



MHSAA Hockey 2025-26 Rule Adaptations

New Experiment in 2025-26 for all MHSAA hockey games – The NFHS has approved a “experiment” for MHSAA Ice Hockey play in 2025-26 regarding face-off location on icing and penalties. Rule 7-10-1 and Rule 9-5-1 have been adjusted for the MHSAA when icing or penalties occur. **The “non-offending” team will be able to select which face-off spot it prefers when icing or a penalty is called.**

SUPPLEMENTAL GAME SUSPENSION REGULATIONS – As approved by the Representative Council, game suspension penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct (game DQ) for players and coaches will be as follows:

First game DQ – Two-game suspension. , Second game DQ – Four game suspension, Third game DQ – Coach or player is suspended for the remainder of the season.

Suspensions for game DQ penalties will be served on the next days of competition. Follow-up with the school AD when the coach is suspended will be done from the MHSAA office.

***PLAYERS IN UNIFORM** – MHSAA Rules limit participating teams to a maximum of 23 players in uniform for each game. Schools may have more than 23 on rosters, and the roster may change from one game to the next, but only 23 may be in uniform and all roster players must be on the Master Eligibility List. The 23rd player on the roster must be a goaltender. Meaning 20 skaters and 3 goaltenders.

GOAL DIFFERENTIAL RULE - The goal differential rule (mercy rule) is in effect for all regular season and MHSAA Tournament games. The rule is as follows; a running clock shall be used when a team leads by **eight** or more goals during the first and second periods. After two periods of play or anytime during the third period, the game will be terminated when a team leads by **eight** goals. During the first and second periods, if the goal differential drops below **eight** goals, regular time resumes. The rule is not optional, nor shall it be modified.

OVERTIME PROCEDURES – Regular season and MHSAA tournament options and protocols have now changed to include switching ends before the start of each overtime period. (See MHSAA Overtime policies – both regular season and tournament play)

PERIOD LENGTH—The MHSAA has adopted the 17-minute period for use in all MHSAA Tournament games. For regular season games, a league or conference (or opposing schools in a non-conference game or regular season tournament) may adopt a 17-minute period or 15-minute period. Such adoption should be done before the season and communicated to all coaches and officials, not left for debate at the rink before a game.

MHSAA NECK LACERATION PROTECTOR REQUIREMENT—Since 1990, the MHSAA has had a Neck Guard requirement. **Starting in 2024-25, the NFHS now has the same requirement.** All players, including goalkeepers, must wear a neck laceration protector that shall not be modified from its original manufactured state as protective equipment. Goaltenders are also required by NFHS rules to wear a flapper-style throat protector that must be separate, commercially manufactured, unaltered, and properly attached to the goalie helmet or face mask.

HELMETS—**Players and officials must wear helmets at all times while on the ice,** except while standing for the National Anthem and for post-game award ceremonies.

RULES GOVERNING MHSAA HOCKEY - MHSAA member schools must follow MHSAA adaptations and National Federation hockey playing rules for all levels of school competition, regardless of the opponent. When MHSAA member schools play a non-MHSAA hockey team, National Federation playing rules must be followed and MHSAA registered officials must be used. MHSAA registered officials hired and/or assigned by MHSAA member schools and/or an assignor should enforce National Federation rules whenever an MHSAA member school is involved at any level