



**MSAHA 2024-25  
RULEBOOK**

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# 1 Association Membership

Membership in the Mid-South Association of Homeschool Athletics is open to non-profit competitive homeschool athletic teams or organizations that concur with the MSAHA Vision and Mission statements, and that agree to abide by all the rules defined below. Membership in the organization is maintained by the executive director of the MSAHA who will publish the list of teams and organizations who have registered with MSAHA and are in good standing on the MSAHA website.

## 1.1 New Applications for Membership

Applications may be emailed to [info@msaha.org](mailto:info@msaha.org) or mailed to MSAHA at the address found on the website ([www.msaha.org](http://www.msaha.org)). Applications are due the earlier of October 1st or 30-days prior to the first MSAHA competitive event scheduled for any sport in which the submitting organization participates.

- a) New applicants must submit the following information to the MSAHA Executive Director.
  - i. Completed prospective member questionnaire
  - ii. Completed application form  
New applicants must complete the following four sections of the application  
SECTION I – Organization Name, Insurance Provider and Policy #  
SECTION II – Information for all sports offered (including sports not sanctioned by MSAHA)  
SECTION III – Certification that background checks have been performed  
SECTION IV – Signature by the athletic director or coach who will be the team point of contact
  - iii. A copy of any organization bylaws, governance or clarifying information such that the MSAHA can confirm compliance with the requirements for membership.
- b) The MSAHA welcomes new applicants in underserved areas, but the MSAHA also seeks to preserve our existing teams. Therefore, generally new applicants won't be accepted from within the same county or within a 50-mile radius of any existing MSAHA member unless the existing member gives their approval. The MSAHA reserves the right to make exceptions and approve or deny any new applicants at its discretion based on how the applicant furthers the goals of the MSAHA.

## 1.2 Annual Re-registration of All MSAHA Members

- a) Prior to October 1st, each member must submit an updated registration form, dues, and any changes in bylaws, governance, organization, or operation that might affect their status as a member to the MSAHA Executive Director.
- b) Any member organization whose annual registration is completed after October 1st will be subject to the following penalties:
  - i. Annual registrations completed after November 1st will incur a \$30 late fee.
  - ii. Annual registrations completed after December 1st will disqualify the MSAHA member from participating in any MSAHA championship events for the remainder of the current school year.

# 2 Definition of Homeschooling

## 2.1 Definition

MSAHA purposes to serve homeschooling athletes. As such, the definition of homeschooling shall be as follows. "Homeschooling" is defined to mean that a student's education is parent-directed. As such, the

parents shall be involved in their child's education by assuming the role of principal or headmaster, thereby (1) setting the date and requirements for high school graduation; (2) selecting and approving course materials and study schedules; and (3) selecting tutors, teachers, co-op's, correspondence courses, videos, computer courses and similar resources for their child's education. It is understood that students may have the opportunity to take dual-credit college courses, particularly in their junior or senior years. This organization encourages such enrollment by homeschool students and the definition above shall not be construed to mean that such students are not homeschooled if the participating college admitted the homeschool student as a high school student. However, the student must maintain at least 51% of his/her education from classes that meet the homeschooling definition.

"Homeschooling" shall include a person who has been granted legal responsibility of the student filling the role of a parent. "Homeschooling" does not recognize or include students who are enrolled in a traditional public or private school and who are completing their course work remotely from home.

## 2.2 Role of Outside Organizations

### a) Private and Public Schools

- i. Full-time enrollment in a traditional public or private school is not homeschooling because the child's education in such schools is not parent-directed. A player that attends any type of school full-time is not eligible. Even if the school is small and does not offer sports, for part-time students at these types of schools, the student must maintain at least 51% of his/her education from classes that meet the homeschooling definition found in Section 2.1.

### b) Cottage Schools

- i. Cottage schools are known by a variety of names, including but not limited to cottage, cooperative, cover, and umbrella schools and are collectively known herein as cottage schools. They are defined as a group of like-minded families who meet to educate their children at a central location and are always characterized by significant and direct parental involvement. These schools, regardless of name, simply represent different forms of homeschooling.
- ii. Homeschool students attending cottage schools are eligible to compete on a local MSAHA team if their cottage school:
  - 1) Meets for classes no more than three days per week, and;
  - 2) Has no sports program.
    - Students at cottage schools with limited sports programs may petition the MSAHA board for permission to play sports not offered by the cottage school on a local MSAHA team.
- iii. Homeschool teams from cottage schools are eligible to apply for MSAHA membership if their cottage school:
  - 1) Meets for classes no more than three days per week;
  - 2) Has a 6th through 12th grade enrollment of no more than 84 students, and;
  - 3) There is no local existing MSAHA team. If a local MSAHA exists, the MSAHA board will consider membership exception requests if:
    - Participation is limited to students enrolled in the cottage school;
    - The cottage school offers a sport the MSAHA member does not offer, or;
    - The cottage school application has the approval of the local MSAHA team.

## 2.3 51% Rule

For clarification purposes, a normal course load for a full-time student is six (6) core courses; therefore, if a student-athlete is taking more than three (3) courses at a public, private, vocational, or college institution, he/she is not considered 51% homeschooled. If there are special circumstances, a student may apply for a hardship exemption.

