PARTICIPATING SCHOOL TOURNAMENT INFORMATION
2026-2027 MHSAA HOCKEY

1. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The MHSAA Hockey Tournament will be conducted in three divisions based on school enrollment. One-third of the "standalone" teams will be placed in each of the three divisions. One-third of the "cooperative program" schools will be placed in the three divisions. Schools will be placed in one of eight Regional groupings of 4-8 teams in each Division for their initial assignment, based on geography and determined by MHSAA staff. Regional champions in each Division advance to the Quarterfinal round. Quarterfinal winners in each division advance to the Semifinal round, with winners meeting for the MHSAA Championship in each Division.

The MHSAA staff determines the host sites for Regional and Quarterfinal games, and the MHSAA Hockey Committee reviews them. Based on game results, MPR (Michigan Power Rankings) listings determine the brackets and home teams for first-round Regional games. Semifinal and Final games in each Division will be conducted at USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth.

Tournament Dates - 2027
Regional games – February 15 – February 24, 2027
Quarterfinal games – February 27, 2027
Semifinal games – March 4, 2027 (Division 2), March 5, 2027 (Divisions 1 & 3)
Championship games – March 6, 2027

All initial Regional tournament brackets, times, assignments, Quarterfinal sites, and Semifinal pairings will be posted on the MHSAA Hockey page.

2. TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

Administrator Attendance Requirement - By Representative Council action, the school principal, athletic director, or other non-coaching faculty member of the school, with a letter of authorization from the school principal, shall attend MHSAA Ice Hockey Tournament games in which their school participates and must identify himself/herself to the game management. Schools that do not comply will face MHSAA administrative disciplinary action.

Bands—School pep bands are not allowed at the Regional and Quarterfinal levels of the tournament. However, pep bands are allowed at the semifinals and finals with advance approval and coordination from the MHSAA. Bands will coordinate with MHSAA staff on playing options.

Cheerleaders - A maximum of 12 cheerleaders in uniform, including mascots, plus the coach/advisor from each school, may be admitted without charge to games in which their school competes.

Home Team Designation - At each game of the MHSAA Tournament, the higher-seeded MPR will determine the home team.

Noisemakers - Noisemakers are prohibited at all levels of the MHSAA tournament. This includes, but is not limited to, whistles, cowbells, confetti, thunder sticks, air horns, jugs with pennies, stones, and marbles. Also prohibited are banners on sticks, confetti, balloons, and laser pointers.

Guidelines for Artificial Noisemakers

Protests - There are no protests of officials' decisions in MHSAA Tournament contests other than under the MHSAA video review policy, Interpretation #293 of the MHSAA Handbook.

Locker Room Privacy Policy - Using any device to capture or transmit images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms, dressing areas, training rooms, weigh-in rooms, showers, restrooms, or other areas where there is an expectation of privacy during MHSAA tournament events. Tournament managers or athletic directors who discover such use should immediately move to have the device removed and inform the head coach or athletic director of the identity and nature of the person's activity.

3. OPT OUT POLICIES, ELIGIBILITY LISTS, ROSTERS

Schools must submit to the Regional Tournament Manager a Master Eligibility List and Team Roster by the Opt-out Due Date. Roster forms may be school-generated, or forms posted on the MHSAA website. Failure to fulfill the above obligations by the specified Opt-out Due Date will result in MHSAA penalties as stipulated in the MHSAA Handbook. For ice hockey, the Opt-out Due Date is January 23, 2027. All players on the Master Eligibility List submitted are eligible for tournament play.

If the Team Roster and Master Eligibility List are received after the Opt-out Due Date but before the draw is made, they may be accepted for a $50 late fee. The manager must pay the $50 late fee before the draw. The host school retains the late fees.

Additions or updates to the Master Eligibility List (except transfer students who enroll after the dates in Regulation I, Section 9 [F]) may be accepted by the Tournament Manager if submitted and received prior to the start of competition for any team in the first level of that tournament to which the school is assigned (February 15, 2027). All players on the submitted Master Eligibility List are eligible for tournament play, even if their individual names are not on the roster. To be eligible to compete in the MHSAA tournament for Ice Hockey, a student must have competed in that sport in at least four games with his/her school team against other MHSAA member school teams.

