

MIAA RULE CHANGE PROPOSALS FOR 2019-2021

The following reflects Rule Change Proposals that have been submitted as permitted in the Procedure for Requesting a Rule Change, Rule 89, page 101 of the current MIAA Handbook. **Please note: Rule Change Proposals list Current Rule (as in handbook now), Proposal, and Rationale.** All responding groups should review the proposals and forward their recommendations, using the attached form, to MIAA Assistant Director, Dick Baker. Although changes should not be made on the original proposals, any group may make amendments, which will be included in the report passed on to the next group in the process.

The MSSADA and all MIAA Administrative Committees are welcome to act on each rule change proposal. In the section on Sport Specific Rules (rule change proposals 10-19 within this packet) MIAA sport committees and coaches' associations should only act on general rules (rules 1-9 and 20-28) and rules for their own sport.

Each of the below named groups, when reviewing a rule change proposal may take one of the two following actions:

- Record votes in favor and opposed to each proposal.
- Recommend an amendment to the proposal with votes recorded in favor and opposed.

REVIEWING BODY ACTIONS MUST REFLECT THE ACTUAL VOTE

1. MIAA Sport Committees, MIAA Administrative Committees, and Presidents of MIAA recognized State Sport Coaches' Associations votes are due to the MIAA by December 1, 2018.
2. The Massachusetts Secondary School Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA) votes are due to the MIAA by February 1, 2019. The MSSADA should not act until they have the packet that includes all earlier votes.
3. The MIAA District Athletic Committees (DAC) votes are due to the MIAA by March 1, 2019. The DAC's should not act until they have the packet that includes all earlier votes.
4. The MIAA Board of Directors will act upon proposals by May 15, 2019.
5. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Council will act upon all proposals by June 1, 2019 and their decision(s) are final.

1. **Page 31 & 32**
Part III, Rule 32: Application of Rules
By: Dick Baker, Assistant Director, MIAA

Current Rule:

32.8 A principal may not make a private agreement with another school or any other party to evade MIAA rules. Regarding the participation of ineligible students, no ineligible individual may participate in any inter-school competition (including scrimmages) regardless of any proposed agreement between competing schools that his/her results would not be counted. "Exhibition" or "unattached" participation is prohibited.

Proposal:

Add a penalty: If a student-athlete violates this rule, he/she will be ineligible for the first regular season game once eligible.

Rationale:

Adding a penalty makes it clear to both school and student-athlete what should be done.

2. **Page 32 & 33**
Part III, Rule 33: Coaches Education
By: Dick Baker, Assistant Director, MIAA

Current Rule:

33. All coaches hired prior to August 1, 1998 are exempt from taking the Fundamentals of Coaching Course. Coaches hired after 8/1/98 and before 7/1/05 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course with the exception of Certified MA teachers.

All MIAA member school coaches (stipend or volunteer) are required to take annually the on-line National Federation Concussion Course, or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. Rugby Coaches must see Rule 76.2 for additional coaches' education information.

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2005 must complete the National Federation of High Schools, NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course taught by an MIAA Instructor, (must be passed prior to coaching a second year) and an approved Sports First Aid course (NFHS, American Red Cross or American Heart Assoc. and must be passed prior to coaching a third year).

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2007 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course, an approved Sports First Aid course and the NFHS Sport Specific Technical and Tactical Skills Course in the sport they are coaching (must be completed prior to coaching a third year). Note: The sport-specific requirement began on July 1, 2007 or when each particular sport-specific course becomes available, if after this date.

NFHS Sport Specific Technical and Tactical Skills Courses presently available: Baseball, Basketball, Field Hockey, Football, Golf, Boys' Lacrosse, Girls' Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, **Tennis**, Wrestling, Volleyball, Cheer & Dance, and Track and Field.

The NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course requirement must be met through attending an MIAA sponsored Fundamentals of Coaching Class with MIAA Certified Instructors.

The NFHS Sports First Aid and Sport Specific requirement may be met by completing on-line courses with the NFHS <http://www.nfhslearn.com>.

AED training for all coaches is now required. Coaches will be trained on symptoms of cardiac events in student-athletes. This training will be done in conjunction with the existing mandated CPR training which is a State Law for all coaches.

Proposal:

Add a penalty: If a coach is in violation of this rule, coach will be suspended until requirements are met.

Rationale:

This gives the school support in making sure all of their coaches meet rule requirements.

3. Page 35

Part III, Rule 35: Starting and Closing Dates for Tryouts, Practices, and Contests

By: Danny Erickson, Canton HS Athletic Director and Boys Soccer Coach

Current Rule:

35.1 Fall practice may begin for all teams as early as the second Thursday preceding Labor Day. No team may have more than ten single practice sessions (i.e., "double sessions" count as two single practice sessions) through and including the Friday prior to Labor Day. *Football teams must precede their initial "full contact" practice with an additional five days of single conditioning and "limited contact" sessions. These practices can begin on the third Friday prior to Labor Day (August 17, 2018) and practice is not permitted on Sundays prior to Labor Day (August 19, August 26, and September 2, 2018).*

Proposal:

Fall practice, *for all teams other than football*, may begin for all teams as early as the 2nd Monday preceding Labor Day. No team may have more than 13 single practice sessions (i.e. "double sessions" count as two single sessions) through and including the Friday prior to Labor Day.

Rationale:

Allowing fall teams to begin practicing on the Monday rather than the traditional Thursday, will allow student-athletes to participate in their sport following a safer, healthier schedule. It will allow for scheduling contests more reasonably throughout the season – providing more time for proper rest in between contests.

Football's move to beginning practices the prior Friday means that administratively, the fall season has already started, so remaining fall sports starting earlier should not make a major impact on fall preparation. Beyond all of this, it is unfair to non-football fall athletes and sends them the wrong message if we are going to allow football to begin 6 days before the rest of the sports.