## 2.4 Dual Credit / Enrollment Clause

Freshman, Sophomore, & Junior Homeschool Student-Athletes that are taking advantage of Dual Credit/Enrollment Programs are required to take a minimum of three (3) High School Courses per semester. Senior Homeschool Student-Athletes that are taking advantage of Dual Credit/Enrollment Programs are required to take a minimum of two (2) High School Courses per semester. High School Courses can be electives (like Physical Education, etc.) High School Courses can be taken through Co-Ops or any other eligible parent directed definition

# 3 Rules of Eligibility

## 3.1 Team and Organization Eligibility

Teams and their sponsoring organizations are eligible to participate in the activities of the MSAHA if they:

- a) Have made application as a member of MSAHA or have been invited to an activity and approved by the MSAHA Board as a team and organization that meets the following conditions:
  - i. Conducts itself in manner consistent with the Purpose of the MSAHA;
  - ii. Conducts itself in a manner consistent with the Rules of Conduct of the MSAHA;
  - iii. Are not a member of any other school sports league, conference, or association, and;
  - iv. Is as an organization that provides a service to homeschooled athletes in their local geographic area within the guidelines and rules for homeschooling as defined in Section 2;
- b) Represent that each player is a homeschooling student as defined in Section 2;
- c) Represent that each player is a high school, junior high, middle school or elementary student as declared by the parents and coach;
- d) Submit a Team Roster per gender to the MSAHA executive director. Roster to include:
  - i. player names
  - ii. player eligibility age as determined by Section 3.3.c)
  - iii. declared athletic level, beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade through their Senior year
  - iv. academic and MSAHA eligibility per Section 3.3
  - v. primary team designation as applicable per Section 6.2
  - vi. number, if applicable
- e) Agree to abide by the Rules of the MSAHA

## 3.2 Rules Governing Team Roster

- a) Each team shall submit to MSAHA, prior to any interscholastic competition in that sport, a Team Roster consisting of players who are eligible according to Section 3.3 herein. No players will be eligible to participate in MSAHA governed sports whose names are not submitted on this roster.
- b) Team Rosters shall be submitted and amended prior to the deadlines established for each sport. After this deadline, Team Rosters may not be amended other than by a hardship request made to and approved by the sports committee.

- c) At the start of league games, matches, meets, or tournaments the Coach for each team shall certify to the event director that only players listed on the Team Roster will participate in the event. Only players who are shown on the Team Roster may be on the bench during the event.
- d) Tournament player awards or other merits of distinction will be made only to players on the Team Roster.

### 3.3 Individual Player Eligibility Rules

Player Eligibility rules herein follow generally accepted rules established by public and private school associations, and to some extent NCAA rules, particularly with respect to athletic grade designations, years of eligibility and transfer rules. These rules have been adopted by MSAHA for the purpose of establishing credibility with other associations, both public and private, and their teams so as to enhance the opportunities homeschool teams may have to play these teams. It is the belief of the Board that rules which could be construed to mean that MSAHA teams have undue advantage (for instance, when a player who is designated as a senior appears as a player for a second year) are detrimental to MSAHA's efforts to further the opportunities of homeschool students to play competitive sports and to be recognized by scouts, colleges and universities for their skill and achievement. Therefore, players are eligible to participate in activities of the MSAHA if they:

- a) Are homeschool students under the definition of homeschooling in Section 2;
- b) Live at home with their legal guardian;
- c) Are less than 19 years old on the date of August 1 of that sports year prior to the first MSAHA contest for 18U or Varsity sports; i.e., a player may turn 19 on August 2, and still be eligible for 18u competition, but may not be 19 on August 1st. Rules shall be applied in like manner for all other program levels. This rule may be amended for an individual sport by the Sport Committee if necessary to facilitate that sport's cooperation with other local or national associations. See Section 7 for amendments.
- d) Have competed no more than 4 years in high school athletics after entering the 9th grade. This means that a student is eligible for four (4) consecutive years upon entering the 9th grade, regardless of when they began to participate. That is, a freshman will have four years of eligibility; a sophomore, three years; a junior, two years; and a senior, one year. Once a player declares his athletic grade level for 9th grade or above, that player may not subsequently change his declaration for the purpose of playing an additional year even if that player played four years or less at the end of his senior year, nor shall that player be allowed to repeat any grade level even if after repeating a level that player will have played 5 years or less;
- e) Have not been expelled from a public or private school during the academic school year of the contest.
- f) Meet the following academic requirements:
  - i. The athlete is in good academic standing and under the direction of his parents is taking at least four (4) major academic subjects.
  - ii. The athlete accumulated four (4) major academic subjects the previous academic year and may include courses taken in summer school which shall be considered as an extension of the school year. This establishes academic eligibility for the entire year.
  - iii. An athlete who failed to accumulate four (4) major academic subjects the previous academic year is ineligible for the fall semester but may establish eligibility for the

spring semester by passing four (4) major academic subjects during the first semester of that same academic year.

