MHSAA Hockey 2026-27 Rule Adaptations

<u>Face-off location on icing and penalties</u> - Rule 7-10-1 and Rule 9-5-1 are adjusted in MHSAA high school hockey 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.**

<u>SUPPLEMENTAL GAME SUSPENSION REGULATIONS</u> – 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.

<u>*PLAYERS IN UNIFORM</u> – Teams may dress a maximum of 23 players per game: up to 20 skaters and 3 goaltenders. Schools may carry more than 23 players on their roster and change which players dress from game to game. All rostered players must appear on the Master Eligibility List.

<u>GOAL DIFFERENTIAL RULE</u> - 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 **<u>eight</u>** or more goals during the first and second periods. After two periods of play, or at any time during the third period, the game will be terminated if a team leads by **<u>eight</u>** goals. During the first and second periods, if the goal differential drops below **<u>eight</u>** goals, regular time resumes. The rule is not optional, nor shall it be modified.

<u>OVERTIME PROCEDURES –</u> 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)

<u>PERIOD LENGTH</u>—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 or 15-minute period. Such adoption should be made before the season and communicated to all coaches and officials, rather than left for debate at the rink before a game.

<u>MHSAA NECK LACERATION PROTECTOR REQUIREMENT</u>—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.

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

<u>RULES GOVERNING MHSAA HOCKEY</u> - 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