4. Page 35

Part III, Rule 35: Starting and Closing Dates for Tryouts, Practices, and Contests

By: Susan Hendee, Eastern MA Girls Soccer Coaches Assoc. Vice President

Current Rule:

35.1 Fall practice may begin for all teams as early as the second Thursday preceding Labor Day. No team may have more than ten single practice sessions (i.e., "double sessions" count as two single practice sessions) through and including the Friday prior to Labor Day. *Football teams must precede their initial "full contact" practice with an additional five days of single conditioning and "limited contact" sessions. These practices can begin on the third Friday prior to Labor Day (August 17, 2018) and practice is not permitted on Sundays prior to Labor Day (August 19, August 26, and September 2, 2018).*

Proposal:

Fall practice may begin for all teams as early as the second Monday preceding Labor Day (August 19, 2019, August 24, 2020, August 23, 2021). (The rest of the current rule may read as is).

Rationale:

Allowing fall sports such as soccer to begin earlier (the second Monday before Labor Day as opposed to the second Thursday before Labor Day) AS AN OPTION is beneficial to the health and well-being of athletes. We agree with studies by the NCAA Sport Science Institute stating that preseason practices have the highest injury rate, whether through concussions, heat illness or overuse injuries; as well as the Inter-Association Task Force for Preseason Secondary School Athletics in conjunction with the National Athletic Trainer's Association's Secondary School Athletic Trainer's Committee recommendation of a pre-season heat-acclimatization plan. This plan states: "Days 1 through 5 of the heat-acclimatization period consist of the first 5 days of formal practice. During this time, athletes may not participate in more than 1 practice per day". By allowing the option of beginning on the second Monday before Labor Day, single practices can be used while staying within the current MIAA guidelines on no more than ten single practice sessions through and including the Friday prior to Labor Day.

It is our belief that eliminating the need for double sessions will:

- Ease the transition of athletes with varying levels of fitness into programs while lessening the risk of initial overuse and heat acclimatization injury by allowing more rest and recovery time between sessions.
- Allow for easier scheduling of field sharing for schools with limited field availability (i.e. one field for four sports), and eliminate the competitive advantage that schools with more fields have because they are able to practice with fewer conflicts.
- Allow for easier rescheduling of practices due to inclement weather.
- Allow for continuity with states such as New Hampshire and New York which have earlier starting dates
- Allow for competitive equity between schools that start before Labor Day and schools that start after Labor Day.

By keeping the proposal of an earlier start date an option rather than a mandate, it allows coaches of individual teams and school districts to use their 10 preseason practices as single sessions, double sessions, or a combination of single and double sessions in accordance to their needs or preferences.

5. Page 36

Part III, Rule 36: Multiple School Events: Involving Only MIAA Member Schools

By: Aaron Ladd, Boys Cross Country Coach

Current Rule:

36.2 Sub-varsity multi-school events are not allowed. Exception: Swimming & Diving, Track, Volleyball, Wrestling, and Cross Country sub-varsity multi-school meets may be considered for approval unless (1) a team champion or winner is determined, or (2) the meet is advertised as a tournament or championship.

No sub-varsity competition in cross country, swimming & diving, track, volleyball or wrestling, or any event which combines sub-varsity with varsity level competition, will be approved which seems to establish champions or which provides competitors with any award and/or recognition not provided to all other participants equally.

Proposal:

Sub-varsity multi-school events are not allowed. Exception: Swimming & Diving, Track, Volleyball, Wrestling, and Cross Country sub-varsity multi-school meets may be considered for approval.

Remove this text: unless (1) a team champion or winner is determined, or (2) the meet is advertised as a tournament or championship.

Also remove:

~~No sub-varsity competition in cross country, swimming & diving, track, volleyball or wrestling, or any event which combines sub-varsity with varsity level competition, will be approved which seems to establish champions or which provides competitors with any award and/or recognition not provided to all other participants equally.~~

Rationale:

Cross Country and Track & Field are team sports, and providing every opportunity to reinforce that concept with student athletes of all abilities and ages is important to the development of the sport overall. Providing a team champion at Cross Country and Track competitions where a Freshmen or Junior Varsity race takes place shows that every event is team focused, and each team member can work toward a common goal.

6. Page 39

Part III, Rule 40: Out of Season Coach-Athlete Contact Limitations

By: Steven St. Martin, Westwood High School Boys Basketball Coach

Current Rule:

40.1 Unless otherwise permitted in this rule, between seasons a coach may conduct a meeting(s) with team candidates only to elect captains, collect equipment, issue equipment, to provide for physical examinations, to conduct legitimate fund-raising events, or to offer wellness workshops or activities.

40.2 A coach is defined as any paid or volunteer member of the athletic staff.

40.3 The MIAA considers the last coach of record as holding that position until replaced by the principal.

40.4 A coach may not directly or indirectly require an athlete to participate in a sport or a training program outside of the MIAA defined sport season.

Voluntary conditioning sessions open equally to all students in a school and which are entirely devoid of sports-specific activity may be conducted between seasons provided no candidate is either required to participate or penalized for not doing so.

A "candidate" is defined as:

40.4.1 A varsity or sub-varsity athlete who participated in a high school program at some interscholastic level the previous year and has eligibility remaining; or

40.4.2 A middle school student "selected" to participate in an out-of-season program.

40.4.3 A sixth grade student in a 7-12 high school or an eighth grade student in a 9-12 high school.

40.5 A high school coach may be employed by a park or recreation department or other organization or may volunteer for such a group to teach his/her sport out-of-season provided the following conditions exist:

40.5.1 No candidate may either be required to attend or be penalized for not attending.

40.5.2 School funds are not used.

40.5.3 A coach's high school candidates must constitute the minority of those taking part in any out-of-season sport's program, and never more than 50% competing on any team at any moment (e.g. no more than two basketball candidates could be on the court, or 3 ice hockey players on the ice, on the same team, at any point during a game). In sports that are individual in nature, or where competition involves a series of scoring events, candidates of that high school coach must be fewer than 50% of those participating in the overall competition or program.

