

MIAA RULE CHANGE PROPOSALS FOR 2025-27

The following reflects Rule Change Proposals that have been submitted as permitted in the Procedure for Requesting a Rule Change, Rule 88, page 88 of the current MIAA Handbook. **Please note: Rule Change Proposals list Current Rule (listed in 2023-2025 handbook), Proposal, and Rationale.** All responding groups should review the proposals and forward their recommendations, using the form at the back of this packet, to MIAA Assistant Director, Phil Napolitano. 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 18-25 within this packet) MIAA sport committees should only act on general rules (rules 1-17 and 26) and rules specific to 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 and MIAA Administrative Committees votes are due to the MIAA by November 1, 2024.
2. The MIAA District Athletic Committees (DAC) and the Massachusetts Secondary School Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA) votes are due to the MIAA by December 1, 2024. The DAC and MSSADA should not act until they have the packet that includes all earlier votes by sport and administrative committees.
4. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Council MIAA Board of Directors will act upon proposals by January 1, 2025.
5. The MIAA Board of Directors will act upon all proposals by February 1, 2025 and their decision(s) are final.

1. Page 11

Part II, Definitions and Policies - Rule 5: Medical Coverage

By: The MIAA Sports Medicine Committee

Current Rule:

Each member school should employ a licensed certified athletic trainer. Licensed physicians, athletic trainers, and coaches should receive sport medicine training. Schools' must have medical coverage at all levels of football, wrestling and rugby and at varsity ice hockey games per sport rules. For all varsity football games, each team must employ a licensed physician, licensed athletic trainer or certified EMT to be with their team. The school designated as the home team, or the host site identified with a participating school, is required to have an AED onsite (and accessible) or with their medical provider for all athletic events.

Proposal:

5.1 A medical time-out meeting must take place with the head coaches, game official(s), medical staff in attendance and any site administrator(s) before the start of any contest to review the site's emergency action plan and address any weather or safety concerns.

- [Medical Timeout Protocol](#)
- [Medical Timeout Card](#)

Rationale:

The implementation of a medical time out before a game will ensure a proper execution of an emergency action plan if needed. Game officials often meet with coaches prior to competitions, but not always medical staff in attendance or site administrators. This quick meeting will make sure everyone knows what to do if something happens during an event. As stated, a pre-game meeting often takes place, this would formalize the process and content to be covered. It should not add any time to pregame, nor should it delay the start of any competition. It is required at the professional and collegiate sports levels and should be standard practice at the high school level as well.

2. Page 22

Part II, Definitions and Policies - Rule 22: Definition of a Scrimmage

By: The Hockomock League

Current Rule:

To have an interscholastic scrimmage, which will not count against the game limitation rules, the scrimmage must meet the following conditions:

22.1 A scrimmage is competition among any number of schools where no admission is charged, no game-day uniform is worn; score is kept only by segments, and the event is intended to be a practice, with instruction occurring during competition.

22.2 If any of these restrictions are violated, the meeting must be counted as a game and will count toward the total number of interscholastic contests for that sport.

22.3 An "exhibition game" must be counted in the season limitation for the sport, except for an alumni or faculty-student game.

22.4 Ineligible students are NOT allowed to participate in scrimmages/play-days/jamborees.

22.5 Scrimmages may be held at any time during the season.

Note: Play-Days must conform to the criteria of either a scrimmage or jamboree.

Proposal:

Remove the statement in rule 22.1, “no-game-day uniform is worn”.

22.1 A scrimmage is competition among any number of schools where no admission is charged, ~~no game day uniform is worn~~; score is kept only by segments, and the event is intended to be a practice, with instruction occurring during competition.

Rationale:

With the use of Arbiter by all MIAA member schools across the state and the schedule commitment deadline, games and scrimmages are clearly marked in each team’s official schedule. Scrimmages are already permitted at any time during the season. There is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for wearing a game-day uniform instead of other options.

3. Page 14

Part II, Definitions and Policies - Rule 22: Definition of a Scrimmage

By: Bob Rodgers, Athletic Director, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Current Rule:

To have an interscholastic scrimmage, which will not count against the game limitation rules, the scrimmage must meet the following conditions:

22.1 A scrimmage is competition among any number of schools where no admission is charged, no game-day uniform is worn; score is kept only by segments, and the event is intended to be a practice, with instruction occurring during competition.

22.2 If any of these restrictions are violated, the meeting must be counted as a game and will count toward the total number of interscholastic contests for that sport.

22.3 An "exhibition game" must be counted in the season limitation for the sport, except for an alumni or faculty-student game.

22.4 Ineligible students are NOT allowed to participate in scrimmages/play-days/jamborees.

22.5 Scrimmages may be held at any time during the season.

Note: Play-Days must conform to the criteria of either a scrimmage or jamboree.

Proposal:

Add an exception to rule 22.4 to allow students who are serving a MIAA chemical health violation to participate in a scrimmage at the discretion of the school. The rule would read as follows:

22.4 Ineligible students are NOT allowed to participate in scrimmages/play-days/Jamborees, **Exception: Students who are serving a MIAA chemical health suspension may participate in scrimmages at the discretion of the school administration.**

Rationale:

A scrimmage is nothing more than a practice designed to get students ready for competition. These scrimmages make regular season events safer because they are often conducted under a more controlled setting. In addition, in the spirit of restorative justice, students should not be serving a larger penalty than what is outlined in the handbook. For example, we had a student who had a vaping incident in February of 2023. This student also had academic and discipline issues. Through a lot of hard work, he had an incredible turnaround. He had to sit out 4 scrimmages and 5 regular season games which was demoralizing after his great improvement.

4. Page 20

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: Terri Riggs and Mary Lou Thimas- MIAA Girl's Lacrosse Committee Members

Current Rule:

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Spring Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Girls Lacrosse	20	3

Proposal:

Reduce the maximum number of girls lacrosse competitions from 20 to 18.