Waiver Procedure for Individuals – If a student has been a member of the MHSAA school-sponsored high school ice hockey team (Sub varsity or Varsity) since the earliest date of practice within the MHSAA season and has been present, dressed, and on the bench for most games that season and **not** been a member of a non-school team during the same season – including dryland training, classroom preparation and on-ice practice – but has not played in four regular season high school games due to the customary selection of players being entered into a contest by the coach, no waiver request is necessary. The student is eligible for the MHSAA tournament.

An administrator of a school may write to the MHSAA to request that an otherwise eligible student who has not participated in four contests during the regular season participate in the MHSAA tournament.

Consideration will only be given if the student did not meet the four-game minimum due to the cancellation of games caused by weather conditions or due to the student's injury, illness, or family tragedy (not ineligibility under MHSAA rules or school action for academic, disqualification, or discipline reasons).

The request must describe the student's involvement with the school team, the student's departure from the non-school team (if applicable), and the reason the student has not participated in four games.

If the MHSAA administrator in charge of the sport and the executive director or his/her designate concur that this is a reasonable request, the school may allow this student to participate in the MHSAA tournament. The request must be received by noon of the last business day prior to the start of competition for ANY team in the first level of that tournament to which the school is assigned.

The uniqueness of the goaltender position in ice hockey allows a school to request a waiver for that position based on compelling team or individual circumstances. These are not limited to, but may include: injury to a goaltender on the roster of a high school team with a limited number of goaltenders.

Ineligible Players - Teams defeated by teams that have allowed an ineligible student to participate do not advance in MHSAA tournaments. Placement in MHSAA tournaments is vacated when a team allows or uses one or more ineligible students to participate.

Withdrawals—Tournament management is to contact the MHSAA office if a school withdraws or fails to show up for a scheduled competition after the Opt-Out Due Date for team sports, or after pairings, heat assignments, or flights are determined for individual sports at the first level of the MHSAA tournament in that sport.

The MHSAA hockey director will request a written explanation from the school principal for the no-show/withdrawal. If the reason is deemed unacceptable by MHSAA staff, the MHSAA Executive Director will place the school on probation for the next two years. A second offense during the two-year probationary period will result in the school being prohibited from tournament play in that sport for the two years following the second offense.

4. DRAW PROCEDURES

Each Regional Manager will follow the MPR bracket to be released on Sunday, February 7, 2027, to determine games. Home teams will be determined by higher MPR. You can get more information from MHSAA.com on the MPR system: **MHSAA Hockey MPR for 2026--27**

5. TIME SCHEDULES

Regional and Quarterfinal start times will be determined by the host school tournament manager. Start times should be no earlier than 4 p.m. and no later than 8 p.m. for weekday Regional games and from 12 noon to 8 p.m. for Saturday Regional or Quarterfinal games.

Semifinal Time Schedule – USA Hockey Arena
Division 2 Semifinals are at 5:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 4, 2027
Division 3 Semifinals are at 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Friday, March 5, 2027
Division 1 Semifinals are at 4:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Friday, March 5, 2027

Championship games - Saturday, March 6, 2027 – USA Hockey Arena
Division 2 - 11 a.m.
Division 3 - 3 p.m.
Division 1 - 7 p.m.

6. AWARDS

The winning school in each division at the Regional Final Tournament will receive a trophy, as will the runner-up and championship teams in each division at the Final Tournament.

Twenty-four (24) medals will be awarded to members of winning teams at the Regional and Final Tournaments. The same number of medals will be awarded to runner-up teams at the Final Tournament. If additional medals are desired by winning schools, they may be ordered through the MHSAA at school expense. Only MHSAA-approved awards may be presented.

7. LIMITS OF COMPETITION

Teams and individuals may have a maximum of **27 contests** during the regular season. MHSAA tournament dates do not count against season maximums. Exceeding contest limits results in disqualification from the MHSAA Tournament. One scrimmage may be held at any time in the season from the first day of practice to the last regularly scheduled contest.

8. FINANCES

Schools participating in Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Finals games will receive reimbursements for lodging, meals, and mileage as follows:

Meal Allowance: Four dollars ($4) for breakfast, six dollars ($6) for lunch, and eight dollars ($8) for dinner, per person for a maximum of twenty-three (23) individuals.