40.6 A program is deemed to be an intramural rather than an out-of-season program provided that:

- 40.6.1 The program is available to all high school students on an indiscriminate basis, and a representative number of non-candidates are regular participants.
- 40.6.2 No participants may receive any attention not offered to all other participants.
- 40.6.3 Candidates in that intramural sport must constitute a minority of those taking part in the program and never more than 50% of any team actually playing or competing at any one time. (See Rule 40.5.3)
- 40.6.4 The program must be a direct offering of the high school involved.
- 40.7 Public High Schools can host an open house to introduce their schools, academic, extracurricular activities and facilities in the month of February including athletic department presentations (that will include coaches) talking about their sport, facility and philosophy as happens during Catholic School Week. Organizational meetings for fall sports including collecting names, physical documentation and practice schedules for the fall would be not allowable until the current May 1 date.
- 40.8 High School Coaches (paid or volunteer) of one sport may be involved in out-of-season activity of another sport during the summer only.

PENALTY: Because these standards are designed to protect young people from unfair and inequitable scenarios, any coach who violates, or does not prevent violations, of these standards will be rendered ineligible to participate or be present at any MIAA approved or sponsored interscholastic competition in that sport for one year from the date of determination of a rule violation. If a violation is inadvertent or relatively minor, this penalty may be reduced by the Board of Directors, or its designee.

Proposal:

This proposal is broken into 2 parts: 1) During the school year and 2) During the summer

- 1) Out of season coaches can have 3 hours max per week to teach sport specific skills during the school year. The skill sessions during the school year are completely voluntary and open to all who would like to participate, are free of charge, and held on school district grounds in school district buildings, **or in places both agreed upon by Athletic Director and Coach for those teams that do not have access to facilities on school grounds**, with only those athletes who are not participating in an in-season sport, or have written consent from the in-season coach, student, parent, and Athletic Director. These sessions will need to be pre-approved by the Athletic Director.
- 2) During the summer, coaches not only have the 3 hours per week to work on sport specific skills with their players, but can coach their athletes in leagues and tournaments. The skill sessions during the summer are completely voluntary and open to all who would like to participate, are free of charge, and held on school district grounds in school district buildings, **or in places both agreed upon by Athletic Director and Coach for those teams that do not have access to facilities on school grounds**.

Rationale:

- 1) With the explosion of A.A.U., which has caused exploitation of athletes and families by coaches who are not employed by the school, under M.I.A.A. rules or guidelines, do not fill out a CORI, are not finger printed and on file with the district, and charge money, it is not conceivable that these individuals have more influence in the development and direction student athletes that are involved in M.I.A.A. schools than coaches who are under all of the above.

Other states identify this as a problem and have made rules in their handbooks to deal with this situation. For example, New Hampshire, NHIAA states in their handbook: “By allowing limited contact throughout the school year it is our belief that these students can best benefit from working with their school-based

coaches who are highly trained and understand the relationships between academics, athletics, and the life lessons taught that require both components of a sound education.”

North Carolina has also taken a similar philosophy. As stated in the NCHSAA: “To encourage athletes to spend more time with their high school coaches and less time with so-called street coaches, travel and showcase teams, the NCHSAA has dropped limits on the number of athletes who can take part in offseason skill development for all sports but football. Now any coach can work with an unlimited number of players in the offseason for 90 minutes per day.”

These are just two of many who are taking this position.

- 2) High school coaches go through a rugged screening and interview process by the school’s administration in order to find the coach they want to instruct their youth. AAU coaches do not have this process. High school coaches go through extensive First Aid and Concussion education that is sponsored by and instructed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (N.F.H.S.) and The American Heart Association in which these coaches have to renew these certifications. AAU coaches do not have this process. The five Pillars of Educational Athletics are: Community Service, Wellness, Coaches Education, Sportsmanship, and Leadership. Who better to surround our student athletes to have a positive experience to develop these Pillars than the student athlete’s high school coach? The link on the MIAA homepage “The Case for High School Activities” goes to the NFHS website which states: **Case for High School Activities**: “ Co-curricular activities are generally designed to support and work in concert with the academic goals of the schools. Education-based activities staff are trained to not only teach students athletic or performing arts skills, but skills that help students do well in school and in life. Schools are centers of learning where teaching and learning are intentionally designed and implemented. If communities and societies want to be intentional about what students learn, make the most of athletic and performing arts activity participation as well as help promote academic learning in school, they need education-based co-curricular activities.”

Additionally, with other states having these options for their high school student athletes, the MIAA is putting its athletes at an unfair disadvantage to compete for opportunities to play at the collegiate level. Athletes where states allow their coaches to work with them in the off season are more prepared to enter the collegiate sports world because they have had the instruction from coaches with whom the state athletic agency, the high school administration, and the town’s people have deemed this coach the most qualified and trustworthy to instruct its athletes.

College recruiting is a global endeavor at all the levels not just at the scholarship level so it behooves the MIAA to give its student athletes the best chance to reach that level if they so choose to do so.

Not only are these athlete’s not receiving the best instruction on skill development in the off seasons but college coaches are increasingly frustrated with having to deal with AAU coaches during live summer recruiting periods instead of the most qualified coach, the high school coach. In speaking with some college coaches, many said they would like to go to summer skills sessions or camps run by the high school coaches with their own players and deal with the high school coach who has the priority of the student athlete first and foremost. In being a former college coach, I can attest to this sentiment.

It is time for the MIAA to do what is best for its student athletes.

[Click here for State-By-State Off-Season Coaching Rules \(2016\) regarding out of season contact by coaches and summer contact.](#)

7. **Page 41**
Part III, Rule 41: Subsidizing Out-of-Season Activities
By: Dick Baker, Assistant Director, MIAA

Current Rule:

A school or a member of that school's coaching staff may not subsidize or support students who might attend any sports-related activity outside of the authorized seasonal limits for that sport. In addition, a coach may not provide transportation for candidates of his/her team to an out-of-season athletic activity/camp. Student participation in out-of-season activities may not be funded in any way by booster

clubs or organizations. Schools may issue equipment (but not uniforms) during the out-of-season period, but school districts should review any liability issues that could arise from such issuance. Students may not wear school uniforms, or be identified as a school team, out-of-season and/or during non-school events.