- g) Are in good standing with respect to character and behavior according to the player's parents, coaches, other team leaders, and according to criminal laws applicable to their place of residence.
- h) Are on the Team Roster as timely submitted by their team to MSAHA.
- i) Are rostered on their Team Roster according to their biological gender.
- j) Complete a Registration Form signed by the parents and the coach of the team, and provide upon request the following documents to the organization athletic director or team coach prior to any interscholastic competition in that sport:
  - i. Registration Form, to include athletic grade level and eligibility age
  - ii. Legal proof of birth
  - iii. Current Medical Examination Form (not more than 365 days old)
  - iv. Completed and properly signed Parental Permission Form (not more than 365 days old)
- k) Have not participated on another MSAHA homeschool team during the academic school year of the contest or in the year prior unless:
  - i. A team fails to submit its roster or the coach is not certain that the team will be able to timely submit a roster to participate in MSAHA events. In such case a player must notify the MSAHA Sport Committee, who shall confirm the circumstances, but may try out with another team and transfer pending MSAHA approval);
  - ii. A change of residence has been made by the player's family and another team is closer;
  - iii. A new team has been created consisting of a new sponsoring organization, name, coaches and team roster. In such case, players from any team are free to transfer to the new team until the first Team Roster is submitted to MSAHA the year the team participates in its first MSAHA event; or
  - iv. A player notifies the MSAHA executive director and sport committee chair in writing 60 days prior to the first conference contest of his desire to transfer programs. The MSAHA will consider the request, attempt to gain consent from both teams and organizations involved, and through due process, return an answer within 30 days.
- l) Are not a high school graduate.
- m) Have not have participated in athletics above the high school level. This does not mean that a student cannot attend sports camps that are held on college campuses and often instructed by college coaches and/or professional players and coaches.
- n) Have standing as an amateur. For a student-athlete to lose his amateur standing, he must enter competition for a money guarantee or share of gate receipts, accept a purse of money, teach or coach an athletic sport for money, accept excessive travel expenses or in excess of actual expenses, sign a contract to play professional athletics, or compete under a false name.

### 3.4 Eligibility Decisions

Questions or issues concerning individual player or team eligibility, requests for exceptions to the eligibility rules or for rulings thereof, should be submitted to the MSAHA sport committee chairman. The Sport Committee shall review the matter and, knowing that teams must make plans, render a decision in writing and in a timely manner to the requesting party. If an agreeable decision cannot be reached by the Sport Committee, an appeal may be made through the committee chairman to the MSAHA board. All decisions made by the MSAHA board shall be final. Though exceptions to eligibility rules will be



unusual, MSAHA reserves the right to make such exceptions if it deems, in its sole discretion, that doing so is beneficial or necessary for the advancement of the purposes or tournaments of the MSAHA and that, by doing so, MSAHA believes no undue advantage or disadvantage will be bestowed on any one particular team.

### 3.5 Comments to the Board

Questions or requests regarding game rules, tournament rules, or MSAHA rules shall be privately and respectfully submitted to the sport committee chairman, MSAHA executive director, or members of the MSAHA Board. MSAHA shall carefully consider each such communication and shall attempt to give a response in a timely manner to the extent reasonably possible. The Board shall make no commitment to respond to comments that are not made privately according to this section.

## 4 Rules of Conduct

It is the purpose of this organization to teach the athletic skills needed to participate competitively in sports, but more importantly, it is the purpose of MSAHA to teach by example and word Christ-honoring precepts and values. Therefore, the following Rules of Conduct shall take precedent over certain rights that coaches and other individuals may believe they have under the "Rules of Sports". Each MSAHA participant shall submit to the following basic principles and prohibitions during the conduct of all team and MSAHA activities. 'Participants' shall mean players, parents, coaches, MSAHA staff and leaders, and MSAHA directors. Those who refuse to submit to these rules shall be subject to discipline under Section 6 of these rules.

### 4.1 Respect for Authority and Good Sportsmanship

- a) Coaches, players and all other participants and spectators shall respect the authority and decisions of the game officials and MSAHA leaders. A pattern of disrespect to authorities, either by speech, demeanor or gesture, will be a discipline issue. Ejection of a player, coach, or spectator by an umpire shall be a serious discipline issue.
- b) Coaches and players shall at all times conduct themselves according to the principles of good sportsmanship. A pattern of unsportsmanlike conduct, either by coaches or players, shall be considered a violation of rules and is subject to discipline under Section 6 of these Rules. It is hoped that coaches and players will demonstrate exemplary sportsmanship by refraining, for example, from taunting opposing players. They will instead, for example, offer congratulatory comments or handshakes to opposing players for outstanding plays. Good sportsmanship is a term commonly understood; however, MSAHA coaches and players will be held to a higher standard of good sportsmanship. Both umpires and MSAHA officials have the authority to make judgments concerning the MSAHA standards of conduct and infractions thereof.
- c) Close calls by umpires may invoke 'oohs and aahs' from spectators, and frequently spectators and participants give encouraging remarks to players when there is disagreement with an official's call (e.g., saying 'good pitch' to the pitcher after a called ball). Comments become disrespectful, however, when attention is drawn to an umpire with reactions like 'c'mon blue', 'explaining' to him/her why the call may have been wrong, or 'staring him/her down'. MSAHA recognizes that this behavior detracts from the 'spirit of sportsmanship', the focus of athletic endeavor, and (most importantly) the honor of God. MSAHA encourages coaches, players and parents to take appropriate steps to quickly deal with these remarks, whether they come from the dugout or the stands. Serious offenses will require discipline under Section 6 of these Rules.

Teach by example the precept to 'obey your leaders and submit to them' (Heb 13:17) and 'to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed' (Titus 3:1).

#### 4.2 Protesting Calls

- a) All protests shall be settled at the time of the protest and prior to resumption of play. Any protest not lodged prior to resumption of play shall be deemed waived. Any protest of the final play of the game must be made before all officials have left the game.
- b) A protest may be made only for a misinterpretation of rules; protests of judgment calls shall not be permitted.
- c) A protest shall first be addressed directly and respectfully to the official making the protested call who shall make the Initial Ruling.
- d) The Head Coach may appeal the Initial Ruling to any other officials, who shall make a second and Final Ruling.
- e) A Final Ruling shall be final and non-appealable.
- f) All Final Rulings shall be respected and followed without further public display of disagreement. This is a matter of respect for authority. A coach, player or parent who makes a public display of disagreement with a Final Ruling shall be considered a violation of the Rules of Conduct and subject to Section 8.3 of these Rules.