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Spring Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Girls Lacrosse	18	3

Rationale:

- Consistent with game limitation for boys' lacrosse
- More consistent with like sport limitations.... Field Hockey and Soccer
- Lack of numbers of qualified officials to cover the number of games. (see addendum for additional rationale)
- Girls' lacrosse is a growing sport and has become more physically demanding, by reducing the number of games it will give players an opportunity to recover from physical play.
- There are a number of players who are now competing on select teams outside of their scholastic teams and because of this additional lacrosse commitment they have a limited opportunity to physically and mentally recover.
- Weather issues in the Spring force grass field teams to delay the start of the season because fields are unplayable. Thunder and lightning issues causing game postponements or cancellations have forced teams to play 4-5 games during the last week of the regular season to get games completed before the tournament cutoff date. Playing 4-5 games in the final week also requires receiving a waiver from the MIAA and places additional physical, emotional logistical nightmare for Athletic Directors, coaches, players and assigners.
- Conflict in scheduling turf fields for the teams that utilize the field in the Spring season.
- The Western Mass. Coaches association is strongly in favor of reducing the number of girls' lacrosse games to 18.
- The governing organization in Eastern MA. (EMWLUA), which includes assigners and officials, is also strongly in favor of reducing the total number of games to 18.
- Transportation demands and issues with bus and bus drivers' availability, not to mention the monetary bus transportation expenses that are being placed on school athletic budgets. Bus issues across the board have become a huge concern for AD's, coaches, assigners and officials. It is becoming a regular occurrence for teams to arrive 30-45 minutes past the scheduled game start time. This creates a major problem for AD's, assigners and officials because the enormity of seasonal game coverage requirements often means that officials are leaving one game assignment and arriving late to another site to officiate another game.

5. Page 21

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: MIAA Wrestling Committee

Current Rule:

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Winter Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Wrestling	20	3

Proposal:

Allow schools to schedule a maximum of four (4) girls only wrestling competition dates that do not count towards their seasonal limitation of 20 competition dates per season.

Rationale:

With the increasing popularity of girls' wrestling, the rules should permit schools to send their female wrestlers to "girls-only" tournaments and meets without affecting the seasonal limitations for the entire wrestling team. Currently, if a school sends one female wrestler to a girls-only tournament during the regular season, it counts as one of the team's 20 competition dates for the year. This rule can discourage schools and coaches from participating in these events, thereby hindering the growth of girls' wrestling and limiting the opportunities available to female wrestlers.

6. Page 21

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: Tom Arria, Director of Athletics, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

Current Rule:

None

Proposal:

Add Orienteering to be a recognized MIAA state sponsored sport in the spring season. The rules of competition would be guided by the governing body of orienteering, Orienteering USA, which is a member of the International Orienteering Federation.

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Spring Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Orienteering	18	3

Rationale:

Orienteering is an individual cross-country running sport with an added component of map navigation. Competitors visit checkpoints shown on a map, in order. The competitor with the fastest time wins. Orienteering provides a means of engaging more students bringing them into athletics. Orienteering develops not only map navigation and physical fitness, but also teaches useful life skills relating to identifying goals, planning alternate routes, and recovering from errors. Local and national orienteering organizations are available to help teams with ideas for training and creating maps.

7. Page 21

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: Peter Serino, Athletic Director, Abington High School

Current Rule:

None

Proposal:

Ultimate Frisbee to be recognized as a sport by the MIAA during the spring season. Ultimate Frisbee will follow the [rules of USA Ultimate](#) and will be co-ed. The state divisions will have champions in the boys, girls and co-ed divisions.

Rationale:

Ultimate Frisbee is a growing sport that already has a significant number of teams (over 150 registered with USA Ultimate in Massachusetts) participating at the high school level in the state of Massachusetts. By becoming a MIAA sport there will be an organized structure for the students participating and equal recognition as their peers.

Abington High School, a school of less than 600 students, has been able to sustain an ultimate frisbee team during the spring season where we offer our most sports of any season (Track & Field, Tennis, Lacrosse, Baseball, Softball). Ultimate Frisbee attracts a group of students that are typically not engaged in athletics. By the MIAA recognizing the sport the opportunities for participation would increase and more students would be actively engaged in their school community.

Ultimate Frisbee is a self-officiated game (like tennis) with minimal costs to start up – teams only need a field, uniforms, and discs. There are already several high school teams in the State of Massachusetts that are competing through USA ultimate or other unorganized off shoots. By being recognized it will provide a safe and uniform experience for the students.

8. Page 21

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: Jeff Newhall, Athletic Director, St. Mary’s High School; Steve Kendall, Athletic Director, Ayer-Shirley Regional High School, David Palazzi, Athletic Director, Leominster High School; Amanda Alpert, Athletic Director, Chelsea High School; Mike Nelson, Athletic Director, Greater Lawrence Technical High School; Alyssa Dube, Athletic Director, Veritas Preparatory Charter School; Ryan Gaebel, Athletic Director, Springfield International Charter School; Mark White, Greater Lowell Technical High School; Kyle Pelczar, Athletic Director, Collegiate Charter School of Lowell; Henrique DeOliveira, Athletic Director, South Lancaster Academy, Todd Robbins, Athletic Director, Fitchburg High School; New England Patriots; New England Patriots Foundation.

Current Rule:

None

Proposal:

Add Girls Flag Football to be a recognized MIAA state sponsored sport during the spring season.

Maximum # of Competitions

<u>Spring Sports</u>	<u>Per Season</u>	<u>Per Week</u>
Girls Flag Football	18	3

Rationale

The girls’ high school flag football movement continues to sweep the nation with the number of high school state association sanctioning the sport more than doubling in the past two years, from five in 2022 to 11 in 2024, with efforts underway in nearly 20 more states, including Massachusetts.

