



michigan high school athletic association

# 2023 Football Preseason Guide

# SAFETY *Blitz*

*Annual Gameplan for Promoting and Preserving Safety Measures in Football*



# 2023 MHSAA Football Preseason Guide

**In addition to this football guide, coaches and administrators must review the Fall Sports Coaches Alerts especially regarding heat illness, injury, concussions and conditioning.**

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## NOTES AND RESOURCES

**Accident Medical Insurance:** Since 1970-71 the MHSAA has arranged for Athletic Accident Medical Insurance Coverage for eligible participants at each member school and all registered officials. The program is excess accident medical insurance (\$25,000 deductible) intended to help pay medical bills to administer to injuries sustained in athletic activities in MHSAA tournament sports. Details of the coverage and claims administration are posted on the Administrators page of MHSAA.com, and also can be found in the current *MHSAA Handbook*.

**Concussion Insurance:** The Michigan High School Athletic Association is also providing athletic participants at each MHSAA member junior high/middle school and high school with additional insurance that is intended to pay accident medical expense benefits resulting from a suspected concussion. The injury must be sustained while the athlete is participating in an MHSAA in-season covered activity (practice or competition). Policy limit is \$25,000 for each accident. Covered students, sports and situations follow the accident medical insurance.

**This program intends to assure that all eligible student-athletes in MHSAA member schools in grades 6 through 12, male and female, in all levels of all sports under the jurisdiction of the MHSAA, receive prompt and professional attention for head injury events even if the child is uninsured or under-insured. Accident medical deductibles and co-pays left unpaid by other policies are reimbursed under this program to the limits of the policy.**

**Summer Dead Period, Preseason Down Time:** For clarifications check the *MHSAA Handbook*, or visit the Administrators page of MHSAA.com

### Resources:

- Visit MHSAA.com’s Health and Safety page or the Football page for frequent updates.
- NOCSAE FB Helmet Standards: <https://nocsae.org/standards/standards-matrix/#/football/performance/current>



# Coaching Requirements at All Levels for 2023-24

**F**ollowing is a summary of the coaching requirements for the 2023-24 school year and a review of recent requirements.

**1. REGULATION II, SECTION 3(B)** Each head coach of a varsity team in an MHSAA tournament sport hired for the first time as a high school varsity head coach at any MHSAA member high school after July 31, 2016, shall have completed either Level 1 or Level 2 of the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program (CAP). If the head coach does not complete CAP Level 1 or 2 prior to the established deadline, that coach shall be prohibited from coaching in that season's MHSAA tournament for the sport involved and shall not be present at the facility where the MHSAA tournament involving that coach's team is being held. See Regulation II, Section 15(H)4. An administrator or faculty member designee of that school shall be present with supervisory capacity over the school's competitors. Failure to receive reminder notifications (email or other) does not change the requirement of this Section. The MHSAA may substitute an alternative coaches education program for late hires, which will fulfill the requirement on a temporary basis.

**2. REGULATION II, SECTION 3(C)** Each head coach of a varsity team in an MHSAA tournament sport hired for the first time as a high school varsity head coach at any MHSAA member high school after July 31, 2016, shall have completed either Level 1 or Level 2 of the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program (CAP). If the head coach does not complete CAP Level 1 or 2 prior to the established deadline, that coach shall be prohibited from coaching in that season's MHSAA tournament for the sport involved and shall not be present at the facility where the MHSAA tournament involving that coach's team is being held. See Regulation II, Section 15(H)4. An administrator or faculty member designee of that school shall be present with supervisory capacity over the school's competitors. Failure to receive reminder notifications (email or other) does not change the requirement of this Section. The MHSAA may substitute an alternative coaches education program for late hires, which will fulfill the requirement on a temporary basis.

**3. REGULATION II, SECTION 8(B)** Each head coach of a varsity team in a sport under MHSAA jurisdiction shall complete (in person or online) the MHSAA rules meetings for that sport for the current school year prior to the deadline if meetings are provided and attendance is required. If the head coach does not complete a rules meeting prior to the deadline, that coach shall be prohibited from coaching in that season's MHSAA tournament for the sport involved and shall not be present at the facility where the MHSAA tournament involving that coach's team is being held. See Regulation II, Section 15(H)4. An administrator or faculty member designee of that school shall be present with supervisory capacity over the school's competitors. Failure to receive reminder notifications (email or other) does not change the requirement of this Section.

**4. REGULATION II, SECTION 8(C)** Schools shall attest that all assistant and subvarsity coaches have completed an MHSAA rules meeting (online or in person) for that sport for the current school year prior to the deadline. Assistant or sub-varsity coaches who coach more than one sport during a school year must fulfill the requirement each season unless the sport is the same and the coach had completed the MHSAA sport-specific rules meeting earlier in the school year for that sport (e.g., JV boys and JV girls soccer coach). It is expected that schools will impose the penalty of Section 8(B) to assistant or subvarsity coaches who do not meet this requirement by the deadline.

## FOOTBALL RULES MEETINGS 2023

### Start Date

Mon., July 24

### End Date

Thur., Sept 14

**School Attests:** Fall head coaches have valid CPR and subvarsity & assistant coaches have met MHSAA rule meeting requirements by **Thursday, Sept 14.**

# Risk Minimization and Conditioning

It is estimated that there are approximately 1,400,000 participants in high school, junior high school and youth football leagues in the United States. Although statistics reveal that fatalities have decreased markedly since 1976. The National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research reported in the calendar year 2022 there were 11 fatalities throughout all levels of football. In 2022 there were 3 indirect cardiac fatalities.

It is necessary to remind all that are involved with football programs on the local level to continue to be vigilant in our pursuit for a risk free environment for our students. In those efforts, coaches should be aware of the following:

1. Enhanced sanitation for practice apparel, facilities, personal protection equipment and all other equipment.
2. During off-season conditioning, it is more important to stress weight training than passing leagues. The most important weight training is that which focuses not on bulk and bench presses but on strengthening of shoulder, back and neck muscles.
3. During preseason practices, it is imperative to teach proper blocking and tackling techniques, to prohibit butt blocking, face tackling, spearing and any other activity that makes the head the principal point of contact in blocking and tackling.