Lodging - The maximum allowance is the current hotel rate, secured for up to twenty-three (23) individuals. Allowance for expenses of competing schools at the Semifinals/Finals will continue twenty-four hours after their elimination, provided they remain in the tournament city. Schools eliminated in the Quarterfinal games will not receive expenses to attend the Final games. All competing teams in Semifinals and Finals who plan to stay overnight must make their own arrangements. Contact the MHSAA for assistance with tournament lodging and lodging partners.

Per Diem Allowance—In addition to meal and lodging allowances, schools competing in Quarters, Semis, and Finals will be paid one hundred dollars ($100) for each day of competition. Teams unable to return home after winning Quarterfinal contests will be paid the additional per diem and expenses for the next day's travel.

Mileage - Participating teams at the Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Finals will receive mileage reimbursement directly from the MHSAA office after the conclusion of the tournament series, according to the following schedule.

0-75 miles – No payment (deductible)
76-100 miles – pay $1.00 per mile for all miles
101-150 miles – pay $1.50 per mile for all miles
151-250 miles – pay $2.00 per mile for all miles
251-350 miles – pay $2.50 per mile for all miles
351 miles & over – pay $3.00 per mile for all miles

Note - The MHSAA will issue checks for Quarterfinal/Semifinal/Finals reimbursements after the Final tournament games. Regional managers will issue mileage checks at the conclusion of their tournament, when applicable, according to the reimbursement schedule above.

Spectator Admission – Tickets for all tournament rounds will be sold via GoFan. Ticket prices for all Regional games are $9 per game, and for Quarterfinal games, $11 per game. Semifinal tickets are $13 for each session (two Division games per session). Finals tickets cost $13 per game (each game is a session). Semifinal and Final ticket fees include parking.

9. OFFICIALS SELECTION/ASSIGNMENTS

Tournament officials at the Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final will be assigned by the MHSAA officials' selection committee. The four-person hockey officiating system will be used at all Regional Finals, Quarterfinals, Semifinals, and Finals. At the Regional level, local tournament managers will be responsible for hiring game officials from a list of approved officials provided by the MHSAA and available online at MHSAA.com. The three-person officiating system will be used at all Regional rounds of play.

10. PLAYING RULES/ADAPTATIONS

All National Federation hockey playing rules will be used with the following adaptations:

Video replay will be used only in the MHSAA Semifinal and Final games. Game officials may consult with the replay official only to determine whether a goal was scored or whether a goal was scored before time expired. In addition, game disqualification penalties can be reviewed per the NFHS allowance to ensure that the correct player is ejected from the game.

Period Length - A 17-minute period will be used in all MHSAA Tournament games.

Goal Differential Rule—At all levels of the MHSAA Tournament, a running clock will be used when a team leads by eight or more goals during the first or second period. After two periods of play, or at any time during the third period, the game will be terminated if a team leads by eight goals. During the first and second periods, when the score differential drops beneath 8 goals, regular time shall be reinstated until an 8-goal margin is reached.

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.

Helmets—Players and officials must always wear helmets while on the ice, except while standing for the National Anthem and for post-game award ceremonies.

Neck Laceration Protectors - All players, including goalies, must wear neck laceration protectors during warm-up periods and playing action. The neck guards must be commercially manufactured and not altered from their original state.
All players, including goalkeepers, must wear a neck laceration protector as required protective equipment. NFHS rules also require goaltenders to wear a flapper-style throat protector that must be separate, commercially manufactured, unaltered, and properly attached to the goalie helmet or face mask.

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 date of competition.**

Overtime Procedures – For all MHSAA tournament games that finish regulation tied, sudden victory overtime will take place beginning with a maximum of four 8-minute periods, after which, if the game is still tied, a series of 4 on 4 sudden victory overtime periods will be played to determine a winner in accordance with the following procedures:

- At the end of regulation play, the two teams go to their locker rooms. The ice is to be resurfaced before the beginning of overtime play.
- The overtime period shall be eight minutes, sudden victory.
- **Change goals for the first overtime period and each subsequent overtime period.**
- If the game remains tied at the end of the first overtime period, there shall be a two-minute rest period (with teams remaining at their bench), change goals, and continue with the second overtime.
- The ice shall be resurfaced at the end of each set of two eight-minute overtime periods. Teams may go to their locker rooms. The same ice cleaning format is used throughout OT.
- If the score remains tied after four overtime periods have been played, teams will play all subsequent overtime periods as 4-on-4 hockey until a winner is determined. Carry-over penalties will apply. If the first 4 4-period starts with a team down two players, the two-man advantage will be played 5 on 3 and will remain until penalized players return to the ice. Teams revert to 4 on 4 on the first stoppage once shorthanded penalties expire and both teams are at full strength. (By rule, teams cannot play below the ice strength of 3 skaters plus a goalkeeper.)

