



2026-2027 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Boys and Girls Soccer Rules and Policies

General Information

See the [MSHSL Handbook Page](http://www.mshsl.org/governance) (www.mshsl.org/governance) for information regarding the following:

- Multiple Level Teams at Sub-Varsity Level
- Official Squad Size
- Substitution in MSHSL Tournaments
- Weather Conditions (heat, cold, lightning & air quality)

See the MSHSL Official Handbook [Bylaw 501](#) for information regarding:

- Maximum Number of Contest Chart

See the MSHSL Official Handbook [Bylaw 502](#) for information regarding:

- Daily and Season Player Participation Limitations

CONTEST RULES

Refer to [Bylaw 402](#): Except as modified by the League, the National Federation of High School Association rules for the current year shall be the official game rules for all interscholastic contests in which League members participate.

END OF SEASON

Refer to [Bylaw 411](#)

- A. Student Participation on a Non-School Team While the Season is Still in Progress:
 1. The season shall end when the student or the student's team has been eliminated from further participation in a League tournament series.
 2. Students who have been eliminated from further participation in a League tournament series may participate as an individual or as a member of a non-school team in that sport.
- B. School Team Practice and Competition: The "end of season" shall be defined to be the last date of the state tournament in that sport.
 1. Schools may continue to conduct practice and training for all squad members, including the students who have been eliminated from further individual competition in a League-sponsored series until completion of the state tournament conducted by the League in that activity.
 2. Dual contests may be scheduled after the start of the official League tournament series providing the school does not exceed the maximum number of games/matches/meets permitted in that activity.
- C. No school may engage in any meet or meets, practice, training or other activities between the end of the season and the opening of the next season.
- D. During the Summer Vacation Period ([Bylaw 208](#) - Non-School Competition and Training - Team and Individual Sports) members of a high school team may participate on a non-school team and they may receive coaching or training from a salaried or non-salaried member of the student's sophomore, B-squad, junior varsity or varsity high school coaching staff in that sport provided the school has approved a summer coaching waiver for the coach or coaches of that sport.

VIDEO RECORDING ANOTHER SCHOOL'S GAME

It shall be an ethical violation to capture on video another school's game, meet or contest without their permission. Further it may be a violation of the laws governing copyrights. Each school owns the copyrights to their games, meets and contests. Recording another school's game without permission could constitute a violation of the copyright law.

Soccer Information – Regular Season

See the MSHSL Official Handbook [Bylaw 514](#) for information regarding:

- Contests
- Equipment Issued
- Last Date to Join a Team
- Practice Sessions before First Contest
- Season Begins

RULE MODIFICATIONS

- A. **Jewelry (Rule 4-3-2a):** A religious medal or other religious items must be taped to the body and worn under the uniform if possible. Note: this is for religious purposes as stated in Rule 4-3-2 and is not meant as an opportunity to tape or cover jewelry worn for adornment.
- B. **Official Scorekeeper (Rule 6-3)**
The official scorer may be located in one of three places:
1. At the halfway line, which is a distance of 10 yards from the start of each bench.
 2. In the press box.
 3. In a position on the end of the team bench closest to the halfway line.
- The host school must inform the official prior to the start of the game as to the location of the official scorer. **Substitutions will report to the halfway line. Entry onto the field of play by a substitute is prohibited until approved by the referee.
- C. **Suspended Games (Rule 7-1-3):**
Regular Season: If less than one-half of the game has been played, the game will be replayed from the point of suspension unless game completion is mutually agreed upon by head coaches in which case the existing score would be final. The host school has the authority to suspend a game for inclement weather.
Postseason: Games that have been suspended before the completion of the first half, or are tied at the point of suspension, shall be replayed from the point of suspension unless game completion is mutually agreed upon by head coaches and tournament manager in which case the existing score would be final.
- D. **Tie Games (Rule 7-3):** Regular season games which end tied after regulation time shall be recorded as a tie.