4. During games, don't stop teaching. Demand proper techniques of blocking and tackling even during emotionally charged games. Don't send the message that wild, reckless, kamikaze play is especially praiseworthy.
5. At all times, assign player positions sensibly in practice and games, in scrimmages and drills. Don't put younger, slighter, less mature players in positions where they will be more likely to make open-field tackles: at defensive back, or on punt and kick-off coverage teams.
6. No existing football helmet is concussion proof. Proper helmet fit is a major concern and is imperative that athletes, coaches and athletic trainers take an active role in the proper fitting of helmets. Comfort shortcuts are not permitted. (See MHSAA Concussion Protocol)
7. When a player has experienced or shown signs of head trauma (loss of consciousness, visual disturbances, headache, inability to walk correctly, obvious disorientation, memory loss), he should receive medical attention and should not be allowed to return to practice or competition without permission from a physician.

## Get on the Same Page Before Practice Begins

### Suggestions for Principals/Athletic Directors and Coaches

#### PRINCIPALS/ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

Discuss the following topics with the entire football coaching staff prior to your school's first practice in August. Similar subjects should be discussed with coaches of other sports.

1. Point out all foreseeable dangers for each student in football participation.
2. Rules must be followed in every respect. Including required proper fitting, and unaltered equipment.
3. Correct procedures, techniques, conditioning, proper equipment fitting must be taught. The coach must be knowledgeable and drills must be conducted with minimal risk. Do not use dangerous drills to demonstrate procedures. Terminology such as "kill", "maim", etc. should be eliminated.
4. Take positive steps when disciplining a student who has violated a rule involving risk factors. Create a minimum risk learning environment.
5. Protect yourself by keeping thorough records. Document practice sessions, schedules, statements, precautions, etc. Inform parents and students regarding instructional procedures involving risk minimization.
6. Establish a set, written procedure in the event of injury during practice and games.



#### COACHES

At a total squad meeting, have all players place and review the warning labels on the outside lower back part of the helmet and instruct that only certified facemasks may replace the original. Consult helmet manufacturers for policies on "after-market" attachments.

Also, at the team meeting, it would be a good time for the coaches to stress the following to the entire squad:

1. Helmets cannot prevent all head and neck injuries (Poster--Attention Football Players). Proper fit is a must.
2. The helmet check is a shared responsibility and all damaged equipment should be reported to the coach. Share with all team members the suggested inspection checklist items (see enclosed).
3. In any sport there is always the chance that someone can be injured and, in a small percentage of cases, a player could sustain a very serious injury.
4. Spearing, butt blocking, and face and head tackling are illegal. The danger in these techniques is that too often the player's head is not in the proper position when contact is made with the opponent. Executed improperly head down, the neck is most vulnerable to injury. A blow to the top of the head when the neck is straightened is the most frequent cause of permanent injury.

Only legal techniques should be taught or practiced. The players should be instructed to keep their heads up and necks bulled when making contact with opponents. The players should be warned about putting their heads down and initiating contact.

# MHSAA Summer Regulations Regarding Football

*NOTE: MHSAA Handbook Regulation II, Section 11(H) addresses summer football activities for coaches and players  
Below is a SUMMARY of Football-Related items in that Regulation*

- 1. During the summer prior to Saturday, August 1,** a maximum of seven players at one time may engage in organized competition with their school coach present for a maximum of 7 days (more than seven players may be present on the sideline). In addition, informal activities (with footballs, helmets and football shoes not sleds and dummies) may take place on any number of days during the summer (**not Summer Dead Period**) as long as no more than seven students in grades 7-12 of the district are assembled with a football coach of that district.  
These seven days with competition in the summer are subject to the same out-of-state travel limits that apply to school teams during the school season under Regulation II, Section 6, except for camps that are conducted within Michigan.
  - a) In addition, schools should be alerted to prohibitions against events which are called or purport to be all star events or national high school championships. This prohibition applies to 7 on 7 football.**
- 2. During the summer prior to Aug. 1, except as limited during the summer “dead period” football coaches may participate in 15 dates of non-mandatory activity with an unlimited number of players in grades 9-12 or 6-8 separately (in helmets only). Schools could use these dates as they see fit**  
**under other regulations (i.e., practice, 7-on-7) but a team or individual may not exceed the limit of seven “7 on 7” competitions. The allowance with the conditions for a bona fide camp is no longer necessary under this regulation. Any camp day would be counted among the allowed 15 dates.**
- 3. Schools should alert all players: At no time during the summer or school year outside of the defined football season may MHSAA member student-athletes participate in a camp, clinic, practice, tryout or combine where more than football helmets and football shoes are worn (in-state or out-of-state). \*(Exception being that shoulder pads may be worn at college summer camps sponsored and run by NCAA/NAIA Institutions.)**
- 4. Preseason Down Time – Beginning August 1** for all fall sports no open gyms, camps or clinics which involve that sport shall occur at the school or be sponsored elsewhere by the school; and no competition, intersquad or intrasquad between groups that resemble school teams (more than 4 students of grades 7-12 of the district) may occur at any location with any of that school district’s personnel present. The preseason downtime allows voluntary conditioning for any number of students and has a 4-player limitation on any activity that is sport specific (prior to Aug. 1, 7 players).



## Summer Regulations FAQs

- Q** When does “summer” vacation begin for a school?  
**A** The Monday after Memorial Day. The summer dead period may not occur when teams are finishing spring academic seasons.
- Q** May the coach of a school football team involve 20 of his players voluntarily in a practice session he conducts in July?  
**A** Yes. The limit is 7 players, except at a bona fide skills camp or 7 on 7 competition, where there is no limit to the number of players but involves other limitations.
- Q** May a football coach attend and work at a football skills camp in the summer where a dozen members of that coach’s team are enrolled?  
**A** Yes, prior to August 1, but not during the summer dead period.
- Q** May a school sponsor a bona fide football skills camp?  
**A** Yes, it must be open to students from any district; and participants are subject to the equipment limitations of footballs, helmets and football shoes. It may last no longer than 10 days.
- Q** May a football coach be actively involved in coaching in a summer 7-on-7 passing league conducted by a college, community or school?  
**A** Yes, prior to August 1, but not during the summer dead period, coaches may actively coach students in such competition subject to equipment limitations and a maximum of 7 days.
- Q** May a football coach conduct conditioning programs for players in grades 7-12 during the summer?  
**A** Yes, but not during the summer dead period, “Conditioning programs” are permitted out of season if they are voluntary and do not involve equipment that is specific to football conducted on an interscholastic basis. Examples of prohibited equipment include, but are not limited to footballs, dummies and equipment. Generic equipment such as cones, weights, jump ropes, and other fitness apparatuses are permitted.
- Q** May a football team use school transportation to assemble at a site other than the regular location of practice?  
**A** Yes, the use of school transportation is allowed for such purposes, but only **one** day before the first official day of practice. School transportation may not be used for camps, 7 on 7 competition or other summer activities.
- Q** May a MHSAA member school athlete participate in a full contact camp, clinic, practice, tryout or combine where attendees are wearing either full equipment or helmets, shoulder pads and football shoes?  
**A** YES. As long as the camp is sponsored and run by an NCAA/NAIA Institution. Otherwise, Michigan athletes may not participate in any out of season activity while wearing more equipment than football helmets and football shoes in-state or out-of-state.