In Spring 2023, the New England Patriots Foundation launched a 5v5 non-contact pilot program with eight high schools across Massachusetts, including Ayer-Shirley, Chelsea, Fitchburg, Leominster, Needham, Peabody, St. Mary’s and Woburn. The format included all eight schools traveling to one location, once a week, and playing two games. One regulation football field was transformed into three or four flag football fields with multiple games played simultaneously.

The success of the first year program resulted in the league nearly tripling from eight teams in the first year to 23 in 2024 and dividing into two conferences - Eastern and Central. All eight schools from year one returned while 12 new schools joined, and three programs fielded a second team. The league's statewide geographic footprint grew with new teams from Merrimack Valley, Boston, and Springfield. The multiple game format remained similar with most games being played as 4-team, 6-team, 8-team or even 11-team game days with teams playing two games in one day. Additionally, the more traditional single-game format, played endzone to endzone with flag football specific field markings and down markers was successfully introduced and will feature more prominently in year three and beyond as the sport receives added support and commitment from participating high schools.

The trajectory of the Patriots program is following trends around the country and, based on discussions with athletic directors across the state, year three of the program in Spring 2025 is expected to include more than 50 high schools organized into more local conferences. An officiating board is being established and the intent of year three will be to work with the MIAA, District Athletic Committees and athletic directors to ensure the program is set up to easily transition to a MIAA recognized sport in the 2025-26 school year.

The Patriots Girls High School Flag program has been supported by Nike which provided uniforms, USA Football who donated equipment grants, NFL FLAG and NFHS who have offered consultation, and the New England Patriots Foundation who has given financial and operational support in the way of direct funding and memorabilia donations with special events and playoffs hosted at Gillette Stadium.

Flag football is the most inclusive and accessible version of America's most popular sport with girls having earned the opportunities they are being given to compete at the high school level. Nationwide, the gap of one million more boys than girls participating in high school sports is easily explained by the male dominated tackle football participation numbers. Girls flag football is a big part of the solution to closing the gap that currently exists between boys and girls participating in high school sports.

Through two years of the Patriots club program, more than 80% of girls participating do not play another Spring sport, and flag has allowed girls to find their high school sport during the Spring season. Most schools have found that girls who come out to play flag football have never played a high school sport before and it's a great option for fall/winter athletes to maintain their conditioning and agility in the offseason. Girls flag football is not as big of a threat to other girls' spring sports as perceived because it's proving to increase overall participation for girls and not merely pulling from other sports.

The collegiate opportunities continue to expand with more NAIA, NJCAA and now NCAA schools offering scholarships for their women's flag football program and the New England Patriots are facilitating college showcase events for girls in Massachusetts to get noticed by college coaches. As of this writing, two girls from the Patriots program have earned college scholarships with that number expected to dramatically increase in the years to come.

Flag football has been added to the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles and the proposed 5v5 non-contact Olympic format is fast-paced, exciting to watch, and easy to learn and facilitate for athletic directors with minimal equipment or field space needed. The field size is 25 yards wide, 50 yards from goal line to goal line and seven-yard end zones and the practice space needed is even smaller. Additionally, flag football is low cost with very little equipment needed and, thanks to the unique format currently in place, schools are not required to host games if they are unable to. NFL FLAG rules have been used during the first two years of the program, however NFHS' recent announcement of forming a rules committee will require adoption of NFHS 5v5 rules once implemented at the national level.

By the end of the decade, girls flag football will be viewed nationally as the emerging high school sport of the 2020s. It is not a matter of if, but rather when, every state in the country will offer girls flag football. With so many organizations providing support, including the New England Patriots, Nike, USA Football, NFL FLAG and NFHS, the time to act for the state of Massachusetts is now.

9. Page 21

Part III, Rule 34: Recognized Sports and Scheduling Limits for School

By: Peter Serino, Athletic Director, Abington High School

Current Rule:

None – Cheer is under the MSAA

Proposal:

Cheerleading to be recognized by the MIAA as a Fall sport. Cheer can follow the current rules and structure provided by the MSAA with minimal adjustments to align with all other MIAA sports.

Rationale

Cheerleading is a sport and should be recognized as such by the state association. By continuing to label cheerleading as a club and not recognize it as a sport and govern it the same way other sports do further perpetuates the institutional bias against a predominantly female sport. The MIAA's partner organization already organizes and runs the events, it would be a smooth transition to the MIAA and a meaningful step towards equality.

10. Page 26

Part III, Rule 37: Interstate Competition with NFHS Affiliated Member Schools

By: William Devin, Athletic Director, Lynn Classical High School

Current Rule:

37.3 The MIAA Board of Directors criteria for considering approval of interstate contests are:

37.3.1 Participation involves no more than a one-day loss of school time.

37.3.2 No more than two consecutive days of competition are permitted.

37.3.3 The activity is sponsored by or under the ultimate control of secondary school personnel.

37.3.4 The event only involves competition with schools that are members of their state association or schools that have been approved for competition by their state association and it is a sanctioned sport of both associations.

Proposal:

Replace rule 37.3.1 with the language that, *“as long as all academic requirements are met, the loss of school time for all interstate athletic contests/trips should be up to each individual school district and have approval of the town/city Mayor, Superintendent, School Committee, Principal and parents whose children are participating in the contests/trip.”*

Rationale

It should not be up to the MIAA to determine how many days of school a student athlete can miss to participate in an approved interstate athletic contest if previously approved by the town/city Mayor, Superintendent, School Committee, Principal and parents whose children are participating in the contests/trip.