#### 4.3 Anger, Speech, and Demeanor

Coaches, players, other participants, and parents shall at all times control their spirit and demeanor, be slow to anger, and be respectful in speech. A pattern of anger, outbursts, dissension or derogatory statements shall be a discipline issue. Using words or gestures that demean any participant (including taunting, talking-down, or related actions and attitudes), using words that demean any participant, or any swearing or cursing will be a discipline issue.

Be 'slow to speak, slow to anger' (James 1:19); letting 'no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear' (Eph 4:29); and let your 'speech always be with grace' (Col 4:6), 'allowing no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks' (Eph 5:4). By example, be 'sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us' (Titus 2:8). 'Encourage one another' (Heb 3:1) to excel, conducting ourselves 'honorably in all things' (Heb 13:18), and stimulating 'one another to love and good deeds' (Heb 10:24). Remember that growth and maturity is a matter of 'practice' (Heb 5:14), particularly in difficult play situation.

#### 4.4 Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs and other Matters

- a) Consumption of alcohol or tobacco by players before, during, or after any MSAHA game or activity is prohibited;
- b) Reckless driving to and from events is prohibited;
- c) Use of illegal drugs is prohibited;
- d) Careless use, destruction or abuse of property or facilities, or littering of property is prohibited. Each team shall, furthermore, ensure that their respective benches and stands are clean of litter prior to departing. Parents are encouraged to help clean the stands of litter before departing;
- e) Sexually explicit materials, provocative clothes or behavior, or extramarital sexual relationships are prohibited. It is further required that all participants, whether players, family or friends,

wear modest and respectful clothing at all times, suitable for the occasion and as a testimony to the higher Christ-honoring standards of MSAHA;

- f) Jewelry on players must be removed during all practice and games;
- g) All players are expected to be neatly and appropriately dressed at all times as a representative of MSAHA.

#### 4.5 Respect for Decisions of MSAHA and Condition for Participation

- a) The MSAHA Board and its representatives shall make every attempt to make decisions that are favorable to all teams and not favorable to any one individual team or individual player. However, final decisions made by MSAHA concerning tournament formats, schedules, team and player participation, rules for making player awards, and other such issues shall be supported without further dissension.
- b) All teams, coaches, players, other participants and spectators agree to abide by the Rules of the MSAHA as a condition for participating in its activities.
- c) A coach, player or parent who is dissatisfied with a decision of the MSAHA may respectfully approach an MSAHA board member to express his or her disagreement in private and without public display. That board member may elect to involve other board members in the discussion, and if appropriate, bring the disagreement to the entire MSAHA Board for consideration. Once a final decision is made by a majority of the entire MSAHA Board, the decision shall be considered final. All final decisions shall be respected and followed without public display of disagreement. This is a matter of respect for authority. A coach, player or parent who makes a public display of disagreement with a final decision of the MSAHA Board shall be considered in violation of the Rules of Conduct and subject to Section 8.3 of these Rules which may affect that coach's, player's or parent's eligibility for continued participation in MSAHA events.

## 5 Game Rules

### 5.1 Game Rules

Games will be governed, in all matters not specifically addressed by MSAHA rules, by the rules of the National Federation of State High School Associations, Indianapolis, Indiana. Rule books may be ordered from [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

### 5.2 Supplemental Game Rules

MSAHA Sports Committees will evaluate the rules of their individual sport, and submit supplemental rules. The MSAHA Board will adopt official, supplemental rules to the NFHS published rules in cases where such supplemental rules are necessary or favorable to MSAHA purposes.

### 5.3 Exceptions

The MSAHA Board or a Tournament Director may publish exceptions to the Rules for each tournament depending upon the requirements of the tournament.

### 5.4 Game Officials

All MSAHA conferences games must be officiated by a certified high school referee, umpire or other official as appropriate. Referees must be appropriately trained, have sufficient experience, and must be certified by a high school association such as MHSAA or MAIS.

## 6 Team Rules

### 6.1 Team Age Restrictions

When competing with other MSAHA organizations, member organizations may field teams at appropriate levels for that sport as determined by the sport committee. The sport committee will describe the age divisions in their sport specific rules.

### 6.2 Primary Team Designation

This section is reserved. See sport specific rules for applicability.

## 7 Sport Specific and Supplemental Rules

### 7.1 Basketball Rules (adopted 31 July 2021)

#### 7.1.1 Rules Modifying MSAHA Rules

- a) Roster Rules modifying Section 3.2
  - i. Team Rosters must be submitted prior to the first conference game. No players may be added to the roster following this deadline.
  - ii. The deadline to amend primary team designations on the roster shall be December 31st. Roster changes must be emailed to MSAHA executive director and verbally communicated to the opposing team prior to the beginning of game play.
- b) Age Eligibility modifying Section 3.3 c)
  - i. Beginning August 1st, 2023, the deadline for age restrictions for the various MSAHA basketball leagues will be August 1st of the current sports year. Players whose age limit birthday falls on August 1st will be considered eligible to play in that league. Players whose age limit birthday falls on August 2nd will not be considered eligible to play in that league. *For clarification: a player's age eligibility is determined by his/her age on August 1, of the current school year. This means that the deadline is July 31st. For example, a player who is 16 on July 31, with an August 1st birthday who turns 17 is considered eligible to play in the 16-and-under age group at MSAHA events. This rule and clarification are consistent with current published NCHC guidelines and will remain in alignment with NCHC guidelines. If the NCHC votes to change the Age Eligibility Date, all basketball leagues will be notified as soon as possible.*
- c) Age/grade level supplementing Section 3.3 d)
  - i. Beginning with the 2024/2025 Basketball season, the following Age/Athletic Grade Level Chart will be utilized:

Age as of August 1	Athletic Grade
15	9th
16	10th
17	11th
18	12th

- ii. This chart will be the basis for declaring a player's Athletic Grade Level on the team roster in order to be compliant with Rule 3.3 (d). A player's Athletic Grade will be independent from and may differ his/her Academic Grade.
  - iii. This supplemental rule aligns with NCHBC player eligibility guidelines.
  - iv. Additionally, a player who has already participated in a graduation ceremony is no longer eligible for MSAHA basketball regardless of age.
  - v. The MSAHA Basketball player eligibility date aligns with the NCHC player eligibility date which is currently August 1. In the event the NCHC changes player eligibility dates, MSAHA will recognize and comply with whatever new date the NCHC adopts.
- d) Team Age Restrictions modifying Section 6.1
- i. 14U : "Junior High" – Players may play on a 14U team if they are 14 years old or under on September 1st of the school year.
  - ii. 16U : "Junior Varsity" – Players may play on a 16U team if they are 16 years old or under on September 1st of the school year.
  - iii. 18U : "Varsity" – Players may play on a 18U team if they are 18 years old or under on September 1st of the school year.
- e) Primary Team Designation modifying Section 6.2. Players must have a single primary team designation of 14u, 16u or 18u. The following clarify the intent of this rule:
- i. Players may play on multiple age groups within a program. They are permitted to play in any age group for which they qualify.
  - ii. Primary team designations are not intended to limit team play and will likely have no bearing on regular season play as it is highly unlikely that dual rostered players would play concurrent regular season games.
  - iii. The purpose for primary team designations is to ensure participating teams have enough primary players to compete in an age specific event in tournaments. In tournaments, we will look at requests to accommodate dual rostering, however, each player must have a primary team and each team must have enough primary to begin each game in a tournament. In the event a team has concurrent games with multiple age groups playing, primary players must be used first to fulfill game requirements for their primary team. Players may play in a non-primary concurrent game once their requirements for their primary team have been fulfilled. Ultimately each team must be prepared for conflicts that we are unable accommodate.
- f) The "Basketball Quarter Limits Rule" (previously 7.1a) has been suspended and is no longer in effect. Players who are age eligible, meet the roster requirements and are properly rostered on the MSAHA roster may play all quarters or any combination of quarters for that team with no restriction or penalty.

### 7.1.2 Basketball Supplemental Rules

- a) Mercy Rule – Running Clock Rule
- i. A running clock shall be established during any game in which one team obtains a lead of 30 points or more in the second half and should only be stopped for called timeouts, official timeouts or injury. If the clock is to expire while a player is shooting free throws, the clock operator should stop the clock at 5 seconds and restart the clock when the ball is put back into play.
  - ii. The Mercy Rule may be suspended prior to the initiation of game play if:

- a. both coaches agree to suspend the rule before the game begins, and
- b. the suspension is communicated to the game officials before the game begins.

## 7.2 Baseball Rules (adopted 31 July 2021)

### 7.2.1 Rules Modifying MSAHA Rules

- a) Roster Rules modifying Section 3.2
  - i. Team Rosters must be submitted by February 1st.
  - ii. The deadline to amend Team Rosters is April 1st.
- b) Team Age Restrictions modifying Section 6.1
  - i. Varsity (18u) = ages 18 and under
  - ii. Middle School (14u) = ages 14 and under

### 7.2.2 Baseball Supplemental Rules

- a) Official Season Dates
  - i. Official practice begins January 1st.
  - ii. Official season begins February 1st.
- b) End of Season Tournament tentatively scheduled for the second week of May.

### 7.2.3 Supplemental Rules to NFHS, 2020 Rulebook for Baseball

- a) Pitch Count
  - i. 18U Players: 105 maximum pitches per game; 75-105 pitches in a game requires a minimum of 4 days of rest until the player is eligible to pitch in a game.
  - ii. 14U Players: 80 maximum pitches per game; 60-80 pitches in a game requires a minimum of 4 days of rest until the player is eligible to pitch in a game.
  - iii. Players listed on submitted Varsity rosters regardless of age are subject to Varsity level pitch count rules.
  - iv. Conference tournament pitch count rules shall be 120 total pitches for the tournament as well as follow the existing regular season pitch count rules.
  - v. If a pitch count limit is reached during the middle of an at bat, the pitcher may finish the at bat of the current batter in that inning before being removed for any pitch count limit.

- b) Bat Requirements

The MSAHA adopts the NFHA bat standards in entirety and does not have a separate exemption or amendment that allows a deviation to the basic standards which are summarized below. This applies to Varsity games.