- E. **Mercy Rule (Rule 7-4):** In the second half, if the goal differential is five goals or more, the clock will only stop for serious injury.
- F. **Policy for Disqualified Players (Rule 12-4)**
1. Any player disqualified from the game for any reason, including a soft Red Card (two yellow cards), shall be disqualified from that game and the next game of that season. Application of the following progressive game disqualification structure applies throughout each season, including playoff games:
 - a. First disqualification - that game plus the next scheduled game.
 - b. Second and all subsequent disqualifications - that game plus the next four scheduled games in that sport.

POLICY FOR LOWER LEVEL DISQUALIFIED PLAYERS

Bylaw 206.4.B.1.a: A student who is ejected from a contest, shall not participate in a contest for the remainder of that day. The student is also suspended from the next scheduled, rescheduled, or contracted contest at that level of competition and all contests in the interim at other levels of competition.

Note: the student is also ineligible in any other fall sports that they participate in until the suspension is served in the sport and at the level they received the ejection. (e.g. a JV Soccer player who is ejected during a Soccer match, who is also the kicker on the JV or Varsity Football team is ineligible to compete in any contests in any program until their suspension for the JV Soccer ejection is served)

UNIFORMS

Players must wear game uniforms (shirts and shorts) and/or school-approved attire when they enter the contest area, including the field of play.

Soccer Uniform Requirements

Soccer Information – Postseason

REGION/SECTION SEEDING CONSISTENCY - Seeding Consistency (www.mshsl.org/sectionseeding)

ELIGIBILITY DURING MSHSL TOURNAMENTS - SUBSECTION, SECTION AND STATE

Refer to **Bylaw 206.4.B.1.d:** A student must be fully eligible under all local school district policies, MSHSL Bylaws and Rules & Policies to be in uniform, occupy the bench or playing area, participate and receive individual/team awards, including all-tournament honors, in the awards ceremony.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN LEAGUE-SPONSORED TOURNAMENTS

Refer to **Bylaw 405:** A member school must schedule a minimum of three interscholastic varsity games, meets or matches to qualify for League-sponsored tournament participation in that sport.

SECTION TOURNAMENTS

All information and directions for Section Soccer Tournaments will come to each school from the Section Soccer Tournament Manager.

STATE TOURNAMENT SCHOOL QUALIFYING INFORMATION

Specific information for qualifying schools is posted on MSHSL Dashboards under State Tournament Resources.

CLASSES

For the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 seasons, the state tournament will be conducted in 3 classes, determined by school enrollment.

Class AAA: Largest 64

Class AA: Next 64

Class A: Remainder

OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT BALL

Select Royale

SEEDING THE STATE TOURNAMENT

The coaches of the teams who qualify for the state tournament will rank the eight section teams to determine the eight seeds (teams do not rank themselves). Teams will be placed in the bracket as follows:

#1 vs. #8

#4 vs. #5

#2 vs. #7

#3 vs. #6

Brackets will be posted to the MSHSL website on Sunday before the start of the state tournament.

SUSPENDED GAMES

Postseason games that have been suspended before the completion of the first half, or are tied at the point of suspension, shall be replayed from the point of suspension unless game completion is mutually agreed upon by head coaches and tournament manager in which case the existing score would be final.

SUBSTITUTION IN LEAGUE TOURNAMENTS

Certification and Substitutions for Team Sports:

After an official squad for a tournament has been certified to the governing committee, substitutions are not permitted except under the following conditions:

1. That a physician indicates that a student listed on the certified roster must not participate.
 - a. This student may be returned to the tournament squad upon certification, in writing, by the physician to the governing committee.
 - b. When such a player is returned to the tournament squad, the player replaces the substitute.
2. That the governing committee determines that a justifiable emergency indicates a need for the withdrawal of a certified player. A justifiable emergency does not include the removal of a student from competition once the determination of ineligibility of the athlete by the school.
 - a. This student may be returned to the tournament squad by action of the governing committee.
 - b. When such a player is returned to the tournament squad, the player replaces the substitute.