Concussion Protocols - "Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional."

The language above appears in all National Federation sports rule books and reflects a strengthening of rules regarding the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion. Some sports rules require officials to remove from play any athlete who was "unconscious or apparently unconscious." This new language reflects an increasing focus on safety, given that the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness. This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion.

1. The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious one where a player is either unconscious or apparently unconscious. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise that the player should be examined by a health care professional for an exact determination of the extent of injury.
2. If it is confirmed by the school's or the MHSAA designated health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may reenter competition pursuant to the contest rules.
3. Otherwise, if competition continues while the athlete is withheld for an apparent concussion, that athlete may not be returned to competition that day but is subject to the return to play protocol.
    a. The clearance may not be on the same date on which the athlete was removed from play.
    b. Only an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner may clear the individual to return to activity.
    c. The clearance must be in writing and must be unconditional. It is not sufficient that the M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner has approved the student to begin a return to play progression. The medical examiner must approve the student's return to unrestricted activity.
    d. Individual schools, districts and leagues may have more stringent requirements and protocols including but not limited to mandatory periods of inactivity, screening and post-concussion testing prior to the written clearance for return to activity.
4. Following the contest, an Officials Report shall be filed with a removed player's school and the MHSAA if the situation was brought to the officials' attention.
5. Member schools are required to complete and submit the forms designated by the MHSAA to record and track head injury events in all levels of all sports. Prior to returning to physical activity (practice or competition) the student and parent (if a minor student) must complete the Post-Concussion Consent Form. This form must be kept on file at the school and emailed to concussion@mhsaa.com or faxed to 517-332-4071.
6. In cases where an assigned MHSAA tournament physician (MD/DO/PA/NP) is present, his or her

The decision not to allow an athlete to return to activity may not be overruled.

Return to Activity & Post-Concussion Form –
Return to Activity and Post-Concussion Form

11. MEDIA NOTES For information on credentials, drones, locker room privacy policy, microphones, photographers, flash photography, postgame interviews, press box, results, streaming (audio and video), and videotaping, go to this Media /Streaming information site: **Media/Streaming information**

Souvenir Program Policies—Teams winning Regional titles in selected sports must complete and e-mail program information and a team photograph to the MHSAA office for use in the souvenir program for the Semifinals and the Finals, if the team qualifies for Final-round play. Complete directions for filling out and submitting information and photographs are included with each kit. All program information and photographs must be submitted by e-mail.

Information For District/Regional/Semifinal Tournaments - Teams competing in MHSAA District, Regional, and Semifinal tournaments shall provide, upon request, team rosters, photographs, and other information as necessary to local tournament managers to assemble a souvenir program for the event.

Merchandising/Promotion Policies
Use of MHSAA logo – The MHSAA logo and acronym are registered trademarks. MHSAA tournament trophy designs are also copyrighted. Use of these legally protected marks requires written permission from the MHSAA. Contact the MHSAA Communications Director for additional information.

Post-Game Interviews -- Coaches should also be readily available to meet with the media shortly after a contest concludes. It is recommended that, approximately five minutes after the game, managers provide a location other than the team locker rooms for post-game interviews with coaches and/or players, and that the coach may wish to designate for interviews. Locker room access should never be allowed to media. Inasmuch as many media outlets are often on deadline following contests, interviews should be granted before any lengthy team meetings occur.

12. SPORTSMANSHIP

When a student is disqualified during a contest for flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct, his/her school shall withhold that student for the remainder of that day of competition and for at least the next day of competition for that team.

When a coach is disqualified during a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct, that coach shall be prohibited by his/her school from coaching for the remainder of that day of competition and from coaching at or attending at least the next day of competition for that coach's team.

If the school fails to enforce this regulation for any reason, it will be prohibited from entering the next MHSAA tournament for that sport or from the remainder of the current tournament if the disqualification occurs during an MHSAA tournament or during the last regular-season contest.