- i. Non-wood (Aluminum or Composite):
  - Must contain the certification "BBCOR.050"
  - Drop 3 with a maximum 2 5/8" barrel
  - 36" maximum length
- ii. Wood:
  - Must be a single piece of wood
  - Maximum 2 3/4" barrel
  - 36" maximum length

- iii. For JV games only, players 13 years old and under can use either -3 BBCOR or -5 USSSA approved metal bats. Any player using a -5 bat must be made aware to the opposing coach prior to the game beginning.
- c) Coach Uniform Requirements  
Coaches are not required to wear a team uniform. Coaches are permitted to wear clothing that matches the colors of the team (e.g., sports shirts or pants with team logo).
- d) Courtesy Base Runner  
Courtesy base runner for Catchers and Pitchers may be the last player to record an out if there are no bench players eligible to run for said positions.
- e) Conference Standing Tie Breakers
  - i. In the event of a tie at the end of the year conference standings the rules for tie breaker will be as follows:
    - 1. Results of head to head competition during the season.
    - 2. Run differential between the teams during the season.
- f) Forfeitures
  - i. In the event of a forfeit, the forfeiting team will receive a loss by the score of 0-7.

### 7.3 Cross Country Rules (adopted 23 August 2021)

#### 7.3.1 Rules Modifying MSAHA Rules

- a) Roster Rules modifying Section 3.2
  - i. See Section 7.3.2.a)iii
- b) Team Age Restrictions modifying Section 6.1
  - i. Divisions are broken out by grade level and the grade levels are defined by age on September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.

Cross Country Divisions		
Elementary	Grade 1-5	Ages 6-10
Middle School	Grade 6-8	Ages 11-14
Varsity	Grade 6-12	Ages 12-18

Table 1

#### 7.3.2 Cross Country Supplemental Rules

- a) Important Dates
  - i. First Possible Practice: June 1
  - ii. First Possible Meet: August 1
  - iii. Rosters Due: September 1
  - iv. Championship Meet: Usually the last week of October
- b) Participation
  - i. Sixth graders and above are allowed to participate in cross country at middle school and varsity levels. No student below the sixth grade may participate at either the middle school or varsity level.
  - ii. Number of Participants – At the MSAHA Conference Meet, all runners from a team can be entered. However, only seven (7) finishers per team will count as official runners and of these, only five (5) will count as scorers. The remaining two (2) are 'pushers'. If there is a tie score, the team with the highest finishing sixth place finisher will be awarded the

higher place. The seven official participants do NOT have to be designated and the first seven finishers from a team will become the official participants for scoring purposes.

c) Overall Meet Competition

- i. There will be a 5.0 km (3.1 miles) girls' race and a 5.0 km (3.1 miles) boys' race for varsity at the MSAHA Conference Championship meet. There shall also be an elementary school 2-mile mixed race. In addition, there may also be a 1-mile fun run if warranted. Runners may compete in no more than one (1) race.
- ii. Awards in each race at the MSAHA Conference Championship will consist of medals or shirts for the top finishers of each race and a traveling trophy for the varsity champion of each biological gender that will reside with the winning team until the MSAHA Conference Championship the following year.
- iii. Non-conference homeschool teams may not participate in the conference championship meet without the approval of the MSAHA board.
- iv. Unattached competitors who have not competed that year on any conference team are allowed to compete in an appropriate race at the conference championship provided they are homeschooled and reside in the Mid-South region. Unattached competitors are allowed to receive an award for being a top finisher but will receive no points so that team standings are not affected.

7.3.3 Supplemental Rules to NFHS

All cross-country competition will be governed by the National Federation of High Schools' Cross-Country Rules unless modified by the MSAHA board of directors. The following exceptions and/or points of emphasis have been made by the MSAHA:

- a) Typical Length of Course:
  - i. VARSITY BOYS AND GIRLS – 5.0 km (3.1 miles)
  - ii. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – 2.0 miles

7.4 Track and Field Rules (adopted 23 August 2021)

7.4.1 Rules Modifying MSAHA Rules

- a) Roster Rules modifying Section 3.2
  - i. See Section 7.4.2.a)iii
- b) Team Age Restrictions modifying Section 6.1
  - i. Divisions are broken out by grade level and the grade levels are defined by age on September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.

Cross Country Divisions		
Elementary	Grade 1-5	Ages 6-10
Middle School	Grade 6-8	Ages 11-14
Varsity	Grade 6-12	Ages 11-18

Table 2

7.4.2 Track and Field Supplemental Rules

- a) Important Dates
  - i. First Possible Practice: January 15
  - ii. First Possible Meet: February 14



- iii. Rosters Due: March 1
  - iv. Championship Meet: Usually the last week of April
- b) Participation Rules
- i. No individual, boy or girl, may participate in more than six (6) events in track and field.
  - ii. Sixth (6th) graders are allowed to participate in track at middle school and varsity levels. No student below the sixth (6th) grade may participate at the middle school or varsity level. Middle school athletes must decide each meet whether they will run individual events in the middle school division or in the varsity division. An athlete may not run as a middle school athlete and a varsity athlete for individual events at the same meet. However, a middle school athlete may compete in middle school individual events and varsity relays in the same meet.
  - iii. There will be six (6) divisions at the MSAHA Conference Championship based on biological gender and grade. The age divisions shall be elementary , middle school, and varsity.
  - iv. Entries in the MSAHA Conference Championship - Each team may enter two (2) participants in each individual event at the conference track meet. Each team may have only one (1) entry in each of the relays.
  - v. Changes to a school’s original entries may be made online at <http://ms.milesplit.com> until the registration closes on Milesplit. Additional changes may be made at the discretion of the meet director. Registration for elementary races will be made either by email to the race director or on Milesplit at the race director’s discretion.
  - vi. Non-conference homeschool teams may not participate in the conference championship meet without the approval of the MSAHA board.
  - vii. Unattached competitors who have not competed that year on any conference team are allowed to compete in an appropriate race at the conference championship provided they are homeschooled and reside in the Mid-South region. Unattached competitors are allowed to receive an individual award for being a top finisher but will receive no points so that team standings are not affected.