Proposal:

Change the third sentence to read: Student participation in out-of-season activities *may be* funded by booster clubs or organizations *if approved by the school administration*.

Rationale:

Booster Clubs or organizations run fundraisers in and out of season and should be allowed to support financially, out-of-season camps and/or activities that are approved by the school administration.

8. Page 52
Part IV, Rule 52: Student Eligibility: Alternative, Collaborative, Detached or Other Non-Traditional Educational Programs
By: Laura Burton

Current Rule:

Students who are not being educated on the high school campus that will issue their diplomas are not eligible to represent that, or any member high school, unless the criteria within this rule are satisfied and waiver approved by MIAA. If the student is not eligible at the attending college or the alternative institution does not offer any athletic participation opportunity, a student may participate in the diploma-granting MIAA high school if that principal:

- has the authority to suspend the student from all academic programs; and
- receives daily reports of the student's attendance and achievement; and
- Certifies the student is eligible by all other MIAA and local standards that must be satisfied by the student's teammates.

(The above conditions must be agreed to in writing via MIAA Rule 52 Letter of Agreement from White Book of Forms by the non-member-school director prior to any practice or athletic participation by the student at the high school that is awarding the diploma.)

These non-traditional students may not participate if they do not meet all of the eligibility standards that are required of their teammates and waiver is approved by MIAA. Principals, athletic directors, and guidance personnel should counsel students regarding athletic eligibility prior to committing to non-traditional educational pursuits.

Proposal:

A student who chooses to attend an out of district school (i.e. trade school) that does not offer the sport of choice at that school can be eligible to tryout in their hometown, without the need of an eligibility waiver if the home town school offers that sport.

Rationale:

Many students are conflicted because the school they are considering attending might not also offer their sport of choice. They have a big enough decision of which school to attend. It might ease the decision if they knew they would be allowed to try out for the home town school team.

9. Page 56
Part IV, Rule 57: Student Eligibility: Transfer Students
By: Dick Baker, Assistant Director, MIAA

Current Rule:

57.3 Before a transfer student can be certified as eligible in a specific sport within the year of his/her transfer, the sending school principal and athletic director must certify on Form 200 by signature what

the student participated in – sport & level (sub varsity, varsity or non-school team) during the year prior to the actual transfer.

57.3.1 If it is later determined that the sending school falsely or erroneously certified eligibility, then the sending school will be subject to minimally a letter of censure, copies of which will be mailed to the school committee, superintendent, principal, athletic director, and reported on the MIAA website.

57.3.2 MIAA Form 200 must be dated and filed at the receiving school before the student is declared eligible (as to the transfer rule only) by the receiving school principal. Note that Form 200 will not yield eligibility for a student who transfers after the opening date of the practice season (57.5)

57.4 The receiving High School Principal may utilize Form 200 to declare a transfer student eligible, providing it is prior to the start of the season and if the sending school Principal certifies the following (3a through 3e on Form 200):

- a. Recruitment was not involved in any way.
- b. At the time of transfer, the student was in good standing.
- c. The student would be academically eligible at the sending school.
- d. The transfer was in no way motivated by athletics.
- e. The student would have been eligible by MIAA and local rules at the sending school.

Proposal:

57.3: Add “MIAA” after sending in first sentence & add the following sentence at the end; “Only MIAA Member Schools – Receiving or Sending – are allowed to use Form 200.”

57.4: Add “MIAA” after receiving in first sentence and also after sending in first sentence.

57.4a: Change to read: To our knowledge recruitment was not involved in any way.

57.4d: Change to read: To our knowledge the transfer was in no way motivated by athletics.

57.4f: New subsection: If sending school believes recruitment, or transfer was related to athletics (“a” & “d” above), they must make an allegation with additional proofs to the MIAA Executive Director or designee within 10 days of returning the Form 200 to the Receiving School. They must also NOT INITIAL “a” & “d” when filling out Form 200.

Rationale:

Our MIAA Member Schools understand the purpose of Form 200, while non-members do not. We also need to allow the sending school an opportunity to present documents if they believe recruiting or transfer was athletically motivated.

10. Page 68

Part V, Rule 69: Football

By: Maria Hutsick, Athletic Trainer

Current Rule:

69.2 A licensed physician, licensed trainer or certified EMT must be in attendance and on duty for all interscholastic football games. The medical person shall be responsible for both teams unless the visiting team has its own medical coverage. His/her judgment will be final with regard to the condition of a player after injury. No player may continue to play against the medical person's advice. The penalty for violation of this provision is forfeiture of the game.

Proposal:

A licensed physician, licensed trainer or certified EMT must be in attendance and on duty for all interscholastic football games. *For all varsity football games, each team must employ a licensed physician, licensed trainer or certified EMT to be with their team. In the case of sub-varsity games, the medical person shall be responsible for both teams unless the visiting team has its own medical coverage.*

His/her judgment will be final with regard to the condition of a player after injury. No player may continue to play against the medical person's advice. The penalty for violation of this provision is forfeiture of the game.

Rationale:

Medical personnel have a great deal of responsibility during the game. With increased attention to concussion laws, management of concussion and management of other injuries, one athletic trainer cannot attend to all players on both teams and communicate effectively with coaches, parents and others during the game. Running back and forth across the field to be available for the multitude of medical needs at a varsity football game is not a reasonable expectation for one person.