11. Pages 37-41

Part IV, Rule 49: Sportsmanship- Athlete and Coach Contest Disqualifications/Suspensions By: Richard Pearson, MIAA Associate Director

**This proposal will also impact ice hockey rule 72.11 and soccer rule 78.2.8*

Current Rule:

None

Proposal:

Add a new rule to the Sportsmanship Rule 49;

New section 49.5 Total Team Disqualifications - Tournament Eligibility

Any team (in all sports) whose players/coaches receive collectively a total of more than four disqualifications during the regular season shall not qualify for the MIAA tournament. An appeal to enter the tournament can be made to a subcommittee of the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee. Appeal to enter the tournament must be made to the MIAA liaison to the Sportsmanship Committee.

Rationale:

Two specific sports, Ice Hockey and Soccer have a potential tournament removal if a team reaches a number of disqualifications during the regular season. Ice Hockey Rule 72.11 lists "More than 3 disqualifications", and Soccer Rule 78.2.8 lists "more than 4 red cards" (which are the same as disqualifications in other sports). This expectation for only two sports does not seem to fit with what expectations should really be for all schools in all sports. Focusing on only two sports inherently allows other sports to exceed anything more than 3 or 4 with no limits. If one inquired of expectations set forth by current school athletic departments, I think we would find that school leaders already address any of their teams with excessive disqualifications. Adding this rule would make all sport teams responsibly monitor disqualifications and uphold the highest ideals of sportsmanship for individuals and collectively for the team.

Additionally, the ice hockey rule had an appeal process, but the soccer rule did not. This proposal also establishes a clear appeal process which is appropriately placed before the Sportsmanship Committee and not individual sports.

Team DQ's/red cards collected for all sports and all teams for the 2023-24 school year show only three teams with greater than 3 DQ's and only one of those teams with greater than 4 DQ's. This data indicates this new rule for all sports would not impact any team/sport unreasonably and allow for all sports to have the same standard and to be administered in the same manner.

This proposal also includes the elimination of the ice hockey and soccer rules:

- Eliminate – Rule 72.11; Page 65
- Eliminate – Rule 78.2.8; Page 70

12. Pages 41

Part IV, Rule 49: Sportsmanship- Athlete and Coach Contest Disqualifications/Suspensions By: The Hockomock League and Paul Spear, Athletic Director, Framingham High School

Current Rule:

49.3.8 A student who physically assaults an official shall be expelled from the activity immediately and banned from further participation in all sports for one year from the date of the offense.

49.3.9 Any student in any sport who willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempts to injure an opponent shall be removed from the contest immediately and shall be ineligible in all sports for one year from the date of the incident. Such a violation must be indicated by the game official on the student contest disqualification form. ("Fighting" does not apply to this section unless warranted in the judgment of the game official.)

49.3.10 A student disqualification cannot be appealed, except for a one-year suspension. During an Eligibility Appeals Board (EAB) hearing of a one-year suspension, the appeal can only be in relation to the length of the penalty, not the judgement of the official. Refer to rule 89 for more information on hearings and appeals.

[MIAA Student Contest Disqualification Form](#) includes a check box for the official to mark if they believe rule 49.3.8 or 49.3.9 were violated.

Please check below **ONLY** if the disqualification was issued for the following actions:

- Was the violation for fighting, punching or kicking an opposing player, or spitting at someone?
(Rule 49.3.6 – 2 Game Suspension)
 - Was the violation for physically assaulting an official?
(Rule 49.3.8 – One-Year Suspension)
 - Was the violation for willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempting to injure an opponent?
(Rule 49.3.9 – One-Year Suspension)
-

Proposal:

Change the wording on the current MIAA Student Contest Disqualification form to read as follows:

- Was the violation for physically assaulting an official?
(Rule 49.3.8 - **Recommended** One Year Suspension)
- Was the violation for willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempting to injure an opponent? (Rule 49.3.9 - **Recommended** One Year Suspension).

If the official ‘recommends’ a One-Year Suspension, it will automatically trigger an Eligibility Appeal Board hearing to review the incident and make a final decision on suspension length.

Rationale:

Changing the wording on the form to “Recommended” One Year Suspension will now automatically trigger an EAB hearing. The EAB members convened for the hearing will have the opportunity to review all facts pertaining to the incident and will make a final decision. Schools will have the Option to “Opt Out” of the hearing in support of the Recommended one-year suspension.

It is beyond reasonable expectation to ask officials to make a one-year suspension, a judgment call, during, or at the conclusion of an athletic competition. The new wording on the Student Disqualification Form allows officials to make the recommendation to suspend. The filed form triggers the EAB review. This then provides opportunity for a measured response, free of the emotion of the game-day situation and assess appropriate consequences for the violation.

13. Page 43

Part IV, Rule 53: Student Eligibility – Middle School Students on Senior High Teams

By: Kurt Savage, Athletic Director, Whitinsville Christian School

Current Rule:

A middle school student is eligible to represent a senior high school on its athletic teams only when the MIAA member high school includes those grades, and they are under the direct “jurisdiction” and “supervision” of the high school principal (see Rule 51 for definitions).

Note: Consideration can only be given to middle level students when school district residency creates the direct path to a single high school and does not require application for admission or have any other conditions impacting a students’ matriculation.

- Middle level waiver guidelines: [click here](#)

Proposal:

Within policy 4 of Rule 53 on middle level waivers, I propose to add language as written below.

The added language would read:

"Or, when middle level students under the same Head of Schools (Superintendent) as a high school directly matriculate after graduation from middle school to a single high school under the same Head of School (Superintendent)"

The full version of Policy 4 would read: 4.

