate whether each girl is entered in the Boys Singles Tournament or Girls Singles Tournament. A school may enter a maximum of six bowlers per gender in Singles competition.
- A girl does not need to participate in four girls competitions during the regular season to be eligible for the MHSAA Girls Singles Tournament. A girl who competes exclusively on a boys team during the regular season may still be entered in the Girls Singles Tournament.
- Boys are not permitted to participate on a girls team in the MHSAA Tournament under Regulation II, Section 15.

INJUNCTION/RESTRAINING ORDER POLICY – If an injunction or restraining order is served or presented at an MHSAA tournament site and such purports to require the eligibility of or participation by a student or team that a school and/or the MHSAA has ruled to be ineligible under MHSAA regulations, the on-site tournament manager is to suspend the entire competition (team competition) or events in which that student is intending to participate (individual competition). If the meet has begun, it shall be completed.

INTERNET STREAMING – Video streaming during the regular season is allowed by the home/host school in a couple of different ways. If the home/host school is a member of the NFHS Network, they must stream games to the NFHS Network first and foremost. They can also produce a stream to broadcast on a school-controlled page (separate from the NFHS stream). Additionally, NFHS Network members can partner with local media to broadcast regular season home games on the media outlet's channel/website. Schools that are not

members of the NFHS Network can stream regular season home games to a school-controlled webpage or social media page such as YouTube, Instagram, or Facebook. Refer to the [Multimedia Regulations](#) for more information.

Teams participating in **MHSAA Tournaments** are prohibited from streaming live video of any portion of an event over the Internet – including using social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook – or any other method. Likewise, individual spectators are also prohibited from streaming video through any means during the MHSAA tournament.

JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION – Under MHSAA Regulations, students in grades 7-8 may not participate with or against students in grades 9-12. Junior High/Middle school programs should be separate from varsity programs as the varsity team may not have 7-8th graders on the team. **Exception** – Under MHSAA Regulation I, Section 1(D), schools with less than 100 students in grades 9-12 may have students from grade 8 on their varsity bowling team, and schools with less than 50 students in grades 9-12 may have students in grade 7 on their bowling team. Beginning in 2023-24, high schools with less than 125 students may now request an Executive Committee waiver with cause and rationale to allow the use of 8th-grade students. Schools with less than 75 students can make this same request with cause and rationale to use 7th and 8th-grade students. These requests **MUST** be made through the school's athletic administration.

LANE CONDITIONS – **The MHSAA tournament (Regionals and Finals) will use the “Phantom 2” oil pattern for the 2026-27 season.** [Specifications](#) for the “Phantom 2” pattern from Kegel can be found on the MHSAA.com Bowling [AD/Coach page](#). The pattern may be used during regular season competition.

Note: Coaches, students and parents should be advised that although the chosen pattern condition for the MHSAA Tournament will be applied at all tournament centers, there may be variations to the condition due to humidity, lane surface, lane machine characteristics, and oil type. While we will strive for the most consistent application of the condition as possible, the condition is not absolute and expectations should be managed accordingly.

MINIMUM MEET REQUIREMENTS – To be eligible for the MHSAA tournament, a school team must have a minimum of four regular season meets against other MHSAA high school teams. The four-meet minimum is for teams, not individual members of teams. All athletes must meet school and MHSAA eligibility standards and be on the school Master Eligibility list to compete.

MULTIPLE TEAMS – Schools may have more than one team, but only one team is eligible for the MHSAA tournament. If a school has more than one varsity, or more than one junior varsity, it is recommended they keep such teams separate and distinct.

NOISEMAKERS – Artificial noisemakers—including whistles, air horns, cowbells, and similar items—are prohibited at all MHSAA indoor tournament contests. For more details on noisemaker policies and spectator restrictions, please refer to the [MHSAA Guidelines for Artificial Noisemakers](#).

NON-SCHOOL COMPETITION – The MHSAA Limited Team Membership Rule, Regulation I, Section 13, applies to bowling. During the school season, students may not participate in non-school competition. The restriction begins from **the first time an individual student participates in a game, match, or scrimmage for his/her school team.** As an individual sport, bowlers can participate in two non-school events during the school year while not representing their school. An individual event is defined as not more than 3 consecutive days. (See Dates of Competition for use of school dates for school teams in youth leagues.)