11. Page 68

Part V, Rule 69.1.16: Football

By: Ed Mantie – Framingham High School Head Football Coach

Current Rule:

69.1.16 Any player disqualified from a contest because of Targeting/Initiating Contact With the Crown of the Helmet or Defenseless Player: Contact to Head or Neck Area shall not participate in the next scheduled contest per MIAA Handbook Rule 49.3 (NCAA Rules 9-1-3, 9-1-4)

Proposal:

For targeting hits in football, MIAA will follow NCAA disqualification rules which states the disqualified player is out for the half the infraction was called in. Plus an additional half. (NCAA Rules 9-1-3, 9-1-4)

Rationale:

The current MIAA rule that assesses an additional one-game suspension for targeting has deterred officials from calling targeting calls. In an attempt to make the game safer by increasing the NCAA penalty, we have in fact, made the game more dangerous due to the harshness of the penalty and lack of calls. Only seven targeting calls were made in 2017 and 2016 and officials are reluctant to make the call because of the severity the penalty carries. Following NCAA disqualification rules will empower officials to make more calls and thus, make the game safer for student-athletes. Additionally, the MIAA disqualification rule as it is currently written results in a player missing 5% of his/her season for the typical 20 game season, whereas the penalty is 10% for a typical football season (10 games), double the amount. Following the NCAA rules of “the half you are playing in plus a half” is more equitable to the intent of the MIAA rule and the other sports. Other disqualifications the MIAA has imposed carries a % of contests missed rather than a quantity.

12. Page 68

Part V, Rule 69: Football – New Subsection

By: Ed Mantie – Framingham High School Head Football Coach

New Rule Proposal:

Emphasis of Player Safety during practice time.

Proposal:

Coaches should dedicate a minimum of 10 minutes to each practice, teaching nuances of the NCAA targeting rule including techniques to avoid targeting and hits on defenseless players and provide players with tools and options on the field to avoid/eliminate such illegal hits.

Per the NCAA rule:

In addition to not making forcible contact against an opponent with the crown of the helmet, no player shall target and make forcible contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless opponent with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulder.

Coaches should spend practice time teaching techniques that eliminates all of the following:

Launch: a player leaving his feet to attack an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body to make forcible contact in the head or neck area.

A crouch followed by an upward and forward thrust to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area, even though one or both feet are still on the ground.

Leading with helmet, shoulder, forearm, fist, hand or elbow to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area.

Lowering the head before attacking by initiating forcible contact with the crown of the helmet.

Coaches should spend meeting and practice time to effectively teach players what a defenseless player is according to the NCAA rule (Rule 2-27-14):

- A player in the act of or just after throwing a pass.
- A receiver attempting to catch a forward pass or in position to receive a backward pass, or one who has completed a catch and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a ball carrier.
- A kicker in the act of or just after kicking a ball, or during the kick or the return.
- A kick returner attempting to catch or recover a kick, or one who has completed a catch or recovery and has not had time to protect himself or has not clearly become a ball carrier.
- A player on the ground.
- A player obviously out of the play.
- A player who receives a blind-side block.
- A ball carrier already in the grasp of an opponent and whose forward progress has been stopped.
- A quarterback any time after a change of possession.
- A ball carrier who has obviously given himself up and is sliding feet-first.

Rationale:

The communication, teaching, and emphasizing of the initial targeting rule deserves revisiting. When initially written, emphasized, and taught or coached, it mainly focused on the hits via the crown of the helmet. Hits on defenseless players and targeting rules have expanded and such hits need to be eliminated in football. Anything that can be done to improve the safety of student-athletes, should be done. This rule increases knowledge and understanding of the rule amongst players, coaches, administrators, and officials.

The NFL and NCAA have gone to great lengths to expand and emphasize player safety in this regard and it behooves MA to make the same strides (or better) for the betterment of their student-athletes and sport.

Across MA we are seeing lower numbers in football and increased co-op programs in order to save programs. Injuries and concussions are clear reasons for parents and players to not play football. Although it is a collision sport, an effort to eliminate illegal hits, particularly targeting, is essential to protect the integrity of the sport. By mandating that coaches spend a portion of each practice on avoidance and proper techniques, safety will improve and unnecessary injuries will be avoided.

13. Page 68

Part V, Rule 69: Football - New Subsection

By: Keith Parker – Retired Football Coach (Head Coach Boston English High School 1980-2009)

New Rule Proposal:

69.1.19 The following extreme penalties:

- Major Face Mask Violation
- Clipping Infraction

- Targeting and/or Excessive Helmet to Helmet Contact – on offense or defense
- Spearing – on offense or defense
- Uncalled-for Piling On @ conclusion of play

Result in:

1st extreme penalty flag = 30 yard penalty, 2nd extreme penalty flag = 30 yard penalty, then 3rd (& any additional) extreme penalty flags = 30 yard penalty & 2 points given to offended team.

Rationale:

It is time to add to the rules & penalties of high school football in order to emphasize the trending & necessary need to protect our younger players as much as possible. Important for MIAA & Football Coaches Association to work to limit concussions & for all coaches to follow and implement correct teaching techniques. *The additional penalties NEED to be set at a very high cost for teams committing extreme type violations in order to make this new penalty as effective as possible.*

14. Page 68

Part V, Rule 69: Football – New Subsection

By: Ed Mantie – Framingham High School Head Football Coach

New Rule Proposal:

Add section 69.6 Use of HUDL (or other official game film) for review of targeting hits.

Proposal:

After a contest is completed, a school representative may submit HUDL or other team-generated video to request review of non-calls regarding targeting to be reviewed by the head of officials/assignor/rules interpreter. Only team-generated game film (telecasts, HUDL, etc.) may be submitted for review and all reviewable film must be filmed by a member assigned by the high school coaching staff or administration as is currently done. Game film taken by fans or parents via iPhone, smartphones, personal iPads, etc. will not be considered for review. If it is determined the hit was targeting, the MIAA Disqualification Rule 69.1.16 would be enforced.