Consideration can only be given to middle level students when school district residency creates the direct path to a single high school, *or, when middle level students under the same Head of Schools (Superintendent) as a high school directly matriculate after graduation from middle school to a single high school under the same Head of School (Superintendent).*

Rationale

The MIAA rule change regarding residency successfully addressed a conflict of interest of schools of different communities taking advantage of the Middle Level Waivers. However, perhaps inadvertently, the new wording created an inequality for other schools that were otherwise allowed to use Middle Level Waivers and were using them in a way that was equitable for the benefit of students and athletic programs. This caused a loss in athletic programs available to student athletes and negatively impacted program and school development. This proposal will honor and uphold the 2023 change of residency rule and will avoid penalizing other schools that were not misusing Middle Level Waivers.

14. Page 43

Part IV, Rule 53: Student Eligibility – Middle School Students on Senior High Teams

By: Bob Rodgers, Athletic Director, Whitman-Hanson High School

Peter Serino, Athletic Director, Abington High School

Current Rule:

A middle school student is eligible to represent a senior high school on its athletic teams only when the MIAA member high school includes those grades, and they are under the direct “jurisdiction” and “supervision” of the high school principal (see Rule 51 for definitions).

Note: Consideration can only be given to middle level students when school district residency creates the direct path to a single high school and does not require application for admission or have any other conditions impacting a students’ matriculation.

- Middle level waiver guidelines: [click here](#)

Proposal:

In all cases, middle school students, whether eligible via a waiver or by rule (school structure), are only eligible to play at the lowest level offered by that school.

Rationale

For the purpose of this rule proposal, ‘middle school students’ are defined as all students below the ninth grade. To create equity for all students in the MIAA and stop the incentive to use school choice or other methods of transferring to get an early start on a varsity career. In many instances, schools in the same league are playing under different rules, simply because of the structure of that school's administration.

15. Page 43**Part IV, Rule 53: Student Eligibility – Middle School Students on Senior High Teams**

**By: Bob Rodgers, Athletic Director, Whitman-Hanson High School
Peter Serino, Athletic Director, Abington High School**

Current Rule:

A middle school student is eligible to represent a senior high school on its athletic teams only when the MIAA member high school includes those grades, and they are under the direct “jurisdiction” and “supervision” of the high school principal (see Rule 51 for definitions).

Note: Consideration can only be given to middle level students when school district residency creates the direct path to a single high school and does not require application for admission or have any other conditions impacting a students’ matriculation.

- Middle level waiver guidelines: [click here](#)

Proposal:

In all cases, regardless of school structure, schools who wish to have a middle school student participate at the varsity level, must receive DAC approval.

Rationale

For the purpose of this rule proposal, ‘middle school students’ are defined as all students below the ninth grade. To be fair and equitable, all schools should follow the same process.

16. Page 43**Part IV, Rule 53: Student Eligibility – Middle School Students on Senior High Teams**

**By: Bob Rodgers, Athletic Director, Whitman-Hanson High School
Peter Serino, Athletic Director, Abington High School**

Current Rule:

A middle school student is eligible to represent a senior high school on its athletic teams only when the MIAA member high school includes those grades, and they are under the direct “jurisdiction” and “supervision” of the high school principal (see Rule 51 for definitions).

Note: Consideration can only be given to middle level students when school district residency creates the direct path to a single high school and does not require application for admission or have any other conditions impacting a students’ matriculation.

- Middle level waiver guidelines: [click here](#)

Proposal:

Schools who wish to utilize middle level students for JV and freshmen may do so without the involvement of the DAC or MIAA provided that they receive approval from the league and its school

administration. Leagues should utilize the guidelines for approval, including the co-op roster limitations as provided by the current rule.

Rationale

For the purpose of this rule proposal, 'middle level students' are defined as all students below the ninth grade. There is no reason for the DAC or MIAA to be involved in the administration of this rule. Very often, schools do not know they need the middle level waiver until after tryouts have begun. Proceeding in this manner will allow everyone to be more efficient with their time and still achieve the same goals of the original rules.

17. Page 58

Part IV, Rule 62: Student (and Coach) Eligibility: Chemical Health/Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco

By: John Crocker, Director of School Mental Health & Behavioral Services, Methuen High School

Supported by the Student-Athlete Focused Education (SAFE) Coalition ([click here](#) for letter of support)

Current Rule:

Minimum PENALTIES: (also see Rule 32.8 – Ineligible Students)

First violation: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests (regular season and tournament) totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. During the suspension the disqualified student may not be in uniform and attendance at the competition site is determined by the high school principal. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 25% of the season.

Clarity on penalty application: To calculate the "number of events/seasons", count those events on your schedule where the team (vs. an individual) will compete (excluding the potential of MIAA Tournament qualification). Double duals, tri, or quad competitions held on one day count as one "event".

The intent of first offense penalties is to render the student ineligible for approximately 25% of that season's schedule, a football player who misses the last football game of the season would then be required to miss the first two basketball games of the next season. The baseball player who serves a penalty of fewer than five games in the spring would be required to miss the first football game of the fall season. In the former case, the football player has served 50% of his penalty, and then would be required to serve 50% of the basketball penalty (i.e. 2.5 games, which is rounded down to the whole number). In the second case, if the student serves 1, 2, 3, or 4 games of baseball ineligibility, then the carry-over of the penalty in the fall season would require missing the first football game. The minimum in any carry-over would be 1 event.

Second and subsequent violations: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests (regular season and tournament) totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 60% of the season.

If after the second or subsequent violations the student of own volition becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA activities after a minimum of 40% of events provided the student was fully engaged in the program throughout that penalty period. The high school principal in collaboration with a Chemical Dependency Program or Treatment Program must certify that student is attending or issue a certificate of completion. If student does not complete program,

penalty reverts back to 60% of the season. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 40% of the season.

Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year, but serving the penalty could carry over for one year. Or, if the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year (e.g. A student plays only football: he violates the rule in winter and/or the spring of same academic year: he would serve the penalty [ies] during the fall season of the next academic year).