# Current MHSAA Football Practice Policies

*Adopted by the Representative Council 3/21/14, modified 5/8/17 and 5/5/2019*

During the first week of practice of the season, only helmets are allowed the first two days, only shoulder pads may be added on the third and fourth days, and full pads may not be worn until the fifth day of team practice.

## DEFINITIONS and LIMITATIONS:

1. “Collision” practice is one in which there is **live, game-speed, player-vs.-player** contact in pads (not walk-throughs) involving any number of players **executing full tackles at a competitive pace, taking players to the ground.**
2. **First two weeks of practice before first contest:** Collision contact is limited to no more than 6 hours in a week (Monday – Sunday). Inter-squad scrimmages will calculate collision contact based on  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the total time (2-hour scrimmage = 1 hour of collision contact, 3 – hour scrimmage = 1.5 hours of collision contact).
3. **Thud:** Full speed, **contact above the waist only, with no player being taken to the ground.** There is no winner or loser, predetermined or otherwise. Coaches are not grading physical domination in thud. Teammates are merely trying to give each other a simulation of full-speed game action. Thud is not collision contact and is an alternative to live/full contact. Thus drills and segments are unlimited during the football season.  
Note: Thud tempo drills and activity is not considered Collision contact and is unlimited.
  - During any additional practice sessions, players may wear helmets and other pads (neither is mandatory). Blocking and tackling technique may be taught and practiced. However, full-speed contact is limited to players vs. player in thud activity or calculated in collision practice.
4. **After the first regular-season game,** teams may conduct no more than 30 total minutes of **collision** practice in any week, Monday through Sunday. During other practice sessions, players may wear helmets and other protective pads (neither is mandatory). Blocking and tackling technique may be taught and practiced.
5. No single practice may exceed three hours, and the total practice time for days with multiple practice sessions may not exceed five hours.
  - Warm-up, stretching, speed and agility drills and cool down are all considered part of practice. Neither strength/weight training activities nor video/classroom sessions are considered practice for the purposes of the three- or five-hour limits.

## Football Practice Policy Q & A

- A. **Q** Do the policies apply at both the high school and junior high/middle school levels?  
**A** Yes.
- B. **Q** Is the purpose of the proposals to improve student-athlete acclimatization or reduce head trauma?  
**A** Both.
- C. **Q** Are “girdle pads” allowed during the first week of practice?  
**A** Girdle pads may be worn under or in place of shorts during the first four days of acclimatization practice that precede the first day in full pads.
- D. **Q** Does the three-hour limit on single practices and the five-hour limit for multiple practices on the same day apply only to football?  
**A** Yes. The MHSAA recommends that the limits be added as soon as possible to the MHSAA “Model Policies for Managing Heat & Humidity” and apply to all sports.
- E. **Q** How much time is required between sessions on days with multiple practices?  
**A** Because practice venues differ greatly and some may raise questions regarding supervision and the possibility of injury risks as great off the field as on, the Task Force declined to set a maximum and minimum length of rest periods. However, one hour between practices when there is no physical activity is the minimum recommendation. Classroom sessions would be allowed during the period of physical rest. To be clear, break time is **not** included in the five-hour limit.
- F. **Q** Can a team have different collision practices for different levels of players?  
**A** If varsity and sub-varsity squads practice separately, their collision sessions may be different. However, if the squads practice together, then their collision sessions must be the same.
- G. **Q** How are the 6-hours or 30-minutes of collision practices per week calculated?  
**A** Any part of a full contact drill or live scrimmage where players are taken to the ground constitutes time that should be included in the 6-hour or 30-minute total. Team breaks or time out from the collision portions of practice where players are being given instruction or resting from contact, need not be included in the 6-hour or 30-minutes. Moving from a huddle to the line of scrimmage or standing in line to enter a full contact segment of a drill are to be counted as part of the 6-hour or 30-minute total. The calculation is to the team or portion of a team within a week. It is not intended that time be counted and recorded separately for each individual player. See points 2 and 3 in the practice policies for the criteria of a Collision vs. Thud practice.

# MHSAA Football Limitations of Competition & 5-Quarter Allowance

## Regulation II, Section 10-A (6)

### Football Participation Defined:

“Participation” means to have entered and competed in a football scrimmage or contest for at least one offensive, defensive, scrimmage kick (punt, FG, PAT) or free kick. Participation in one down, constitutes participation in that quarter.

- For the purposes of this regulation, a “football week” is defined as Wednesday to Tuesday.
  - Wednesday = Day 1      Saturday = Day 4      Monday = Day 6
  - Thursday = Day 2      Sunday = Day 5      Tuesday = Day 7
  - Friday = Day 3
- A team shall participate in no more than:
  - ONE game of interscholastic football in five consecutive calendar days,
  - FOUR interscholastic scrimmages,
  - NINE games in a season, exclusive of the MHSAA tournament.
  - *Example: The JV team plays on Wednesday (day 1 of the football week), the JV team would not be eligible to play another game until Monday (day 6 of the football week).*
- A student shall participate in no more than:
  - FOUR interscholastic scrimmages and in no more than,
  - NINE games in a season, exclusive of the MHSAA tournament.

### FIVE QUARTER ALLOWANCE:

- A student may participate in no more than:
  - FOUR quarters in a day, and...
  - **FIVE quarters in a week.**  
Five or fewer quarters in a week shall constitute one of the nine allowed games.  
*Example: A student participates in 4 quarters of varsity football on Friday (day 3 of the football week), they would be eligible to participate in another quarter before that football week ends on Tuesday (day 7 of the football week).*
- The 5-quarter allowance is restricted to high school football teams only.
- **Special teams’ participation is not exempt from this rule.**
- Overtime is considered an extension of the fourth quarter insofar as this section is concerned.
  - *Example: A JV player plays in all four quarters during their JV game. They then enter the game in the 3rd quarter of the varsity contest and reaches their quarter limit for the week. Once the third quarter ends, they may not play in any additional quarters – including any overtime. However, had they entered the game in the 4th quarter of the subsequent varsity contest instead of the 3rd, the student would also be eligible to compete in any overtime period, since overtime is an extension of the 4th period.*

### Penalty Update:

In May of 2022, the representative council voted to change the penalty for 5-quarter allowance violations to forfeiture of the contest(s) in which the rule violation occurred (varsity or sub-varsity). Additionally, the head coach of the team in which the violation occurred is ineligible for the next day of competition.