Rationale:

The premise of this proposal is to utilize video to improve player safety. Targeting hits pose a serious threat to the safety of student-athletes. Current practice allows coaches to submit game film to the head of officials/assignor/rules interpreter for various game situations and hits in an effort to increase communication and understanding of the rules. This proposal would utilize the exact same protocol that is currently being used and the head of officials/assignor/rules interpreter would make the determination like he/she does now. However, rather than the response being concurrence, players will be held accountable for targeting hits that creates a major safety issue. In the NCAA, this review is done on the field; a task that is not currently possible in MA high school football. Even though most high school football venues do not have the technology to review plays during a contest in a timely fashion like the NFL and NCAA, that should not deter coaches, administrators, and officials from making corrective action on targeting hits, post-game.

Furthermore, the lack of on-field review should not make dangerous and deleterious hits “legal” simply because they were not called during the game. The goal is to deter players from making such hits, force coaches to spend more time in practice coaching proper techniques and how players can avoid being in position to make such illegal hits, and to empower officials to make more calls to make the game safer for student-athletes. The current practice of submitting game film for review would not change; however, under this new rule if the hit is deemed to be targeting, MIAA rule 69.1.16 would apply.

15. Page 78

Part V, Rule 74: Lacrosse

By: MIAA Sports Medicine Committee

Proposal:

Add subsection:

A licensed physician, licensed athletic trainer or certified EMT must be in attendance and on duty for all varsity lacrosse games (boys and girls). (It is strongly recommended that such medical coverage and an emergency transport system be in place for all games.) The medical person shall be responsible for both teams unless each team has its own medical coverage. His/her judgment will be final with regard to the condition of a player after injury. No player may continue to play against the medical person's advice. The penalty for violation of this provision is forfeiture of the game.

Rationale:

The presence of a licensed athletic trainer would serve to support the health and well-being of student-athletes. The sport of lacrosse has experienced rapid growth. With this growth, the skill level and speed of the sport has also increased. Given the nature of potential contact with players and equipment, access to medical personnel quickly and efficiently helps to address medical concerns immediately. Many teams already supply trainers for varsity contests or attempt to when possible. Other contact sports such as football and ice hockey already require trainers at events. This requirement will help support this ideal for all lacrosse events given that lacrosse too has increased opportunity for contact and injury greater than other sports.

16. Page 82 & 83

Part V, Rule 78: Soccer

By: Jim Willis – Cohasset Middle/High School, Head Coach Boys Soccer

Current Rule:

- 78.2.8 Any team whose players/coaches receive collectively a total of more than four red cards during the regular season shall not qualify for the MIAA tournament.
- 78.2.15 Any varsity team exceeding four red or thirteen yellow cards also must assign a contest manager other than a coach to away contests, as well as for all home contests (as required by Rule 78.2.21). This rule pertains to both boys' and girls' soccer, and to contests played at all levels.
- 78.2.16 For purposes of obtaining tournament eligibility, no team may exceed a four red or thirteen yellow cards during the regular season. Delay of game encroachment and deliberate (intentional) handball are infractions, which will continue to be enforced and penalized. The impact of these infractions will be assessed and will be considered towards tournament ineligibility.
- 78.2.17 Any team whose players/coaches receive collectively five (5) yellow and/or red cards in a contest(including pre & post-game) will result in immediate termination of the contest, and result in forfeiture by the offending team.

Proposal:

- 78.2.8 Any team whose players/coaches receive collectively a total of more than four red cards *for fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct* during the regular season shall not qualify for the MIAA tournament.
- 78.2.15 Any varsity team exceeding four red or thirteen yellow cards *for fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct* also must assign a contest manager other than a coach to away contests, as well as for all home contests (as required by Rule 78.2.21). This rule pertains to both boys' and girls' soccer, and to contests played at all levels.
- 78.2.16 For purposes of obtaining tournament eligibility, no team may exceed a four red or thirteen yellow cards *for fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct* during the regular season. Delay of game encroachment and deliberate (intentional) handball are infractions, which will continue

to be enforced and penalized. The impact of these infractions will be assessed and will be considered towards tournament ineligibility. ***Yellow cards, and red cards assessed as the result of a second yellow card, administered for aggressive play will not affect tournament eligibility.***

78.2.17 Any team whose players/coaches receive collectively five (5) yellow and/or red cards in a contest(including pre & post-game) ***for fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct*** will result in immediate termination of the contest, and result in forfeiture by the offending team.

Rationale:

The existing rules were put in place for a noble reason – sportsmanship. The problem is that they ignore the primary reason yellow cards are given all over the world at every level of play – to curb violent tackles and dangerous plays. A soccer match is 80-90 minutes of lower body collisions, young people have fragile egos and think every tackle is a personal attack, and when tensions escalate, the yellow card warning is a vital tool in forcing players to reign in the aggression – it is the equivalent of getting into foul trouble in basketball and it should serve to keep kids from getting hurt.

In American youth and high school soccer, most referees don't see it that way. They see yellow cards as strictly about sportsmanship and usually give them only for swearing, fighting, taunting, etc. They are understandably reluctant to give yellow cards for overly aggressive tackles because they know that often these aren't really intentional or malicious and they don't want to penalize a whole program or school community with the threat of tournament ineligibility. EVERY HIGH SCHOOL TEAM IN MASSACHUSETTS commits easily over 13 warning-worthy dangerous tackles in a season and if the cards were given accordingly, no one would be eligible for the tournament. Consequently, aggressive and dangerous tackles are often simply let go with a foul given, while tension and physicality escalates.

If referees were trained and encouraged to use the yellow card more often as intended – as a warning for overly aggressive play and to reign in players who are more and more frequently committing dangerous tackles because they know they can get away with it – the games will become safer, more fluid, and easier to control. Refs will only do so if you change the tournament eligibility rules. Create 2 classes of categories of yellow – one category existing as a warning for overly aggressive play, equivalent to a personal foul in basketball and one for sportsmanship (taunting, swearing, fighting, malicious intent, - that is the point of the warning. Make it a point of emphasis with referees – don't worry about the team, town, or program, just use yellow cards more often for violent hits and dangerous plays. It will only work if you change the tournament eligibility rules, though, as no referee wants to cost an entire team its tournament.