NON-SCHOOL OPPONENTS – MHSAA member schools sponsoring bowling may compete against non-school teams or individuals as part of their 24 allowed dates of competition. All MHSAA regulations apply to member school athletes and teams when competing against non-school teams. A school must have a minimum of four meets against MHSAA member school teams to qualify for the MHSAA Tournament.

OUT-OF-SEASON COACHING – MHSAA Regulations place limits on all school coaches when working with team members before or after the school season during the school year. Out-of-season during the school year, school coaches may coach a maximum of four students in grades 7-12 in that sport at any one time at any one location. Schools may apply for exemptions to the 4-player rule for coaches who are also bowling center employees if specific criteria are met, and the request is approved by the Executive Committee.

During the summer period (the Monday after Memorial Day to the first day of practice for MHSAA Fall sports) bowling coaches are not restricted to the number of athletes or dates in which they may coach members of the school team. However, summer activities with the school coach must be voluntary, not mandatory, and not part of team selection, and school uniforms may not be used. School transportation including busses may be used, but funding must come from the school (approved booster funds or team fundraisers) and cannot include school general funds. Bowling coaches should review Regulation II, Section 11(H) with their school athletic director to comply with all out-of-season coaching regulations and restrictions. During the school 7-day summer dead period, no coaching contact is allowed.

PHYSICALS – All students who practice or compete in a school scrimmage or contest are required to have a current physical card on file with school administration.

PLAYING RULES, EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS – MHSAA regular season and tournament playing rules and equipment regulations will be those of the United States Bowling Congress (USBC) unless otherwise modified by the MHSAA in the Tournament Manager Manual.

PRACTICE AT TOURNAMENT SITE – Teams/individuals may not practice at MHSAA Regional or Final tournament sites on the day of competition. Practice **may** take place at the site on days **prior** to the tournament at school expense. At the Regional level, such practice should be coordinated by the host school and proprietor so that all schools are given equal access. Such practice should be monitored by the school coach. At the Finals, practice

sessions will be coordinated and scheduled by the MHSAA at the Finals site on the evening prior to the competition at school expense.

PRACTICE/WARM-UP POLICY – Teams and individuals shall be allowed a warm-up period not to exceed 15 minutes.

PROTESTS – There are no protests allowed for regular season and/or MHSAA tournament competition. Scoring errors may be corrected before teams depart the competition.

ROSTER LIMIT, REGULAR SEASON – Schools may have any number of bowlers active in their program during the regular season. **On the day of competition, a roster is limited to 7 eligible bowlers for each contest.** The roster may change from one contest to the next, or one day to the next.

ROSTER LIMIT, MHSAA TOURNAMENT – A maximum of 7 eligible athletes are allowed on the team roster for the MHSAA tournament, while 6 eligible athletes comprise the singles roster on the day of competition. The tournament roster may change from one day to the next (team to singles), or one level to the next (Regional to State Final).

SCRIMMAGES – MHSAA member schools are allowed 4 bowling scrimmages at any point in the regular season. Scrimmages are defined in the MHSAA Handbook as a form of practice session conducted with another school. Normal scoring should be modified, and scrimmages do not count as a win or loss.

STATISTICS, POST-SEASON RECOGNITION – Regular season statistics are the responsibility of local schools, leagues, and conferences and are not collected or published by the MHSAA. Any post-season honors or recognition is also a matter for local schools, leagues, conferences, or coaches associations. Awards such as All-State, All-State academic, etc. are not coordinated or handled by the MHSAA.

SPECTATORS – No spectators are allowed in the bowling area where team members are seated. Spectators shall not taunt or jeer opposing players.