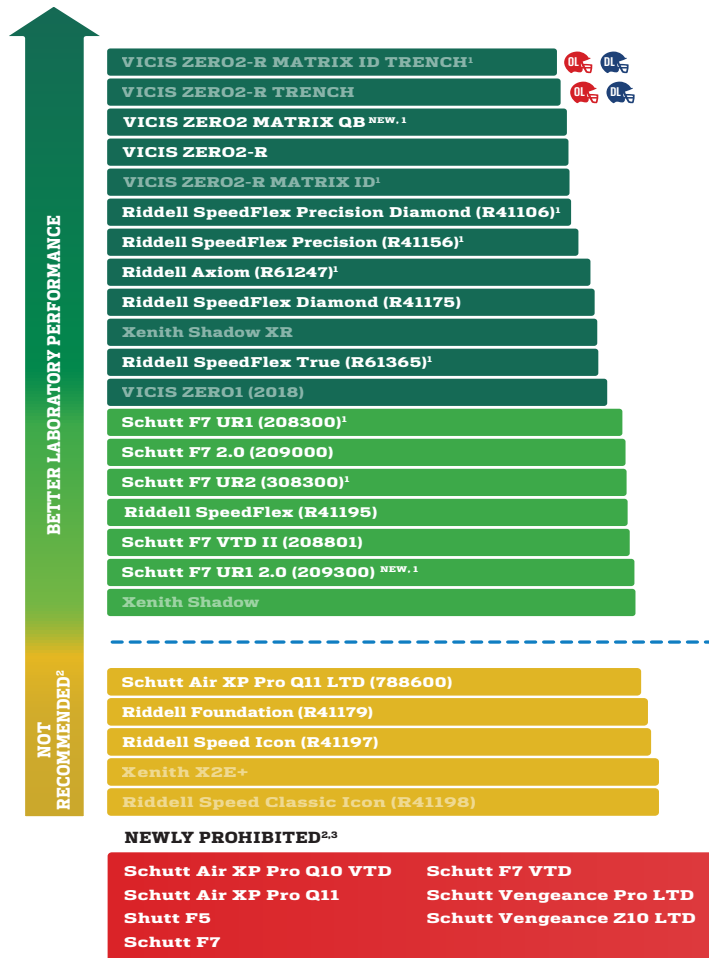
***NOTE: The 5-quarter allowance is an individual student rule, while the 1 game in 5 days regulation pertains to the team.***

# NFLPA Helmet Lab Testing Performance Results

**NOTE:** The bottom 10 helmets in the listed results are listed as prohibited helmets for the NFL. We want to clarify that while these 10 helmets from various manufacturers are no longer in production, they are permissible for play under the current NFHS rules provided they met the NOCSAE standard at the time of manufacture and provided the helmets have been properly recertified as required.



## 2023 HELMET LABORATORY TESTING PERFORMANCE RESULTS



**THE NFL, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NFLPA, THROUGH THEIR RESPECTIVE APPOINTED BIOMECHANICAL EXPERTS, ANNUALLY COORDINATE EXTENSIVE LABORATORY RESEARCH TO EVALUATE WHICH HELMETS BEST REDUCE HEAD IMPACT SEVERITY. THE RESULTS OF THOSE TESTS, WHICH ARE SUPPORTED BY ON-FIELD PERFORMANCE, ARE SET FORTH ON THIS POSTER.**

The helmet models are listed in order of their performance, with a shorter bar representing better performance. The rankings are based exclusively on the ability of the helmet to reduce head impact severity measures in laboratory testing. Performance variation related to helmet fit, retention, temperature-dependence, and long-term durability are not addressed in these rankings.

All helmets in green are recommended for use by NFL players. Based on a statistical grouping analysis, helmets in the Top-Performing group have been further distinguished into two green categories. The darker green group represents those that performed similarly to this year's top-ranked helmets, while the light green group performed similarly to the lowest ranked dark green helmet. Helmets with poorer laboratory performance were placed in the yellow or prohibited groups. Yellow and newly prohibited red helmets are not permitted for new players and players who did not wear them during the 2022 NFL season. Newly prohibited helmets will be prohibited for all players in 2024.

**The laboratory test conditions were intended to represent potentially concussive head impacts in the NFL. The results of this study should not be extrapolated to collegiate, high school, or youth football.**



Use this QR code to view the full list of prohibited helmets and an additional list of approved legacy helmets.

Offensive Lineman Top-Performer Defensive Lineman Top-Performer

*This year, for the first time, top-performing helmets were tested using methodologies specific to offensive linemen (OL) and defensive linemen (DL). Top-performing position-specific helmets are indicated by the corresponding helmet icons.*

<sup>1</sup>Actual performance and ranking may vary since these helmets are customized for each player's head shape.

<sup>2</sup>These helmets are not permitted for new players and players who did not wear them during the 2022 NFL season.

<sup>3</sup>These helmets will be prohibited for all players starting in 2024.

Note: Models worn by less than 1% of NFL players are grayed-out.

NO HELMET SYSTEM CAN COMPLETELY PROTECT AGAINST SERIOUS BRAIN AND/OR NECK INJURIES A PLAYER MIGHT SUSTAIN WHILE PARTICIPATING IN FOOTBALL.



# Football Helmet Inspection

To assist the person responsible for repair and maintenance of helmets, NOCSAE has developed a number of guidelines to observe when inspecting helmets. There may be other things you want to check as this list is not intended to cover every observation which may be made. NOCSAE recommends that a periodic inspection of all helmets be made and that they be periodically retested under the NOCSAE recertification program as directed by the manufacturer.

## SUGGESTED INSPECTION CHECK LIST

1. Check helmet fit for agreement with manufacturer's instructions and procedures.
2. Examine shell for cracks particularly noting any cracks around holes (where most cracks start) and replace any that have cracked. **DO NOT USE A HELMET WITH A CRACKED SHELL.**
3. Examine all mounting rivets, screws, Velcro and snaps for breakage, distortion and looseness. **Repair as necessary.**
4. Replace face guards if bare metal is showing, there is a broken weld or if guard is misshaped.  
NOTE: Face protectors must meet NOCSAE test standards at the time of manufacture.
5. Examine for helmet completeness, and replace any parts that have become damaged, such as sweatbands, nose snubbers and chinstraps.
6. Replace jaw pads when damaged. Check for proper installation and fit.
7. Examine 4-point chinstrap for proper adjustment, and inspect to see if it is broken or stretched out of shape; also inspect hardware to see if it needs replacement.
8. Read instructions provided by manufacturer regarding care and maintenance procedures. Always follow these instructions:

**CAUTION:** Only paints, waxes, decals or cleaning agents approved by the manufacturer are to be used on any helmet. It is possible to get a severe or delayed reaction by using unauthorized materials, which could permanently damage the helmet shell and affect its risk minimization performance.