The fact that teams don't regularly lose tournament eligibility is not a sign that things are going well and that there isn't a problem - it's a sign that refs aren't giving yellows for violent play. I have seen young athletes lose entire seasons due to injuries that could have been prevented if referees were given the tools to keep matches under control.

17. **Page 82 & 83**
Part V, Rule 78: Soccer
By: Phil Napolitano (On behalf of the MIAA Soccer Committee)

Current Rule:

78.2.16 For purposes of obtaining tournament eligibility, no team may exceed a four red or thirteen yellow cards during the regular season. Delay of game encroachment and deliberate (intentional) handball are infractions, which will continue to be enforced and penalized. The impact of these infractions will be assessed and will be considered towards tournament ineligibility.

Proposal:

78.2.16 For purposes of obtaining tournament eligibility, no team may exceed four red or fifteen TOTAL cards during the regular season. Delay of game encroachment and deliberate (intentional) handball are infractions, which will continue to be enforced and penalized. The impact of these infractions will be assessed and will be considered towards tournament ineligibility.

Rationale:

Previous rule stated “no team may exceed four red or thirteen yellow”, which left a flaw in the rule as a team with less total cards could actually be ineligible over a team with more total cards.

Example:

Team A has four red and thirteen yellow. They are tournament eligible based on current rule.

Team B has no red and fourteen yellow. They are ineligible for the tournament based on current rule.

So Team A collectively receives 17 cards, four of which were red cards (game disqualifications) but can still participate in the tournament. However, Team B, which had no game disqualifications and less total cards is ineligible for the tournament based on the current rule. New language eliminates that loop hole, keeps the limit the same on red cards, while adding a total card limit over the yellow card limit.

Committee also removed the final two sentences of the original rule as it did not need to be stated.

18. Page 87

Part V, Rule 81: Tennis

By: MIAA Tennis Committee (Brian Cogswell, Chair)

Proposal: New Sub-section 81.1.13

All boys & girls tennis coaches must complete and have available at all matches, regular and post-season, the Tennis Team Ladder form and Challenge Match Results Form provided by the Tennis Committee. These two forms will be used in addition to the already mandated line-up justification form.

Rationale:

These forms are used for all post-season Team Tennis Matches and give clear justification for each match line-up. The use will add consistency and fairness throughout the season that currently relies solely on the honor system.

19. Part V, New Rule: Billiards/Pool

By: Richard A. Carey

Proposal:

Establish high school interscholastic billiards (pool) leagues.

Rationale:

Pool is a game for all ages, not just for Seniors (who, after all, are simply kids with wrinkles) but for teenagers too. Surely, if colleges can run interscholastic pool leagues, which many already do now, then there is no reason high schools cannot do the same. In fact, some of these institutions of higher learning even offer billiard scholarships – another added incentive for establishing high school pool leagues.

The cost of implementing this proposal would be minimal, because there are many qualified Senior pool players, who are willing and able to be volunteer instructors and coaches. As far as tables are concerned, there are many available in Senior and Community Centers around the state. In the Bay State League, for example, most of the cities and towns have, or soon will have centers that would welcome high school players: Brookline, Dedham, Framingham, Natick, Needham, Norwood, Wellesley and Weymouth.

For many years, we have offered to high school girls and boys many sports, like baseball, basketball, softball, volleyball, etc. I believe it's time to add another sport, 8-ball. It's a great game. The kids will love it!

20. Page 101
Part VII, Rule 88: Bona Fide Team Member Waiver Guidelines
By: Jeff Newhall, Athletic Director, Saint Mary’s High School (Lynn)

Current Rule:

The Bona Fide rule requires that members of a school team actively participate in all team practices and competitions. Members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to participate in a non-school event/activity in any sport recognized by the MIAA.

On occasion, a student might find himself/herself in potential conflict with this rule. This can happen when a student-athlete has an association with an out-of-school team or has an opportunity to participate in some special tournament or on a special team. A waiver of the bona fide team rule excusing the student from the school activity that day and allowing the student to participate in such a non-school event is possible under the guidelines set forth below. Before a waiver request (See White Book for form) is submitted ALL of the following considerations must be present:

- 88.1 The amount of time being missed from school will definitely be considered.
- 88.2 The number of school team activities being missed will be a factor considered.
- 88.3 The request for a waiver must have the written support of the school principal, the athletic director, and the coach.

Waivers will be considered on an individual basis on the merits of each case. Requests for a waiver should be addressed to the MIAA. The above points should be addressed in the waiver request.

Proposal:

Waivers will be considered on an individual basis on the merits of each case. Requests for a waiver should be addressed to the MIAA. The above points should be addressed. The MIAA will NOT accept any Bona Fide Team Member waivers for missing any practice or game during post-season play.

Rationale:

Allowing student-athletes the ability to walk away from their high school team in post season play is unfair to his/her teammates and influences the integrity of our tournaments.

21. Page 109
Part XIII, Rule 92: Game Officials – Policies and Procedures
By: Troy Erickson, Hingham High School Boys Soccer

Current Rule:

92.18 It is recommended that the number of certified officials assigned to a regular season varsity contest be as follows:

Football	4	Field Hockey	2	Softball	2
Soccer	2	Gymnastics	2	Wrestling	1
Volleyball	2	Swimming	2	Cross Country	1
Baseball	2	Basketball	2	Indoor Track	2
Lacrosse	2	Ice Hockey	2	Outdoor Track	2
				Rugby	1

Proposal:

Have 3 soccer referees during night games and All-State Games, not just at tournament semi and finals.

Rationale:

This rationale is not necessarily the quality of referee calls, although I do think this could be more consistent and certainly would be better. 2 linesmen/women and a head ref. This is about the safety of

our players as these referees cannot cover the entire field. It's not dangerous and their inability, because of the scope of the field, to keep up with the play is not allowing them to see the game.

