



**media  
information**



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Winter Sports Season Underway – Rules Changes Include Sportsmanship Emphasis & Uniform Regulations**

**EAST LANSING, Mich. – Nov. 26 –** The Winter sports season is already underway for member schools of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, a time of year where over 70,000 young people are expected to take part in sports which will culminate in nine championships.

Bowling in the Upper Peninsula, girls competitive cheer, girls gymnastics, ice hockey and swimming and diving in the Upper Peninsula have already begun competition. This week will see games begin for girls basketball (Nov. 26), wrestling (Nov. 28), and swimming and diving and bowling in the Lower Peninsula (Dec. 1). Competition begins next week for boys basketball (Dec. 3) and skiing (Dec. 8).

Perhaps the most visible rules change for the winter is truly visual – white uniforms must now be worn by the home team in basketball for varsity competition. This National Federation of State High School Associations rule was enacted several years ago to take effect this year, giving schools an opportunity to plan for its implementation. Another major change in basketball is that the interval for replacing a disqualified player has been reduced from 30 seconds to 20 seconds.

But perhaps the most important rule change for the season comes in ice hockey, where the MHSAA Representative Council enacted tougher sportsmanship standards at its May, 2007, meeting. Effective this year, the penalties for player and coach game disqualifications in ice hockey will be at least double that of the minimums listed in the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Book. A game disqualification will now require an individual to sit the next two games after receiving the first game disqualification in a season; four games after receiving a second game disqualification; and the remainder of the season after receiving a third game disqualification. Coaches are already subject to MHSAA rules which prohibit them from coaching in the Association's post-season tournament in their sport after their second ejection in a season for unsportsmanlike behavior; and players are prohibited from post-season tournament play upon their third such disqualification.

In wrestling, a new national rule taking effect this year will allow an offensive wrestler to request a neutral position restart. The defensive wrestler will still receive a point for an escape. The MHSAA Individual Wrestling Tournament will also be unified this year. Previously, individual competition had been conducted on a Peninsula basis. The Lower Peninsula Individual Wrestling Tournament began in 1948, and the Upper Peninsula Tournament started in 1967. The individual format was used to determine a team champion until 1988 in both peninsulas,

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## 2-2-2 – Winter Season Underway

when the Team Dual Wrestling Tournament started. Seventeen of the Association's 29 tournaments are unified competitions.

The 2007-08 Winter campaign culminates with postseason tournaments beginning with the Upper Peninsula Swimming & Diving Finals on Feb. 16, and wraps up with the Boys Basketball Finals on March 15. With the addition of the Girls Basketball Tournament to the Winter, playing dates for both the Boys and Girls schedules have been set so they will not conflict with each other in overlap weeks. Here is a complete list of Winter championship dates:

### **Boys Basketball:**

Districts – Feb. 25, 27 & 29  
Regionals – March 3 & 5  
Quarterfinals – March 11  
Semifinals – March 13 & 14  
Finals – March 15

### **Girls Basketball:**

Districts – Feb. 18, 20 & 22  
Regionals – Feb. 26 & 28  
Quarterfinals – March 4  
Semifinals – March 6 & 7  
Finals – March 8

### **Bowling:**

Regionals – Feb. 22 & 23  
Finals – Feb. 29 & March 1

### **Girls Competitive Cheer:**

Regionals – March 1  
Finals – March 7 & 8

### **Girls Gymnastics:**

Regionals – March 1  
Finals – March 7 & 8

### **Ice Hockey:**

Regionals – Feb. 25 – March 1  
Quarterfinals – March 4 & 5  
Semifinals – March 6 & 7  
Finals – March 8

### **Skiing**

Regionals – Feb. 14 or 15  
Finals – Feb. 25

### **Swimming & Diving:**

U.P. Boys & Girls Finals – Feb. 16  
L.P. Boys Diving Quals – March 4  
L.P. Boys Finals – March 7 & 8

### **Wrestling:**

Team Districts – Feb. 13 or 14  
Individual Districts – Feb. 16  
Team Regionals – Feb. 20  
Individual Regionals – Feb. 23  
Team Finals – Feb. 29-March 1  
Individual Finals – March 6-8

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,800 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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