**COACHES MUST HAVE PLAYERS inspect their helmets prior to each usage as follows:**

## SUSPENSION STYLE

- Check hardware, i.e., screws or rivets that may be loose/missing.
- Check webbing for tears in threads, stretching, or pulling away at rivet locations.
- If crown webbing is adjustable, check that crown rope is properly adjusted and is tied tightly using a square knot.
- Check interior padding for proper placement and condition.

## PADDED STYLE

- Foam/Air/Liquid
- Check foam padding for proper placement and any deterioration.
- Check for cracks in vinyl/rubber covering of air, foam, liquid padded helmets.
- Check that protective system or foam padding has not been altered or removed.
- Check for proper amount of inflation in air padded helmets. Follow manufacturer's recommended practice for adjusting air pressure at the valves.
- Check all rivets, screws, Velcro and snaps to assure they are properly fastened and holding protective parts.

**If any of the above inspections indicate a need for repair and/or replacement, players must notify the coach at once!**

VISIT the [MHSAA.com](http://MHSAA.com) Football Page for Updates

## Heat and Humidity App on MHSAA.com

An easy-to-use app on MHSAA.com allows coaches and administrators to record heat index measurements that then can be tracked by a school's athletic director or athletic trainer. The tool also shows the suggested actions that should be taken under the policy and records the actions taken by that user (such as removed protective equipment). This is a heat index calculation and record keeping tool. Schools will still need to seek accurate heat and humidity (heat index) readings from a Psychrometer.

To access this tool, log into MHSAA.com, or if already logged in, click "My MHSAA." These pages are optimized for mobile use.

Under the "My MHSAA" column on the left of the screen, click "Coach Services." Under "Coach Services," click "Heat Index Recording" and you will see the page at right.



# Reducing Brain and Spinal Injuries in Football and Other Athletic Activities

Brain and spinal injuries in football have been dramatically reduced since the rules were changed in 1976 to prohibit butt blocking and face tackling, and any other technique in which the helmet and facemask purposely received the brunt of the initial impact. There are still a small number of football players (and fewer in other sports) that become paralyzed, but the lesson to keep the head and face out of blocking and tackling remains.

Generally, about 3 – 5% of the injuries experienced by participants in athletics are concussions, e.g., temporary dizziness, confusion, nausea, headaches, and perhaps unconsciousness. Concussions are given grades from Grade 1 (a hit that dazes for a few minutes to Grade 3 (unconscious). No concussion should be dismissed as minor until proven so by medical personnel. The task is to be sure that the athlete no longer has any post concussion symptoms at rest and exertion before returning to competition. What is now called “the second impact syndrome” with its high rate of morbidity if not mortality is the result of returning to play too soon.

Several suggestions for reducing brain and spinal injuries follow:

1. Preseason physical exams, or the MHSAA Sports Health Questionnaire (2020-21 only) for all participants. Identify during the physical exam those athletes with a history of previous brain or spinal injuries. If the physician has any questions about the athlete’s readiness to participate, the athlete should not be allowed to play.
2. A physician should be present at all games and practices. If it is not possible for a physician to be present at all games and practice sessions, emergency measures must be provided. The total staff should be organized in that each person will know what to do in case of a brain or spinal injury in game or practice. Have a plan ready and have your staff prepared to implement that plan. Prevention of further injury is the main objective.
3. Athletes must be given proper conditioning exercises which will strengthen their neck muscles in order for them to be able to hold their head firmly erect when making contact. Strong neck muscles may help prevent neck injuries.
4. Coaches should drill the athletes in the proper execution of the fundamentals of the football skills, particularly blocking and tackling. **KEEP THE HEAD OUT OF FOOTBALL.**
5. Coaches and officials should discourage the players from using their heads as battering rams. The rules prohibiting spearing should be enforced in practice and games. The players should be taught to respect the helmet as a protective device and that the helmet should not be used as a weapon.
6. All coaches, physicians and trainers should take special care to see that the players’ equipment is properly fitted, particularly the helmet.
7. Strict enforcement of the rules of the game by both coaches and officials will help reduce serious injuries.



8. When a player has experienced or shown signs of brain trauma (loss of consciousness, visual disturbances, headache, inability to walk correctly, obvious disorientation, memory loss) he/she should receive immediate medical attention and should not be allowed to return to practice or game without permission from the proper medical authorities. Coaches should encourage players to let them know if they have any of the above mentioned symptoms (that can’t be seen by others, such as headaches) and why it is important.
9. Both athletes and their parents should be warned of the risks of injuries.
10. Coaches should not be hired if they do not have the training and experience needed to teach the skills of the sport and to properly train and develop the athletes for competition.

Following is a list of Post Concussion Signs/Symptoms:

Depression  
Numbness/tingling  
Dizziness  
Poor Balance  
Drowsiness  
Poor Concentration  
Excess Sleep  
Ringing in the ears  
Fatigue  
Sadness  
Feel “in fog”  
Sensitive to Light  
Headache  
Sensitivity to Noise  
Irritability  
Trouble falling asleep  
Memory Problems  
Vomiting  
Nausea  
Nervousness

# MHSAA Protocol for Implementation of National Federation Sports Playing Rules for Concussions

**“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, which appears in all National Federation sports rule books, reflects a strengthening of rules regarding the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion. This language reflects an increasing focus on safety and acknowledges 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 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 school, 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 or after 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. **ONLINE REPORTING:** Member schools are required to complete and submit an online report designated by the MHSAA to record and track head injury events when they occur in all levels of all sports during the season in practices and competitions. Schools with no concussions for a season (fall, winter and spring) are required to report this at the conclusion of that season.
6. **POST-CONCUSSION CONSENT FORM:** Prior to returning to physical activity (practice or competition) the student and parent (if a minor student) must complete the Post-Concussion Consent Form which accompanies the written unconditional clearance of an M.D., D.O., P.A or N.P. **This form should be kept on file at the school for seven years after the student’s graduation and emailed to [concussion@mhsaa.com](mailto:concussion@mhsaa.com) or faxed to 517-332-4071.**
7. In cases where an assigned MHSAA tournament physician (MD/DO/PA/NP) is present, his or her decision to not allow an athlete to return to activity may not be overruled.