SPORTSMANSHIP/CONDUCT – Good sportsmanship for players and coaches is a must. Taunting, profanity and intimidating conduct are not allowed. All MHSAA regulations regarding sportsmanship and disqualification penalties as stated in Regulation IV, Section 3 will be followed. Players will not be allowed on the approach to congratulate or celebrate the accomplishment of a fellow team member during bowling. Bowlers will not be allowed to enter an adjacent lane approach to celebrate or “run-out” their delivery. Bowlers shall observe traditional bowling courtesy for bowlers on adjacent lanes. **Crowding of the approach will not be allowed by opposing teams. Only two bowlers will be allowed standing during a match, if seating is available. One that is bowling and one that is on deck.**

Taunting – MHSAA Regulation V, Section 3

Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not the deeds or

words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters.

Examples of taunting that would lead to ejection include, but are not limited to, "trash talk"; physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game; reference to sexual orientation; "in the face" confrontation by one player to another; standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player. Managers are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike foul that disqualifies the offending bench personnel or contestant from that contest/day of competition (and next contest/day of competition). A warning may be given but is not required before ejection.

At all MHSAA tournament venues, tournament management may give spectators one warning for taunting. Thereafter, spectators who taunt others are to be ejected by security.

SUBSTITUTIONS/LINEUPS/PARTICIPATION – A starting lineup must be submitted 10 minutes prior to the start of each game. A standard starting lineup for team competition will consist of 5 bowlers (regular season competition may involve formats where fewer than 5 bowlers constitute a team as adopted by leagues or conferences).

Lineups may change in subsequent games. A starting bowler must deliver at least one ball before being substituted. Once a substitute enters the game, he/she must finish that game. Substitutions in mid-frame are allowed. The bowler who is substituted for may return as a starter or substitute in subsequent games.

The substitute must be on the **7-person roster** for the match at the start of competition. All five starting bowlers may be substituted for in any given game. If a substitute is injured, they may be replaced by an eligible substitute. **Note:** The substitution rule will be applied as stated in MHSAA tournament competition. Modifications are allowed for regular season play, but it is recommended the MHSAA tournament substitution rule be used.

Scratches or deletions from MHSAA Regional and Finals competition should occur as early as possible and no later than the Monday prior to competition.

SANCTIONING – The MHSAA does not require sanctioning of leagues, conferences, or individuals by outside governing bodies. Any such sanctioning shall be voluntary and not mandatory by either schools or leagues and conferences.

TOURNAMENT CLASSIFICATION – The MHSAA Tournament will be conducted in four equal divisions for boys and girls, based on enrollments, 8 Regional qualifying events in each Division. The largest 25% of schools sponsoring bowling will be placed in Division 1, the next largest 25% in Division 2 and the next largest 25% in Division 3 and finally the next 25% of schools in Division 4. Schools who notify the MHSAA of their intention to sponsor a bowling program after the divisions and enrollment breaks have been established will be placed in the appropriate division based on their enrollment.

TOURNAMENT EXPENSES – Schools are responsible for their own transportation, lodging and lane fee expenses at the MHSAA Regional Tournament. At the MHSAA Finals,

lane fees will be paid by the MHSAA and a breakfast and lunch will be provided to coaches and athletes. Transportation and lodging expenses at the MHSAA Finals are the responsibility of participating schools.

TOURNAMENT ENTRY – Schools participating in the MHSAA Tournament must submit a Master Eligibility List and Tournament Roster for singles and team to the Tournament Manager by the Opt-Out Due date which is **January 23, 2026**. Entry materials submitted after the due date are subject to the \$50 late fee penalty. There may not be changes to the Master Eligibility list after the start of Regional Competition. **Schools/Coaches must make payment for lane fees PRIOR to competition or their team will not be allowed to participate. Please plan with your school’s athletic department to ensure that financial obligations are met.**

Singles Entry – Schools may enter a maximum of **six** bowlers in the singles portion of the MHSAA tournament. **Team Entry** – A school may enter only one team in the MHSAA tournament and that team may have a maximum of **seven** members on the roster. Five students constitute a team for MHSAA tournament competition. The roster may change from one level of the tournament to the next.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT – The MHSAA tournament format will be “scratch” as follows:

Regional Singles – All singles entrants will bowl six regular games with total pinfall determining score. (Eight Regional events in each Division)

Regional Team – All teams will bowl 8 Baker games and 2 regular games on alternating lanes. (Eight Regional events in each Division)

Lane rotation will be determined by local managers intended to rotate teams through all pairs in the available lane block.