OFFICIAL SQUAD

22 Players

2 Student Managers

3 Coaches

Total of **27**

TIE BREAKING PROCEDURE

Section and State Tournaments:

1. Teams remain in the bench area for a five-minute rest period.
2. The choice of ends OR kick-off will be determined by a toss of a coin with the visiting team captain making the call while the coin is in the air.
3. A 20-minute sudden death overtime period will be played. At the start of the period, the clock will be set at 10 minutes. A kickoff shall initiate the play. (Teams will change ends after ten minutes of play. Teams do not go to their bench; coaches do not talk to the captain; play should be continued immediately.)
4. If a tie still exists, each coach selects five players, on or off the field (except those who were disqualified), to take penalty kicks. A coin toss will determine which team shoots first. The referee designates which captain will call the coin toss. The team winning the coin toss has the choice of shooting first or second. The teams alternate kickers with the goalkeeper being any eligible team member. The team scoring on the greater number of kicks shall be the winner.
5. If the score is still tied, each coach will select five additional players and continue with the same procedure; except that beginning with the sixth kick, a winner will be declared if one team scores and the opponent fails to score on a turn. A different player shall take each kick, and not until 10 players of any team have attempted a kick, may a player of the same team have a second kick. When repeating the procedure, a winner will be declared if one team scores and the opponent fails to score.
6. If the score is still tied, follow the procedures in (5) above and repeat until a winner has been determined.
7. There will be no tie-breaker or overtime for third-place games.

AWARDS

Section

- Medals: to all members of the official squad (27) of the first and second place teams.
- Trophies: to the first and second place teams.

State

- Certificates of Participation: to each student member of the official squad.
- Certificates of Recognition: to the head coach and the two assistant coaches of each team.
- Medals: to each member of the official squad (27) including the coaches of the first - third place teams.
- Trophies: to the first - fourth place teams.
- An All-Tournament team will be selected.

Note: It is a violation of MSHSL policy for a member school or a representative of a member school to establish, distribute or accept any awards not provided by the MSHSL for section or state tournament.

MSHSL MINIMAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR REGULAR AND POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT COMPETITIONS

These policies “elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, members schools and their personnel,” consistent with the Minnesota State High School League’s Founding Purposes and the belief that sportsmanship needs to have a constant presence in all school-based activity programs. The League and its member schools work intentionally to create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments for fine arts activities and sports in our schools and competitions.

School officials are responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students, and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held. ([Bylaw 409](#)).

Behavior Expectations

To create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments in fine arts and sports in our school and competitions, I will:

- Lead by positive example and demonstrate respect and support for others.
- Follow all MSHSL, school and venue expectations.
- Refrain from using profanity or ethnic, racial, religious, ability or gender-based comments, posts or messages directed at participants, directors, coaches, officials, spectators, or team representatives.
- Act as a responsible and respectful digital citizen who positively uses social media platforms.
- Speak or act in support of others when they are harmed by words or actions.
- Honor each contest and all involved, including participants, directors, coaches, officials, spectators, and team representatives.
- Hold high standards for myself, engage positively and demonstrate sportsmanship.

Requirements of Attendees

Prohibited Items

- Flags, whiteboards, large signs on sticks, signs with vulgar, obscene or inappropriate language or images, or that obstruct the views of others or similar items
- Balloons, confetti, glitter, baby powder, pom poms or other similar celebratory items
- Artificial noise makers (i.e., megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks and other similar items)
- Drones and laser lights
- Firearms or other weapons
- Vapes, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or illicit drugs
- The following are prohibited at MSHSL postseason events. These may be prohibited as determined by the venue during the regular season:
 - Backpacks and other bags
 - Outside food and drink
 - Professional cameras and tripods
 - Pets

Dress Code/Attire

- Spectators may not wear masks or costumes that limit the ability to identify individuals. Masking for medical purposes is allowed
- Spectators must wear clothing that covers the torso
- Clothing worn must not be vulgar, obscene, or inappropriate

Behaviors

- No one may interfere with the contest in any way
- Only members of the official squad may be on the contest surface
- The use of appropriate language is always expected. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable
- Respect the Flag and the National Anthem

*Venues may have additional requirements and prohibited items.

*For most contests, spectators may bring cameras, including cell phones, that are basic point and shoot, consumer-grade cameras without detachable lenses. The lens may be no longer than two inches. Spectators should confirm restricted items for contests with contest management.