Disqualifications from one season carry over to the next season in that sport for undergraduates and coaches, or the next season in any sport for seniors. If the playing rules for a sport specify an additional penalty or more rapid progression, or use of such a progression for other violations, the playing rules apply. **Note: MHSAA Supplemental Hockey suspensions apply for player/coach game DQ's**

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 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.

If a team is removed from competition in protest, the contest is forfeited to the opponent and the coach and principal of the removed team must appear before the Executive Committee to indicate why additional action should not be taken. The Executive Committee may also require the appearance of personnel from other schools and game officials.

If the coach is ejected from the contest and an assistant coach or an assigned school representative is not available to continue as the coach, the event is terminated and forfeited to the opponent.

When a contest is interrupted, or it ends prematurely because of the breakdown of proper sportsmanship and the on-site officials forfeit the contest to one team, one or both schools may be subjected to any or all, but not limited to, the following: censure, probation with competition, probation without competition, forfeiture, loss of the privilege of revenue sharing, expulsion. In addition, it may be required of one or both schools that their coaches and administrators appear before the Executive Committee to explain why no additional action should be taken.

13. WEATHER POLICIES, SUSPENSIONS, POSTPONEMENTS

When teams are delayed in arriving at tournament sites because of inclement weather, management is encouraged to consider delaying competition for a few hours and/or playing games/matches in brackets of teams/individuals who are present and prepared to participate. If, after a reasonable delay, fewer than 60% of the scheduled teams/individuals have arrived, the tournament must be rescheduled. If 60% or more of the scheduled teams/individuals are present, the tournament will be conducted on the scheduled day.

14. INJUNCTION, RESTRAINING ORDER, PROTESTS

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.

There are no protests of officials' decisions in MHSAA Tournament contests beyond the MHSAA video review policy, Interpretation #293 of the MHSAA Handbook.
All disputes must be resolved on site before the game proceeds. The officials will make the final decision regarding game events. The Tournament Manager will resolve all concerns about the next game.

15. TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL POLICY

For players, coaches, and officials at all MHSAA tournaments, the use of alcohol or tobacco, including e-cigarettes or other smoking devices, is prohibited at MHSAA tournament events. Managers should stress in coaches' meetings that they are not to use tobacco at the tournament venue.

Tobacco: It is not intended that a violation of the tobacco policy should lead to immediate ejection of a coach. He or she should be reminded of the policy and report to his or her school administration after the contest. Only if the coach is unwilling to comply promptly shall he or she be disqualified from coaching at the event. Officials should be reminded of the tobacco policy, and the tournament manager should report it in writing to the MHSAA.
Alcohol: Historically, officials promptly disqualified coaches, and tournament managers immediately replaced officials who were under the influence of alcohol; and no change in such procedures is intended by these policies.

16. SPECTATOR POLICIES

The following general policies apply to spectators at MHSAA Hockey Tournament events. Tournament managers may also have additional school, facility or institutional restrictions and/or policies.

- Banners are allowed with Tournament Manager approval.
- Noisemakers are not allowed at MHSAA indoor tournaments.
- Body paint and bare chests are not allowed.
- Smoking is not allowed at the tournament site.
- Coolers are not allowed.
- Signs on sticks are not allowed.
- Helium-filled balloons are not allowed.
- Towels waved by fans are not allowed.
- Spectators may not pound on glass during games.
- Spectators may tape games from their normal seating area but are not to interfere with the view of other spectators or news media personnel covering the activity. A manager is not required to provide electrical hook-ups or tripod space and may arrange spectator videotaping from a designated location(s).

17. YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

During the MHSAA Tournament events, the MHSAA expects all designated managers, volunteer or paid staff assisting in the event, officials, or any other personnel to follow local school district policy and state statute regarding the mandatory reporting of child abuse, bullying, hazing, and sexual harassment. A report of such activity shall be made to legal authorities and to the MHSAA Executive Director or his designee.

18. UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE (DRONE) POLICY

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles ("UAV"), also known as drones, is prohibited for any purpose by any person at MHSAA tournament venues. Tournament management shall refuse admission or entry to anyone attempting to use a UAV and, if necessary, remove them and/or confiscate the UAV until the event has been completed.

For purposes of this policy, a UAV is any aircraft without a human pilot aboard.

An exception to this policy may be made in specific cases for MHSAA broadcast partners, provided that the management of the tournament facility permits the presence of UAVs for broadcast purposes under MHSAA control.