## NON-COMPLIANCE WITH CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Following are the consequences for not complying with National Federation and MHSAA rules when players are removed from play because of a concussion:

- A concussed student is ineligible to return to any athletic meet or contest on the *same day* the concussion is sustained.
- A concussed student is ineligible to enter a meet or contest on a *subsequent day* without the written authorization of an M.D., D.O., Physician’s Assistant or Nurse Practitioner and the MHSAA-designated “Post-Concussion Return to Activity Consent Form” also signed by the student and parent.”

These students are considered ineligible players and any meet or contest which they enter is forfeited.

In addition, that program is placed on probation through that sport season of the following school year.

For a second offense in that sport during the probationary period – that program is continued on probation through that sport season of the following school year and not permitted to participate in the MHSAA tournament in that sport during the original and extended probationary period. A school which fails to submit required online concussion reports will be subject to the penalties of Regulation V, Section 4 (A). This includes reporting zero if no concussions occurred in a season.

# MHSAA Return to Activity Form



July 2023

## RETURN TO ACTIVITY & POST-CONCUSSION CONSENT FORM

This form is to be used after an athlete is removed from and not returned to activity after exhibiting concussion symptoms. MHSAA rules require 1) Unconditional written authorization from a physician (MD/DO/Physician's Assistant/Nurse Practitioner), and 2) Consent from the student and parent/guardian. **Both Sections 1 & 2 of this form must be completed prior to a return to activity. This form must be kept on file at the school and emailed to Concussion@MHSAA.com or faxed to 517-332-4071.**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Event/Sport: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Action of M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner

- **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-activity progression, nor is it sufficient that the student is authorized to return pending the completion of a return-to-activity progression. The medical examiner must approve the student's return to unrestricted activity.
- 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 or after the written clearance for return to activity.
- A school or health care facility may use a locally created form for this portion of the return-to-activity protocol, provided it complies with MHSAA regulations. (See MHSAA Protocol.)

Permission is granted for the athlete to return to **unrestricted activity** (may not return to practice or competition on the same day as the injury).

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE (must be MD or DO or PA or NP – circle one)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner's Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Post-Concussion Consent from Student and Parent/Guardian.

- I am fully informed concerning, and knowingly and voluntarily consent to, my/my child's immediate return to participation in athletic activities; I understand, appreciate, acknowledge, and assume the risks associated with such return to activity, including but not limited to concussions, and agree to comply with all relevant protocols established by my/my child's school and/or the MHSAA; and I/my child has been evaluated by, and has received written clearance to return to activity from an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.
- In consideration of my/my child's continued participation in MHSAA-sponsored athletics, I/we do hereby waive any and all claims, suits, losses, actions, or causes of action against the MHSAA, its members, officers, representatives, committee members, employees, agents, attorneys, insurers, volunteers, and affiliates based on any injury to me, my child, or any person, whether because of inherent risk, accident, negligence, or otherwise, during or arising in any way from my/my child's participation in an MHSAA-sponsored sport.
- I/we consent to the disclosure to appropriate persons, consistent with HIPAA and FERPA, of the treating medical examiner's written statement.

Student's Signature (Required): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ \*Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Required if student is less than 18 years of age.*

# Member School Concussion Reporting



School leaders will want to familiarize themselves with the logo at left. “MHSAA headlines” will signify important health-related matters, such as the Association’s online concussion reporting form.

The online form will require the following information related to concussion occurrences.

**Post-Concussion Return-to-Play Requirement:** In addition to the written clearance from an MD, DO, PA or NP, signatures are also required of both students and their parents/guardians before the student can return to activity. It is also required that the Return to Activity & Post-Concussion Consent Form be emailed or faxed to the MHSAA and kept on file at the school for seven years following a student’s high school graduation. The same form signed by the medical professional must then be signed by the student and parent before the student may return to activity. Students who participate without the required approvals are ineligible athletes.

The form is on the MHSAA website – Health and Safety – Return to Activity & Post-Concussion Consent Form. The reverse side of the form has information for parents on the MHSAA Concussion Care Gap Insurance that covers deductibles, copays and students with no insurance.

## SAMPLE -- MHSAA MEMBER SCHOOL CONCUSSION REPORTING -- SAMPLE

*(This information will be requested via an online form being deployed by the MHSAA this fall)*

### PRIMARY INFORMATION

- School and Reporting Individual & Title (AD, Coach, Athletic Trainer, Secretary, Other):
- Email and Primary Phone

### STUDENT INFORMATION

- Grade, Gender, Age, Sport
- Level (Varsity, JV, Fr., Etc)
- Date and Time of Occurrence
- Event Occurrence: Practice or Contest

### DETAILED INCIDENT INFORMATION

- Prior to this incident had the student ever been diagnosed with a concussion? Month/Year
- Was protective equipment worn on the head at the time of the event?
- Did the event result from (select one): person to person contact; person to object contact; person to ground contact; uncertain as to the cause of the event
- If during a practice (select one): During a drill; During simulated competition- scrimmage; Other
- If during a practice (select one): The event occurred near the start of practice; The event occurred near the middle of practice; The event occurred near the end of practice
- If during a contest (select one): The event occurred near the early portions of the contest; The event occurred near the middle; The event occurred near the end of the contest
- On what surface did the injury occur: Wooden gym floor, rubberized gym floor, wrestling-type mat, indoor tile type floor, carpeted floor, rubber weight room floor, artificial turf, natural grass, concrete, asphalt, other
- The student was initially examined at the time of the event and withheld from activity by (select all that apply): Coach; Athletic Trainer; Athletic Director; Sideline Emergency Personnel; Other Appropriate Health Care Professional; MD; DO; NP; PA; Other
- Did student return to activity on the same day because a concussion did not occur?

### FOLLOW-UP TO INITIAL CONCUSSION EVENT REPORT

- Was the student determined to have a concussion?
- The student was given a written authorization to return to activity by a: MD; DO; NP; PA
- Date of written authorization to return to activity:
- Please select the type of medical facility from which the authorization to return to activity was provided: Hospital; Urgent or ready care business; Primary care physician or pediatrician’s office; Neurologist’s office; Team Doctor; Other
- Were there comments or conditions written on the authorization to return to activity?
- How many days was this student absent from school as a result of this concussion event?
- The student was NOT given a written authorization to return to activity by the end of the season in which the event occurred (Dec 1, April 1 or July 1 or later).