c) False Starts

In each race, should there be a false start by any of the participants, the false start will be charged to the entire field, and no runners will be disqualified. Should any further false starts occur, the offending party (or parties) shall be disqualified.

d) Scoring

Points to be awarded in track for team events and individual events shall use the following scoring system:

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	6 Points
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	4 Points
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	3 Points
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	2 Points
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	1 Point

*Table 3*

e) Track Events

The running events at the MSAHA Conference Championship meet will be run in the following order:

Track Meet Order of Running Events
MS 3200 Meter Run
300 M Hurdles
4 x 800 M Relay
100 M Dash
4 x 200 M Relay
1600 M Run
4 x 100 M Relay
400 M Dash
100 M (G) / 110 M (B) Hurdles
800 M Run
200 M Dash
Varsity 3200 Meter Run
4 x 400 M Relay

Table 4

Note: The typical order of events listed on Figure 1 (Section 7.4.2.j) is not the typical order of events the MSAHA uses for its track meets

f) Field Events

The following will be the field events with weights of the shot put and discus at the MSAHA Conference Championship:

Girls' Field Events	
Elementary Shot - 6 lb.	Elementary Discus - 1 lb.
MS & HS Shot - 4Kg (8 lb. 13 oz.)	MS & HS Discus - 2 lb. 3.274 oz.
High Jump	Triple Jump
Long Jump	

Table 5

Boys' Field Events	
Elementary Shot - 6 lb.	Elementary Discus - 1 lb.
MS Shot - 4Kg (8 lb. 13 oz.)	MS Discus - 2 lb. 3.274 oz.
Varsity Shot - 12 lbs.	Varsity Discus - 3 lb. 9 oz.
High Jump	Triple Jump
Long Jump	

Table 6

g) MSAHA Field Event Trial Policy

In all meets, participants in the long jump, triple jump, shot put and discus throw will be given three (3) preliminary trials. After that, as time permits, the top six (6) competitors shall be given three (3) additional trials based on their best preliminary trial performance, from worst to best. All determinations will be made by the event field judge.

h) Hurdle Heights

The following hurdle heights will be used for MSAHA competition:

Hurdle Heights	
MS Girls' 100 M	33 inches
Varsity Girls' 100 M	33 inches
MS Boys' 110 M	33 inches
Varsity Boys' 110 M	39 inches
MS Girls' 300 M	30 inches
Varsity Girls' 300 M	30 inches
MS Boys' 300 M	30 inches
Varsity Boys' 300 M	36 inches

Table 7

i) Starting Heights for High Jump

The starting height for each division will be as follows and the bar will be raised in 2" intervals until the field has been reduced to six (6) competitors. At that point the bar will be raised in 1" intervals.

Starting heights for High Jump	
Varsity Boys	4' 6"
Varsity Girls and MS Boys	4' 0"
MS Girls	3' 6"

Table 8

j) Track Layout

The following diagram shows starting and finishing lines, relay baton exchange zones, and hurdle placement. Note: the typical order of events listed on this diagram is not the typical order of events that MSAHA uses for its track meets (see Table 4).



Figure 1

## 7.5 Volleyball Rules (adopted 18 June 2022)

### 7.5.1 Supplemental Rules to NFHS

- a) All volleyball competition will be governed by the National Federation of High Schools' Volleyball Rules unless modified by the MSAHA board of directors. These rules shall govern unless noted below or modified by the MSAHA Board of Directors.
- b) Any discrepancies will be ruled upon by the volleyball board representative and/or MSAHA Director.
- c) No closed fist overhand serving will be allowed due to risk of injury and unfair advantage given to serving team.

### 7.5.2 Roster Rules modifying Section 3.2

- a) Team Rosters must be submitted to the executive director prior to the first conference game.
  - i. Players may play in multiple different age groups within a program.
  - ii. Players may play in any age group they qualify for.
  - iii. Players may only play on one team per age group.
- b) No players may be added to the roster after the first conference game.

### 7.5.3 Age Eligibility

- a) Sixth Grade Participation – A sixth (6th) grader, may participate on the middle school and varsity level in volleyball. Teams that are 6th to 8th grade only, may not enter participants at the varsity level.
- b) No students below the sixth (6th) grade may participate in the middle school or varsity level in volleyball.
- c) A sixth (6th) grader is defined as a student who is at least 11 years of age on August 1st of the current school year.

### 7.5.4 Important Dates

- a) The first possible date for team practice in girls' volleyball is June 1st.
- b) The first possible date for interschool competition in girls' volleyball is August 1st.
- c) The last possible date for interschool competition in girls' volleyball a team's last conference game. After the last conference game, teams may only play in the conference post season tournament and the national homeschool volleyball championship.

### 7.5.5 Game Scheduling Regulations

- a) Teams may schedule games for a maximum of 3 dates per week, but the third date must be a Friday or Saturday.
- b) All MSAHA volleyball teams are encouraged to play annual home-and-home series each year but are not required due to the distance between some of the teams.
- c) If a home-and-home series has been scheduled, a cancellation will count as a forfeiture if the game has already been played at the opposing team's home location.

### 7.5.6 Post Season Tournament

- a) The post season tournament will generally be the second weekend of October each year with all conference teams participating.
- b) Varsity tournament will be a best of five, double elimination tournament.

- c) The middle school (junior varsity) tournament will be a best of three, double elimination tournament.