Finals Singles – In each Division, the 56 bowlers will roll a six-game qualifying block with total pinfall determining score. The top 16 bowlers/scores (ties will be broken) will advance to head-to-head match games with bracketing based on qualifying round score. After qualifying, the Higher seeded individual will be given choice of lanes within the pair. The head-to-head competition will consist of two games, total pins from the round of 16 to the quarterfinals, semifinals and Championship matches.

Finals Team – In each Division, the 16 teams will first bowl a qualifying block consisting of 8 Baker games and 2 regular games with total pinfall determining score. The top 8 teams in each Division (ties will be broken) will advance to head-to-head match games with bracketing based on first-round scores. The Quarterfinal, Semifinal and Finals matches will be best of 5 Baker games. Each head-to-head Baker game will count as 1 point. The team with the highest pin total after 10 frames is awarded the point for that game. In games 1-4 of a head-to-head match, if teams are tied after the 10th frame, each team is awarded a ½ point and teams move on to the next Baker game. In the 5th Baker game of a best of 5 head-to-head match (i.e., going into the 5th game teams are tied 2 to 2), if the teams are still tied after the 10 frame, teams will bowl a 6-10th frame Baker format roll-off repeated until the tie is broken. The first team to 3 points wins

the head-to-head match, and advances. If a team wins the first 3 Baker games, and the next round opponent is still competing, the team that is waiting for the other team to finish, will be allowed to practice to stay loose on their existing pair – adhering to all expectations of good sporting behavior – a team waiting and staying loose shall not disrupt ongoing competition. During team Finals match play, all games will use an alternating lanes format and the higher seeded will be given first game lane choice, and then the arrows will be followed. All Baker and regular games at the team Finals will use an alternating lanes format. During team Finals match play, the higher seeded will be given first game lane choice, and then the arrows will be followed.

TOURNAMENT DIVISION & REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS – The MHSAA Tournament will be conducted in four equal Divisions by enrollment with eight Regional Tournaments in each Division. Schools will be assigned to a Regional site which will be posted on MHSAA.com.

TOURNAMENT DATES –

MHSAA REGIONALS – TWO CONSECUTIVE DAYS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2027

TEAM EVENT WILL BE HELD DAY 1 | SINGLES EVENT WILL BE HELD DAY 2

MHSAA FINALS – FEBRUARY 26 (TEAM) – FEBRUARY 27 (SINGLES), 2027

TIEBREAKER PROCEDURES – For regular season it is recommended that one Baker set (2 games) be used to break ties in team competition. In singles competition, ties may be broken with additional games or 9th & 10th frame tiebreakers as adopted by leagues & conferences.

MHSAA Regional Tournament Tiebreaker – Tiebreaker procedures for champions and final qualifier position will be as follows: Singles – One regular game, if still tied then a 9-10th frame roll-off repeated until the tie is broken. Team – One Baker set (2 games), if still tied then a 6-10th frame Baker format roll-off repeated until the tie is broken.

Finals Tiebreaker Procedures – For the Singles Qualifying Block, ties for the final qualifying position is one game, if still tied then a 9-10th frame roll-off repeated until the tie is broken. All other seeded positions are determined by the last game bowled. In Singles Match Play, a 9-10th frame roll-off is used for all rounds.

For the Team Qualifying Block, ties for the final qualifying position is one Baker set (2 games); if still tied, then a 6-10th frame Baker format roll-off is repeated until the tie is broken. All other seeded positions are determined by the last game bowled.

In Team bracket Match Play, each head-to-head Baker game will count as 1 point. The team with the highest pin total is awarded the point for that Baker game. The first team to 3 points wins the head-to-head match, and advances. In games 1-4 of a head-to-head match, if teams are tied after the 10th frame, each team is awarded a ½ point and teams move on to the next Baker game. If after the fifth Baker game, neither team has 3 points, teams will bowl a 6-10th frame Baker format roll-off repeated until the tie is broken.