If a student is not an athletic participant for one full year after affirmation of a violation, then the penalty period would close, and the student would face no consequence.

Prior to any chemical health violation, a student's request for and enrollment in a substance abuse treatment shall not in and of itself constitute a violation of the chemical health/alcohol/drugs/tobacco Rule 62.

Proposal:

Proposed First Violation Response

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the principal shall assist the student in engaging with the appropriate health or counseling/clinical staff at the school who can make appropriate recommendations and/or refer the student to the appropriate care.

- A. The student will be given the option to engage in an approved intervention or treatment program implemented within the school. The school and support provider will work cooperatively with the student and their parent/guardian to develop a plan of care that is appropriate based on the assessment of the care provider. For as long as the student remains actively engaged in the care plan and attends all required activities related to that care, they will remain eligible for all interscholastic contests. If there is a superseding school suspension for the infraction, that will take precedence before the penalty.

If the student refuses to engage in care or does not remain engaged in care after the development of the agreed upon care plan, the student shall lose eligibility for the next 25% of interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, penalties will be determined by the current or next season of participation. If there is a superseding school suspension for the infraction, that will take precedence before the penalty. Proposed

Second Violation Response

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a subsequent violation occurred, the response shall be as follows:

- A. For a student who is currently engaged in care related to a first violation or has already completed a care plan in response to a first violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the 25% of interscholastic contests in that sport. If there is a superseding school suspension for the infraction, that will take precedence before the penalty.
 - a. For the student, penalties will be determined by the current or next season of participation. The student will be offered the option of participating in a different intervention program, or the option to engage in other support within their area from the list of resources provided at the beginning of the athletic season. The student will agree to a re-assessment (SBIRT) of their current health status by a qualified clinical professional and to engage in a new and/or revised care plan that is appropriate based on the assessment of the care provider. For as long as the student remains actively engaged in the care plan and attends all required activities related to that care, they will remain eligible for all interscholastic contests after the conclusion of their loss of eligibility for the next interscholastic contest.

- B. Should the student refuse this opportunity and elect not to engage in revised or continued care in response to a second violation, the ineligibility period reverts to the next 65% of interscholastic contests. For students who elected not to engage in a care plan for a first violation, who then experience a subsequent violation and wish to enter care, the student will be given the option to engage in an approved intervention/treatment program.

Subsequent Response Violation Response

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a subsequent violation occurred, the response shall be as follows:

- A. For a student who is currently engaged in care related to a second violation or has already completed a care plan in response to a second violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the 65% of interscholastic contests in that sport. If there is a superseding school suspension for the infraction, that will take precedence before the penalty.
 - a. The school and support provider will work cooperatively with the student and their parent/guardian to develop a plan of care that is appropriate based on the assessment of the care provider. For as long as the student remains actively engaged in the care plan and attends all required activities related to that care, they will remain eligible for all interscholastic contests after the suspension period. For the student, penalties will be incurred by the current or next season of participation based on when the violation occurred.
 - b. If the student refused to engage in care after a first and second violation or did not remain engaged in care after the development of the agreed upon care plan, and then refuses to engage in care in response to a subsequent violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the remainder of the season. For the student, penalties will be incurred by the current or next season of participation based on when the violation occurred.

Rationale:

The [Letter of Support](#) addresses the need for a change to rule 62 of the MIAA handbooks so that it aligns with the Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE) Chapter 177.

[The Substance Use Intervention/Treatment document](#) is a template form. It provides a way for schools, coaches, athletic directors, and other authorized personnel to track where student athletes are receiving support. This document is something that stakeholders, coaches, principals, and others have requested to help support this rule change. The SAFE Coalition, and the individuals who made this document are more than willing to partner and collaborate with the MIAA if the rule change proposal is adopted.

----- START OF SPORT SPECIFIC ONLY RULE PROPOSALS -----

18. Page 65

Part V, Rule 65: Baseball

By: Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association (MBCA)

Current Rule:

65.5 MIAA pitch count breakpoints and required rest will be as follows:

Varsity		Sub Varsity	
1-25 pitches	0 days rest	1-25 pitches	0 days rest
26-40 pitches	1 days rest	26 -40 pitches	1 days rest
41-55 pitches	2 days rest	41-55 pitches	2 days rest
56-70 pitches	3 days rest	56-70 pitches	3 days rest
71-115 pitches	4 days rest	71-95 pitches	4 days rest

*These rules apply to both regular and post season play.

*If a pitcher has thrown 71-90 pitches on the day he last pitched, on his fourth day of rest, he would be eligible to throw a maximum of 25 pitches.

Proposal:

65.5 MIAA pitch count breakpoints and required rest will be as follows:

Varsity		Sub Varsity	
1-24 pitches	0 days rest	1-24 pitches	0 days rest
25-42 pitches	1 days rest	25-42 pitches	1 days rest
43-60 pitches	2 days rest	43-60 pitches	2 days rest
61-78 pitches	3 days rest	61-78 pitches	3 days rest
79-115 pitches	4 days rest	79-95 pitches	4 days rest

*If a pitcher has thrown 79-95 pitches on the day he last pitched, on his fourth day of rest, he would be eligible to throw a maximum of 25 pitches.

Rationale:

Without increasing the total number of pitches allowed in a game, this proposal provides a little more flexibility for programs to have pitchers return sooner with mid-tier pitch counts. This proposal was supported unanimously by the MIAA Baseball Committee and proposed by the Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association (MBCA).

19. Pages 58 and 69

Part V, Rule 66: Basketball and Rule 78: Soccer

By: Amanda Alpert, Athletic Director, Chelsea High School

Current Rule:

Basketball: 66.9 The team jersey torso color shall be light for the home team and a contrasting dark color for the visiting team.