Following completion of the required material above, schools will be provided the opportunity to describe any additional information regarding the incident occurrence, of follow-up to the incident. They may also attach documents pertinent to the incident.

# MHSAA Model Policy for Managing Heat and Humidity

Adopted March 22, 2013

1. **Thirty minutes prior to the start of an activity, and again 60 minutes after the start of that activity**, take temperature and humidity readings at the site of the activity. Using a digital sling psychrometer is recommended. Record the readings in writing and maintain the information in files of school administration. Each school is to designate whose duties these are: generally the athletic director, head coach or certified athletic trainer.
2. **Factor the temperature and humidity into the Heat Index Calculator and Chart** to determine the Heat Index. If a digital sling psychrometer is being used, the calculation is automatic.

## 3. If the Heat Index is below 95 degrees:

### All Sports

- o Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
- o Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
- o Ice-down towels for cooling.
- o Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.

## If Heat Index is 95 to 99 degrees:

### All Sports —

- o Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
- o Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
- o Ice-down towels for cooling.
- o Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.

### Contact sports and activities with additional equipment:

- o Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
- o Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
- o Ice-down towels for cooling.
- o Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.

### Contact sports and activities with additional equipment:

- o Helmets and other possible equipment removed while not involved in contact.
- **Reduce time of outside activity. Consider postponing practice to later in the day.**
- **Recheck temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat Index.**

## If Heat Index is 99 to 104 degrees:

### All Sports —

- o Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
- o Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
- o Ice-down towels for cooling.
- o Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
- o Alter uniform by removing items if possible.
- o Allow for changes to dry t-shirts and shorts.
- o Reduce time of outside activity as well as indoor activity if air conditioning is unavailable.
- o Postpone practice to later in the day.

### Contact sports and activities with additional equipment:

- o If helmets or other protective equipment are required to be worn by rule or normal practice, suspend practice or competition immediately and resumption may not occur until the index is 99 degrees or below.
- **Recheck temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat Index.**

## If Heat Index above 104 degrees:

### All Sports

- o **Stop all outside activity in practice and/or play, and stop all inside activity if air conditioning is unavailable.**

**Note: When the temperature is below 80 degrees there is no combination of heat and humidity that will result in need to curtail activity.**

**— See Next page for Heat Index Chart —**





# Heat Index FAQ

**Note:** By its very nature, a “model” policy is intended to be flexible so that when it is being considered for local adoption, local authorities can factor in the details of their unique facilities and schedules as they prescribe the manner in which this heat and humidity management policy is implemented.

Remember that even with rigorous implementation of this policy, the need remains for supervising staff to provide for adequate hydration and rest breaks at all times and places, and to arrange for cooling devices and strategies that respond to heat illness emergencies.

**1. Where do I find a device that automatically provides the heat index?**

**A** Most health care professionals with whom schools work know about these devices, called digital psychrometers, and know where to obtain them. Many medical supply stores carry the devices. Even Home Depot does.

If you Google “Devices for measuring heat and humidity,” you will find many options.

The MHSAA has established a relationship with School Health. Place orders by phone, 866-323-5465, or by fax, 800-235-1305, or by email, [orders@schoolhealth.com](mailto:orders@schoolhealth.com), or via Web, [sportshealth.com](http://sportshealth.com). School Health accepts credit card or PO payments or can invoice schools. Discount pricing will be received by referring to the reference code for the particular item, MK90727 (Heat Watch) or MK61253.

**2. If I don't have a digital psychrometer that provides the heat index calculation, how do I get readings for temperature and relative humidity, and how do I calculate the heat index?**

**A** A thermometer and humidity gauge will usually be necessary. Get each reading and then refer to the “Heat Index Calculation and Chart” to determine the heat index.

**3. Are there cell phone applications that can be utilized?**

**A** There are cell phone applications that can do the calculations. There are also applications that can provide the heat index at certain locations, but those locations are unlikely to be close enough to the actual site of the practice or event to be useful.

Readings will differ indoors and out, on hills or in valleys, on natural grass or artificial turf. These and other variables make it necessary for the person designated to record and file the readings to actually take those readings 30 minutes before and 60 minutes into the activity.

**4. Where in the school should the readings be filed?**

**A** They should be placed on a regular and frequent basis in files maintained in the office of the superintendent, principal or athletic director. Those files may be electronic. Coaches might record the readings on their written practice plans which schools should then keep on file.

**5. Are there any MHSAA sports or any venues for which the policy is inapplicable?**

**A** Every practice and competition in every sport at every venue is intended to be subject to the policy when the temperature at the venue nears 80°F.

In the case of swimming & diving, the risk is greater to spectators than participants, who compete in water that may be cooler than the air temperature.

While most attention will be given to outdoor sports, do not neglect conditions at indoor venues, such as volleyball in facilities that are not air conditioned.

While most attention will be given to early fall and late spring activities, do not neglect conditions for winter sports, such as in the wrestling room.

Sometimes conditions will vary for different aspects of the same competition. For example, one tennis court may be in the shade, and another out of the wind. One part of a cross country course may be much hotter or more humid than other parts. The best course of action is to take the heat index at the place of the most severe conditions.

**6. Who and what control when there are multiple devices and different heat index readings at a venue?**

**A** Host management makes the decisions to suspend and to resume activity using those devices or systems usually relied upon at that venue.

**7. After a heat index reading that would require delay or suspension of activities, is there a period of time that must pass before activities resume?**

**A** No. Readings can be taken continuously during the delay or suspension of activities. When relief from high temperature and humidity is unlikely, local authorities should be implementing previously-considered contingency plans to relocate events to different venues or reschedule events to different days or times.

**8. May a school decide to implement this model policy for practices but not regular season contests?**

**A** Yes. However, MHSAA tournament managers will follow this policy for MHSAA tournament contests.

**9. When the temperature at the site of the activity is less than 80°, do we need to check and record the heat and humidity?**

**A** No. When the temperature is less than 80°, there is no combination of heat and humidity that will result in a need to curtail activity.

However, if the temperature is near 80°, it would be prudent to record that temperature in the usual way and to have a digital psychrometer programmed to alert you to increasing temperature or a heat index that prescribes precautions.

**10. The Model Policy calls for a heat index reading 30 minutes before and 60 minutes into an activity. How frequently thereafter should the heat index be checked for half-day or day-long events?**

**A** A reasonable expectation is to continue to check every 60 minutes while the temperature is 80°F or higher.



# The Heart of the Matter: Potential Life-Saving Resources

## From the Mayo Clinic:

Sudden cardiac arrest symptoms are immediate and drastic.