22. **Page 116**

Part IX, Rule 96: Divisional Enrollment: Co-operative and Mixed Gender Teams

By: Dick Baker, Assistant Director, MIAA and Jim O'Leary, Athletic Director, Saint John's Preparatory

Current Rule:

For all sports that establish divisions by enrollment, all cooperative teams and mixed gender teams (see Rule 43.2.1 for golf exception) must combine enrollments for divisional placement. Each school participating in an approved co-operative program must register that sport by indicating "co-op" on the membership registration form. In combining the enrollments, no school will be required to move up more than one division.

Proposal:

Rewrite rule to read: For all sports that establish divisions by enrollment and mixed gender teams (see Rule 43.2.1 for golf exception) must combine enrollments for divisional placement. *All approved co-operative teams will use the enrollment of largest school in the co-operative for the Divisional placement.* Each school participating in an approved co-operative program must register that sport by indicating "co-op" on the membership registration form. In combining the enrollments *for mixed gender teams*, no school will be required to move up more than one division.

Rationale:

Co-operative Teams are approved by MIAA District Committees to give schools the ability to sustain programs and offer participation. Many times the "Guests" only have a few athletes. By using the largest school in the co-op, it will keep the co-op where it should be in the alignments. This is presently done by the football committee. Most co-op schools are programs that are having issues with numbers and should not be put up a division.

23. **Page 116**

Part IX, Rule 96: Divisional Enrollment: Co-operative and Mixed Gender Teams

By: Danny Erickson, Canton HS Athletic Director and Boys Soccer Coach

Current Rule:

For all sports that establish divisions by enrollment, all cooperative teams and mixed gender teams (see Rule 43.2.1 for golf exception) must combine enrollments for divisional placement. Each school participating in an approved co-operative program must register that sport by indicating "co-op" on the membership registration form. In combining the enrollments, no school will be required to move up more than one division.

Proposal:

For all sports that establish divisions by enrollment, all cooperative teams gender teams (see Rule 43.2.1 for golf exception) must combine enrollments for divisional placement. Each school participating in an approved co-operative program must register that sport by indicating "co-op" on the membership registration form. In combining the enrollments, no school will be required to move up more than one division.

Any team that includes one or more rostered varsity student-athlete from out of district due to an approved School Choice program must move up one division in that sport tournament- unless the combined enrollment of the host school and the sending district's school(s) would not move the team up a division. Each school participating in an approved School Choice program AND having one or more rostered varsity student-athlete in a sport, must register that team by indicating "School Choice" on the tournament form.

Rationale:

It is not fair or equitable for schools who have school choice athletes from other communities playing on their teams, to participate in a division tournament based on their school enrollment as their true pool of athletes is much larger. Moving these teams up one division is a fair solution.

24. **Page 117**
Part IX, Rule 96 – Divisional Enrollment - new subsection
By: Dick Baker, Assistant Director, MIAA

Currently: Tournament alignments are established every four years.

Proposal:

Add new subsection: Tournament alignments are done for four year cycles (presently 2017-18 to 2020-21) using enrollment from grades 9-12 (10/1/15) as submitted to the DESE, two years before the start of a cycle.

Rationale:

We presently use this process and has been done this way for years, but is not part of the MIAA Handbook. It will be, if accepted.

25. **Page 116**
Part IX, Rule 96 – Divisional Enrollment - new subsection
By: Thomas Holdgate, Director of Athletics & Wellness, Duxbury Public Schools

Proposal:

Propose we use enrollment numbers for tournament alignments from grades 9-11 instead of the current 9-12 model.

Rationale:

In our current system we use grade 12 enrollment numbers even though they will never play in the tournaments that their enrollment numbers effect. Our current alignment cycle uses enrollment numbers from 10/1/15 for a cycle from fall 2017 to spring of 2021. By using enrollment from grades 9-11 it will give a more accurate overview of the true enrollment of the school for the alignment cycle.

26. **Page 116**
Part IX, Rule 96 – Divisional Enrollment - new subsection
By: Thomas Holdgate, Director of Athletics & Wellness, Duxbury Public Schools

Proposal:

Propose alignments for sports be reviewed every two years instead of the current four year cycle.

Rationale:

By using a two year model, it will allow for students that are actually enrolled in the school to affect their divisional alignment. In our current system we use the enrollment numbers of 2 classes (seniors and juniors) that do not play in the alignment cycle of which we use their enrollment numbers. Our current enrollment cycle uses numbers from 10/1/15 for a cycle from fall 2017 to spring of 2021.

27. **Page 117**
Part IX, Rule 97: Tournament Eligibility
By: Dick Baker, Assistant Director, MIAA

Current Rule:

97.3.3 All league (*or divisions within a league*) champions, regardless of winning percentage. This includes co-championships.

Proposal:

Add to this rule, “Minimum number of schools to form a league or division is four.” To assist all schools with the understanding if presently in a league/division of three, you will be grandfathered.

Rationale:

Some sports have in their format that you need at least four teams to have a single champion qualify. We want this proposal to go through the rule change process to be accepted officially.

28. Page 117

Part IX, Rule 97: Tournament Eligibility - new subsection

By: Danny Erickson, Canton High School Athletic Director

Currently: Varsity schedules must be committed by September 30, January 15 and April 15.

Proposal:

All varsity schedules must be committed each season prior to the first scheduled contest.

Rationale:

Schools should not be able to eliminate contests after the season has started. The use of the MIAA Members Only website to commit schedules allows for this process to take place easily.

OFFICIAL RULES CHANGE BALLOT

Date of Vote: _____

Name of Reviewing Body: _____

Rule #	Yes	No	Abstentions
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COMPLETED BALLOT & AMENDMENTS ARE TO BE RETURNED TO DICK BAKER @ THE MIAA

Name of Reviewing Body: _____

Date: _____

AMENDMENT VOTED
(Make copies as needed)

1. Rule proposal number: _____

2. Amendment voted:

3. Rationale:

4. Committee vote on amendment:

Number **Yes**: _____

Number **No**: _____

Number abstentions: _____

**COMPLETED BALLOT & AMENDMENTS ARE TO BE RETURNED TO DICK
BAKER @ THE MIAA**