Soccer: 78.1.6 The home team shall wear dark jerseys and sock, and the visiting team shall wear white or light jerseys and socks.

Proposal:

Teams may wear a uniform of their school's colors so long as there is a distinct difference between the opposing teams uniform color. In the event that the opposing team has the same uniform colors, the home team chooses their uniform color, and the opposing team must wear their contrasting color.

Rationale:

Research has found that girls have lower levels of confidence as teenagers, they drop out of sport particularly between the ages of 12 and 14, and do not want to participate in physical activity based on their body image. Many girls feel self-conscious about their period and the color white exacerbating this feeling and particularly when they are concerned about leaking.

20. Page 59

Part V, Rule 68: Field Hockey

By: Katherine Hennessy, School Committee and MIAA Field Hockey Committee member

Current Rule:

None

Proposal:

Add rule 68.1.3 to state;

Field Players are permitted & encouraged to wear a smooth, preferably transparent or single-color face mask, which follows the contour of the face, when defending a penalty corner. Face masks should be stored behind the goal cage and should be put on and discarded without delay. Unnecessary delay will be treated as misconduct. Players should remove their penalty corner equipment as soon as they are able to do so after the penalty corner is completed. Equipment may be removed and tossed over the end line or sideline once the penalty corner is completed. The primary objective of wearing a face mask to defend a penalty corner is safety.

Field Players are permitted to wear throughout a match, for medical reasons only, a smooth, preferably transparent or single-color face mask which closely fits the face. The player concerned must understand the possible implication of playing with the medical condition. Goggles may be worn by all field players should they choose so.

Rationale:

Face Masks are highly recommended for the safety of players, specifically during penalty corners, where there is potential for shots of the ball with high velocity and potential lifts that could injure players that are defending the goal.

Rules similar to this proposal exist in other NFHS schools, as well as the NCAA and the FIH and this rule would bring more consistency between youth club programs, high school, collegiate and beyond.

21. Page 63

Part V, Rule 71: Gymnastics

By: MIAA Gymnastics Committee

Current Rule:

71.1.8 Exhibition performances are allowed with the following conditions:

- Each team is allowed to have up to two Junior Varsity routines per event.
- Consideration should be made for the number of JV routines when there are more than two teams and/or the meet starts after 7:00 PM.
- These routines must follow all the following rules:
 - Be designated at the start of the event.
 - Once the event starts no changes can be made to the designation of the gymnast.
 - The routines must be the first ones on the event.
 - The judge must be notified at the start of the event that there is a JV competitor or two going first.
 - Their scores cannot be used for the team score at that meet.
 - Their scores cannot be used as qualifying scores for varsity qualifications (MIAA Sectional Meet)

Proposal:

71.1.8 ~~Exhibition~~ **JV** performances are allowed **at a varsity meet** with the following conditions:

- Each team is allowed to have up to two Junior Varsity routines per event.
- ~~Consideration should be made for the number of JV routines when there are more than two teams and/or the meet starts after 7:00 PM.~~ **If a meet starts after 8:00 PM, no JV routines will be accepted.**
- These routines must follow all the following rules:
 - Be designated at the start of the event.

- Once the event starts no changes can be made to the designation of the gymnast.
- The routines must be the first ones on the event.
- The judge must be notified at the start of the event that there is a JV competitor or two going first.
- Their scores cannot be used for the team score at that meet.
- Their scores cannot be used as qualifying scores for varsity qualifications (MIAA Sectional Meet)

Rationale:

Over the years, gymnastics meets have been trending to later start times, leading to student athletes and officials arriving home very late. In the interest of safety of junior operators and officials, the MIAA Gymnastics Committee unanimously supported this minor change to not allow JV routines if a meet begins after 8pm.

22. Page 67

Part V, Rule 74: Lacrosse

By: MIAA Lacrosse Committee

Current Rule:

74.6 In Boys lacrosse if a team is leading by 12 goals at the end of the third quarter - the fourth quarter will have running time. There will be no resumption of stop time once this rule is started.

Proposal:

Remove rule from the MIAA Handbook

Rationale:

Remove rule from the MIAA Handbook which will then allow use of NFHS Rule 3 Section 1 Art. 2 for clarity and consistency. Rule 74.6 is not as clear or detailed as the current NFHS running time boys' lacrosse rule. Officials have been confused about proper application with the MIAA rule vs. NFHS rule.

NFHS Rule 3 Section 1 Art. 2:

ART. 2 . . . After the first half, any time the score differential reaches 12 goals or more, starting with the whistle resuming play, the clock will only be stopped for a team time-out, official's time-out or an injury time-out. All penalties that occur during a score differential situation will be running time. In this situation, running penalty time begins with the next whistle resuming play.

23. Page 73

Part V, Rule 81: Tennis

By: Richard Pearson, MIAA Associate Director and Tennis Committee Liaison

Current Rule:

81.1.1 All matches are to be decided on the basis of best two out of three sets with a 7-point tiebreaker when a set reaches 6-6 in games. (Local conditions may cause an adjustment of this rule by prior mutual consent).

Proposal:

Strikethrough one sentence and replace with new language

81.1.1 All matches are to be decided on the basis of best two out of three sets with a 7-point tiebreaker when a set reaches 6-6 in games. ~~(Local conditions may cause an adjustment of this rule by prior mutual consent).~~

Other Match/Set Resolutions:

- a) If the team match has been decided (i.e. - one of the teams has already won three of the five team matches) and an individual match is still in progress, in the event of split sets, there will be a three (3) minute break followed by a first-to-ten-by-two match tiebreaker. Players are not allowed to leave the court prior to the tiebreaker.
- b) If available daylight or other local conditions necessitate alternative match scoring, such as the need to play a double header, AND with prior mutual consent of both teams, a team tennis match could use Pro Set (8-Game) scoring for all matches. Pro Set scoring cannot be used for tournament play. Pro Set scoring can be found in the USTA "Friend at Court" Part 3 Reg. I.E.4.