#### 7.5.7 Uniform Policy

Uniform shorts will be a minimum of a 4-inch inseam for all players.

#### 7.5.8 Admission Fees

Admission fees will be capped at \$5 per person unless the facility being used requires a higher fee.

### 7.6 Softball Rules (adopted 22 August 2024)

#### 7.6.1 Rules Modifying MSAHA Rules

- a) Roster Rules modifying Section 3.2
  - i. Team Rosters must be submitted by July 15.
  - ii. The deadline to amend Team Rosters is September 1st.
- b) Team Age Restrictions modifying Section 6.1
  - i. Varsity (18u) = ages 18 and under
  - ii. Sixth Grade Participation - A sixth (6th) grader may participate on the jr. high and varsity level in softball.
  - iii. No student below the sixth grade may participate at the jr. high or varsity level in athletics.

#### 7.6.2 Softball Supplemental Rules

- a) Important Dates
- b) First possible practice date is June 1st.
- c) The first possible date for interschool competition is the last Friday in July.
- d) Rosters are due: ?
- e) The Championship Tournament is tentatively scheduled for the fourth week of September/first week of October.

#### 7.6.3 Supplemental Rules to NFHS, 2022 Rulebook for Softball

- a) Coach Uniform Requirements: Coaches are not required to wear a team uniform. Coaches are permitted to wear clothing that matches the colors of the team (e.g., sports shirts or pants with team logo).
- b) Courtesy Base Runner: Courtesy base runner for Catchers and Pitchers may be the last player to record an out if there are no bench players eligible to run for said positions.
- c) Number of Innings Constituting a Game: Unless there is a mutual agreement by both head coaches to do otherwise, seven (7) innings shall constitute a game, but when the score is tied at the end of the 7th inning, additional innings shall be played MSAHA Softball to break the tie. If extra innings are needed to determine the winner of any MSAHA softball game, each team will start the extra inning(s) with the player who completed the last official at bat, as a base runner on second base. Each subsequent inning will start the same way until a winner has been determined.
- d) Forfeiture: In the event of a forfeit, the forfeiting team will receive a loss by the score of 0-7.
- e) Conference Standing Tie Breakers

- i. Teams will designate 2 games as conference games at the time of scheduling. If teams are scheduled to play more than twice, they shall designate 2 as conference.
- ii. In the event of a tie at the end of the year conference standings the rules for tie breaker will be as follows:
  - 1. Results of head-to-head competition during the season.
  - 2. Run differential between teams during the season

## 8 Violations and Discipline

### 8.1 Scriptural Guidance

- a) Discipline due to a violation of rules established by the MSAHA shall be addressed in accordance with our Lord's guidance in Matthew 18:15-17: "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed".
- b) Every attempt will be made by the MSAHA to fairly and impartially judge the merits of each issue such that decisions can be made and enforcement carried out in a way that (a) considers the circumstances from the perspective of all parties, (b) honors teams and individuals, coaches and umpires, and (c) preserves the integrity of our testimony, knowing that we (players, coaches, spectators, and coaches) all sin and "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

### 8.2 Responsibilities of Coaches, Players, other Participants and Spectators

MSAHA encourages coaches, players and parents to take appropriate steps to deal with issues of conduct in the dugouts, on the fields, and in the stands, in a gentle manner, and in accordance with Scripture and these Rules.

### 8.3 Violations of the Rules of Conduct and Responsibility of the MSAHA

- a) MSAHA has a special responsibility to monitor violations by participants and spectators. The MSAHA Board Members are responsible for exercising this authority and enforcing the Rules of MSAHA.
- b) Umpires and Tournament Directors shall have the authority to eject coaches, players, parents, or spectators as required during the game. A refusal to leave by the ejected person shall result in forfeiture of the game by the affected team.
- c) Violation of Rules may result in disciplinary actions such as player suspension, coach ejection (one or multiple games), game forfeiture, or, in the case of a serious offense, suspension from all MSAHA activities. All teams, by participating in sports governed by the MSAHA, agree to and consent to abide by the Rules contained herein.
- d) The Tournament Director, upon recognizing a possible violation of the Rules that remains unsettled may before play resumes meet to discuss the possible violation with the game officials and coaches and shall make a decision that is consistent with the Rules of MSAHA. Tournament Directors whose own teams, coaches, players, parents, or other participants are affected, may participate to mediate a resolution but shall disqualify themselves from making disciplinary decisions. In such case a MSAHA Board Member shall mediate. Violations which are not play specific may be discussed at the end of the game or later at the discretion of the Tournament Director or Board Members and a disciplinary decision made accordingly.

- e) Less serious violations shall be met with a discussion and a warning. Ejections are considered serious violations and are discussed in Sections (f) and (g) hereinafter. Other serious violations or continual violations and continual warnings either during a single game, or from game to game, may be met with (a) suspension of a player, coach or other leader for any or all remaining games or (b) forfeiture of games by the affected team. A pattern of violations from year to year may be met with a suspension of a player's, coach's or leader's participation or suspension of a team's participation in future MSAHA activities.
- f) An ejection of a player is considered a serious violation, though it is recognized that umpires are human and sometimes "over react" to an unintentional situation. Nevertheless, to maintain the high standards of character to which MSAHA aspires, any player who is ejected from a game, regardless of the reason, shall also be suspended for the following game.
- g) Any coach who is ejected from a game, regardless of the reason, shall also be suspended for the following game.
- h) The appropriate response to a violation, if a matter of character as demonstrated by a player or coach, shall be an attempt to apologize to the affected parties in a respectful and honest manner.