TRANSPORTATION – Teams and individuals should follow all school transportation policies for travel to regular season and MHSAA tournament competition. MHSAA liability insurance will be in effect for school approved transportation only directly to and from competition venues.

UNIFORMS/DRESS CODE –

Boys

- Slacks are required.
- The following are not permitted: blue jeans, cutoffs, shorts, sweatpants, or warm-up pants.
- Legal uniform tops include jerseys with a collar, quarter-zip, V-neck, rib-lined, or banded neckline, specifically designed for use as a bowling uniform.
- V-neck and crew-neck jerseys must be made from athletic performance fabric (not cotton).
- Cotton T-shirts and sweatshirts are not permitted during competition.

Girls

- Allowed bottoms: slacks, shorts, skorts, or skirts.
- Skirts, shorts, and skorts must extend at least to fingertip length when arms are held straight at the side.
- Bowlers wearing skirts must wear shorts or spandex underneath.
- Yoga/spandex pants are permitted only if worn under shorts, skorts, or skirts. Worn alone, they are not permitted.
- The following are not permitted: blue jeans, cutoffs, sweatpants, or warm-up pants.
- Legal uniform tops include jerseys with a collar, quarter-zip, V-neck, rib-lined, or banded neckline, specifically designed for use as a bowling uniform.
- V-neck and crew-neck jerseys must be made from athletic performance fabric (not cotton).
- Cotton T-shirts and sweatshirts are not permitted during competition.

General Provisions

- Teams are not required to wear identical uniforms, but similar uniforms are recommended.
- Jewelry is permitted.
- Headwear: hats, caps, and bandanas are prohibited.
- Permitted: headbands (for hair retention) and sweatbands.
- Religious dress is permitted without MHSAA approval.

If a violation of the MHSAA Dress code/Uniform rule occurs, a warning will be given to the player and coach of the violating team. If at that time the dress code is not followed, a loss of bowling privileges and disqualification from the MHSAA Regionals or Finals will result.

Prior to competition, warmups (jackets, sweatshirts, hoodies) must be removed and may not be used in competition.

A single patch or embroidered area not to exceed 2 inches x 3 inches in size will be allowed to identify a sponsor or sponsors. The logo or type must be approved with the MHSAA. It may appear once on either sleeve, or the left or right front breast-pocket area.

School name, logo, school nickname or bowler name may also appear on the shirt. No offensive language of any sort is allowed on uniforms. A single commemorative patch may also appear not exceeding 2 x 3 inches in size. **Coaches must also adhere to the MHSAA uniform/dress code regulations.**

USE OF INELIGIBLE ATHLETE

Individuals or teams that are defeated by an ineligible opponent or teams which allowed one or more ineligible students to participate do not advance in MHSAA tournaments.

If placements in MHSAA tournaments are vacated because of an individual being ineligible or a team allowing one or more ineligible students to participate, other individuals or teams neither advance to those placements nor receive awards for those places.

VARSITY/JUNIOR VARSITY PARTICIPATION – The MHSAA does not regulate grade placement on varsity or junior varsity teams (i.e., can a senior be on a JV team). Individual schools may establish their own policies regarding grade assignments (9-12) for varsity and JV participation, or leagues & conferences may have policies on this matter. Students in grades 7-8 may not participate with or against students in grades 9-12 in MHSAA member schools.

NOTE: If a school has multiple teams competing at the same time, bowlers may not compete for more than one team (i.e., be listed on more than one match roster and move back and forth between multiple teams during competition) once the competition has started. Bowlers are allowed to participate in subvarsity and varsity competition on the same day, provided the

competitions are separate events, and competition in the first event of the day has ended –A bowler MAY NOT move between Varsity and JV teams league/conference dual matches being conducted concurrently – Varsity/JV dual matches against the same opponent are considered the same event for the purposes of this rule.

COACHES PLEASE NOTE

The MHSAA Bowling Coaches Manual serves as a quick reference document, providing information on the most frequently applied MHSAA regulations, tournament policies, and general bowling information for member schools. Coaches should regularly review all matters pertaining to their programs with school athletic administrators. All regulations governing interscholastic bowling are contained in the MHSAA Handbook.