Rationale:

Rule 81.1.1 is used frequently, during the regular season, when unique circumstances arise. The first portion of this addition includes language from the Tennis Format that has been used extensively in the regular season ("one of the teams has already won ... first-to-ten-by-two ...") but never listed in the MIAA Handbook as a rule option for match scoring. This clearly inserts this approach as an option for the regular season. The additional submission of Pro Set is also a common use in the regular season. It is especially necessary given possible weather challenges and late season makeup matches. Given a new power ranked formula for Team Tennis, it is proposed here in this rule change to clarify the only possibilities for match structure. The previous "local conditions" is too vague even though most of the time, almost all of the time, only these two structures were used but not detailed in the rule. The Pro Set instructions are clearly documented in the USTA rules manual, Friend at Court.

24. Page 78

Part V, Rule 84: Wrestling

By: MIAA Wrestling Committee

Current Rule:

84.2.4 A double dual, triangular, quadrangular or tournament meet must be scheduled on a day preceding a non-school day, i.e., Friday, Saturday, the day before a vacation or holiday, or during school vacation periods.

Proposal:

Remove 'double dual, triangular and quadrangular' from rule 84.2.4.

The updated rule would read, *"A tournament meet must be scheduled on a day preceding a non-school day, i.e., Friday, Saturday, the day before a vacation or holiday, or during school vacation periods."*

Rationale:

Leave it in the hands of the school Athletic Director to determine if they want to schedule a double dual, tri-meet or quad on a school night. This rule negatively impacts the smaller schools/teams that could easily host a tri-meet that would take less time than a regular dual meet due to forfeited weight classes/smaller team sizes.

25. Page 79

Part V, Rule 84: Wrestling

By: Lindsey von Holtz, Director of Athletics, Mount Greylock Regional High School

Current Rule:

84.4.3 An MIAA Minimum Weight Control Certificate will be issued to each wrestler at the beginning of the season. This Certificate will contain a statement showing the wrestler's certified minimum weight class. This Certificate must be filled out in ink and signed in ink by the wrestler, the wrestler's parent or guardian, the wrestler's coach, and a duly registered Licensed Physician, Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner or Licensed Athletic Trainer. It must be on file in the athletic director's office, electronically submitted in MIAA Members Only & on FLO Arena prior to the wrestler's first interscholastic competition of that season.

Proposal:

Add: "Certified School Nurse" to allowable certification signatures in Rule 84.4.3

An MIAA Minimum Weight Control Certificate will be issued to each wrestler at the beginning of the season. This Certificate will contain a statement showing the wrestler's certified minimum weight class. This Certificate must be filled out in ink and signed in ink by the wrestler, the wrestler's parent or guardian, the wrestler's coach, and a duly registered Licensed Physician, Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, **Certified School Nurse** or Licensed Athletic Trainer.

Rationale:

The rationale for the medical signature on these forms is to ensure students are safe and ensure students are not being encouraged to lose too much weight. Small schools without trainers are often forced to involve local pediatricians who may not know the student or any medical or disordered eating condition that the student may have. Decisions are made purely on mathematical calculations and without necessary information about a student. School nurses in Massachusetts are required to be a registered nurse and to hold a professional license. In addition, they know our students well and can easily determine a safe weight class for a student to wrestle. They can use the mathematical calculation but can also use their own judgement based on knowledge of the student.

----- END OF SPORT SPECIFIC ONLY RULE PROPOSALS -----

26. Page 96

Part VII, Rule 88: Procedure for Requesting a Rule Change

By: Bob Rodgers, Athletic Director, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Current Rule:

88.2 Rule change proposals will be voted on by each group listed below with vote and recommendations due to the MIAA by listed date. Copies of the proposals will be listed on the MIAA website by September 1, 2024 and will be updated with votes as they are submitted.

88.2.1 MIAA Sport Committees and MIAA Administrative Committees. Votes are due to the MIAA by November 1, 2024.

88.2.2 The MIAA District Athletic Committees and The Massachusetts Secondary School Athletic Directors Association votes are due to the MIAA by December 1, 2024. The DAC and MSSADA should not act until they have the packet that includes all earlier votes by sport and administrative committees.

88.2.3 The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Council will act on proposals by January 1, 2025.

88.2.4 The MIAA Board of Directors will act upon all proposals by February 1, 2025 and their decision(s) are final.

Proposal:

All rule changes will be decided by the full membership. After the rules have been submitted and advisory votes taken by the various committees, an electronic ballot will be created and submitted to each school's principal. Any rule which receives 60% in either direction will be considered adopted/rejected as voted. However, if a proposal fails to gain that threshold, the matter will advance to the MIAA annual meeting for discussion and a binding vote with majority deciding the outcome.

Rationale:

If we say "We Are the MIAA" then member schools should have a more meaningful say in the rules that govern the organization. Over the years, the MIAA Annual Meeting has been less meaningful with very little substance and this will attract more members to attend. The rules that do not gain 60% in one direction or the other would benefit from some dialogue from both sides before we vote.

OFFICIAL RULES CHANGE BALLOT

Date of Vote: _____

Name of Reviewing Body: _____

Rule #	Yes	No	Abstentions
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____	_____
21.	_____	_____	_____
22.	_____	_____	_____
23.	_____	_____	_____
24.	_____	_____	_____
25.	_____	_____	_____
26.	_____	_____	_____

COMPLETED BALLOT & AMENDMENTS ARE TO BE RETURNED TO PHIL NAPOLITANO @ 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 PHIL NAPOLITANO @ THE MIAA