- Sudden collapse
- No pulse
- No breathing
- Loss of consciousness



Sometimes other signs and symptoms precede sudden cardiac arrest. These may include fatigue, fainting, blackouts, dizziness, chest pain, shortness of breath, weakness, palpitations or vomiting. But sudden cardiac arrest often occurs with no warning.

This page offers just some of the resources available to schools to encourage preparedness for such situations.

### CPR Requirement FAQs

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Q Which coaches are required to have CPR certification?   | Q Does the MHSAA specify the age level for the CPR training?  |
| A Effective with the 2022-23 school year, <b>all varsity, junior varsity and 9th grade head coaches</b> must have a valid current Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification by the established deadline for completion of the rules meeting, for the first sport in which the coach is a head coach during the school year. | A No. Generally, the course for adults alerts candidates of the necessary modifications for children and infants, and vice versa. |
| Q How expensive is the certification?   | Q Does an online course satisfy the requirement?  |
| A \$0 to \$95.  | A Yes. While not as effective as face-to-face courses, an online course does satisfy the requirement.                             |
| Q How long does certification take?   | Q Is it necessary for varsity, junior varsity and 9th grade head coaches to also have training in AED?                            |
| A Two to five hours.  | A AED training is often a part of CPR certification and is preferred.   |
| Q How long does the certification last?   |   |
| A Generally, two years  |   |

### CPR Requirement: Who Can Help?

The MHSAA does not dictate which organization or individual must provide CPR education and certification. However, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services lists the following organizations that are approved to provide CPR training:

American CPR Training	americancpr.com
American Heart Association	heart.org
American Red Cross	redcross.org
American Safety and Health Inst.	hsi.com
American Trauma Event Management	atem.us
American Health and Safety	asha_safety@sbcglobal.net
Emergency Care and Safety Institute	ecsinstitute.org
Emergency First Response Corp.	emergencyfirstresponse.com
EMS Safety Services, Inc.	smssafetyervices.com
Pro Trainings LLC	profirstaid.com

## Become a MI HEARTSafe School

If someone in your school community suffers a sudden cardiac arrest, would you know what to do? Did you know that early recognition of a cardiac arrest, calling 9-1-1, bystander response with hands-only CPR, and use of an AED greatly increase the chance of survival?



Important questions for schools to consider are:

- Does your school have a cardiac emergency response plan?
- How many students and staff can recognize the symptoms of cardiac arrest and know how to get help "on the way, right away"?
- Who knows CPR in your school and is ready to use it when necessary?
- Where are the automated external defibrillators (AEDs) located in your school building, are they properly maintained and inspected, and who knows how to use them?

The MI HEARTSafe Schools Award Program was developed to help schools be prepared for a cardiac emergency. Schools meeting the minimum criteria will be awarded the MI HEARTSafe School designation, receive a letter of commendation, and be spotlighted on our website, all **at no cost to the school**.

More than 330 schools and/or districts in Michigan have HEARTSafe status. The program provides valuable resources and training, and the price is right: **free!** The MHSAA encourages schools to join the list.

To apply for MI HEARTSafe School designation at no cost, download and follow the instructions on the application form at <https://migrc.org/Library/HEARTSafe.html>

### NFHS Course on Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)

The NFHS online course on sudden cardiac arrest is free and available by scanning the code at right.

This topic will again receive attention in the risk management portion of the required head coaches rules meetings this year.

The NFHS is also offering many other health and safety courses linked from [MHSAA.com](http://MHSAA.com) and [NFHSLearn.com](http://NFHSLearn.com).





# 2023 NFHS Football Rules Changes

## 2023 FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

**Clarified That Towels Do Not Have To Be The Same Solid Color For Each Player [1- 5-3a(5)a 4, 5 (NEW)]** — Player towels may contain one manufacturer’s logo and/or one school logo neither exceeding 2¼ square inches. Towels must be a solid color but now do not have to be the same solid color for each player. Towels may not be ball- or penalty-flag colored.

**Clarified When a Player Is Inbounds After Being Out of Bounds [2-29-1]** — This change clarifies when a player is inbounds after being out of bounds. There is no change to any foul or subsequent penalty provisions, or any rules related to illegal participation or the provisions regarding eligibility to catch a pass.

**Added A List of Criteria to Help Identify Players Who Should Be Defined as Defenseless Receivers [2-32-16d (NEW), 9-4-3g]** — This change adds to the list of criteria to help identify players who should be defined as defenseless receivers related to application of unnecessary or excessive contact. This clarification should help game officials and coaches by defining allowable contact against defenseless receivers.

**Intentional Grounding Exception Changed [7-5-2d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5-2 d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW), TABLE 7-5 (1)d EXCEPTION 2a, c (NEW)]** — This change permits the exception for intentional grounding to the first and only player to possess the ball after the snap ends.

**Removed “Intentional” From Pass Interference in TABLE 7-5 [TABLE 7-5 2c (DELETED), 7-5 PENALTY]** — By removing “intentional” from pass interference, this change puts the rule in line with how it is already enforced which is a 15-yard penalty.

**Changes In Basic Spot Penalty Enforcement [10-4, TABLE 10-4 (NEW), 10-6 (DELETED)]** — This change restructures and clarifies the amendments to Rule 10 to eliminate the excessive penalty enforcements for offensive fouls that occur behind the line of scrimmage. This revision stipulates the basic spot for enforcement of fouls behind the line of scrimmage is the previous spot rather than the spot of the foul unless otherwise specified by rule. Current penalties for illegal kicking, batting and participation fouls, and provisions for offensive fouls occurring in the end zone that may result in a safety remain intact.

**Clarification On The Ball Being Handed Forward On A Running Play [Six-Player – Rule 7g (NEW)]** — The change allows the ball to be handed forward on a running play, including to the guards/ends, while prohibiting handing the ball to the snapper provided both players are behind the neutral zone.

## 2023 EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-1-7; 1-1-9; 1-3-2; 1-3-7 NOTE; TABLE 1-7; 1-8 (NEW); 3-6-1b(1); TABLE 7-5 (1) d EXCEPTION 2; 9-5-1; 9-8-1; FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS – II-5, X-3, X-5; RESOLVING TIED GAMES – 3-1; NINE-, EIGHT- AND SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES – RULES 2 and 7; PENALTY SUMMARY; INDEX.

## 2023 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Helping the Runner  
Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials  
Game Management