



Executive Director's Update

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

33 Forge Parkway Franklin, MA 02038 | 508-541-7997 | miaa.net

August 21, 2025

An Update from Executive Director Robert Baldwin

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

Save the Dates – Fall Informational Meetings

In our on-going attempt to make our communication more effective and efficient, the MIAA will be conducting a series of fall informational meetings. These meetings will begin at 8:30 a.m. Agendas will be emailed prior to the meeting.

| District(s) | MIAA Liaison | Date | Location |
|-------------|---|---------|---------------|
| 1 | Sherry Bryant | 9-4-25 | Mt. Greylock |
| 2 & 3 | Keith Brouillard | 9-29-25 | Hudson HS |
| 4 & 5 | Peter Smith (4) & Phil Napolitano (5) | 9-18-25 | Tewksbury HS |
| 6 & 7 | Mike Rubin/Steven Dubzinski (6) & Bob Baldwin (7) | 9-11-25 | MIAA Office |
| 8 & 9 | Bob Baldwin (8) & Richard Pearson (9) | 9-16-25 | Middleboro HS |

2025 Schedule Commitment Deadline & Process

With practices and tryouts for Fall 2025 sports now under way, this is a reminder that the MIAA schedule commitment deadline is Friday, September 12. All schedules for **Field Hockey, Football, Fall Golf, Soccer, and Fall Volleyball** must be entered into Arbiter by the end of the day on September 12.

After that point, no changes can be made to your opponents or the number of games/matches that can be played. After the September 12 commitment deadline, all schedules will be considered **FINAL**. Three days before the Schedule Commitment deadline, MIAA staff will produce and publish schedules for each sport based on the available data for review and verification by member schools. Below is the breakdown for 2025-26 school year:

- FALL 2025
 - o First contest date: Sunday, August 31 (Friday, August 22 for Fall Golf)
 - o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, September 9
 - o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, September 12
- WINTER 2025-2026
 - o First contest date: Thursday, December 11
 - o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, December 16
 - o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, December 19
- SPRING 2026
 - o First contest date: Thursday, March 26 (Monday, March 23 for Spring Golf)
 - o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, March 31
 - o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, April 3

Check the [MIAA Sport Limitations Information Sheet](#) for the maximum number of competitions allowed per week and per season in each sport.

In Support of Game Officials

The MIAA acknowledges the persistent and growing shortage of game officials. This shortage is impacting schools and communities in several significant ways:

- Current officials are overburdened, leading to burnout, overuse, and attrition.
- Many contests, particularly at the sub-varsity level, proceed with fewer officials than recommended (e.g., only one official for baseball, softball, or soccer games that typically require two).
- Games are being scheduled on less desirable days and times, affecting practice routines and creating conflicts for student-athletes, coaches, and families.
- Some games, especially at the sub-varsity level, are being postponed or cancelled due to lack of officials.

While the MIAA does not directly oversee the recruitment or training of game officials, we remain committed to supporting our member schools in addressing this ongoing issue. To support our member schools' efforts in this important area, the MIAA is expanding and enhancing its energies with our strategic partner **RefReps**.

Together, we aim to facilitate access to the knowledge and skills needed to serve as game officials—creating a sustainable pipeline of future referees.

How MIAA Will Support Member Schools Using RefReps:

- **Provisional Certification:** Students who complete a RefReps course will be registered with the MIAA as provisionally certified officials. These students may be assigned to work sub-varsity (middle school, freshman, JV, and youth league) games under the guidance of veteran officials.
- **Grant Program for Seat Licenses:** The MIAA will facilitate a grant program offering **200 seat licenses** to MIAA member schools. These licenses will support the launch of school-based officiating training programs.
 - o Grant details and application instructions will be released no later than **August 31, 2025**.
- **Pathways to Employment and Skill Development:** Students trained through RefReps can earn money while officiating, all while developing valuable employability and leadership skills.

We invite all MIAA member schools to explore this opportunity to support student development while helping resolve the officiating shortage in our state. Together, we can build a stronger foundation for the future of high school athletics.

MIAA Tournament Passes

MIAA Tournament Passes will be mailed to the High School Principal beginning the week of August 25th.



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Arbiter Back-to-School Webinars

Arbiter recently hosted a series of Back-to-School webinars, and the recordings are available on the [ArbiterGame Resources](#) page of the MIAA website:

- [Arbiter Game](#): How to Set Up Schedules and Accounts
- [Arbiter Registration](#): Create and Manage Programs, Forms, Eligibility and more
- [Arbiter Pay](#): Setting Up and Using ArbiterPay
- [What's New](#) at Arbiter: New Solutions, New Enhancements, and What's Next (*coming soon*)

MIAA Statewide Tournament Host Fee Update Baseball, Field Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, and Volleyball:

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, the Round of 16 games for Field Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer, and Volleyball, expenses and revenue will remain with the host school. As a reminder, the Round of 16 games for Baseball, Rugby, and Softball were previously being managed under this same policy.

MIAA tickets will be sold beginning with the Round of 8 through the State Finals. The host school will be paid a set tournament hosting fee for each event.

Football, Basketball and Ice Hockey:

MIAA tickets will be sold beginning with the Round of 16 through the State Finals. The host school will be paid a set tournament hosting fee for each event.

For rounds in which the MIAA sells tickets, custodial and police details will be paid separately by MIAA and must be included on the Tournament Host Site Form. This form is required to be submitted by the host school upon completion of the event.

Student Eligibility Waiver Deadlines

As a reminder, below are the seasonal deadlines for student eligibility waiver submissions as outlined in MIAA rule 87.1. These are firm deadlines and late waivers will not be accepted.

- o Fall – September 22, 2025
- o Winter – December 15, 2025
- o Spring – April 1, 2026

Fall 2025 Eligibility Appeals Board Schedule

- August 19
- August 28
- September 9
- September 25

Coop & Middle Level Waiver Applications

Middle Level waivers and Coop Applications cannot be applied for after the Schedule and Commitment Deadline for each season. The final application date for Fall sports is **September 12, 2025**.

Golf

The MIAA golf committee voted last February to adopt and implement a maximum score policy for the postseason beginning this fall. The policy is outlined on page 3 of the Golf Format <https://www.miaa.net/sites/default/files/2025-06/golf-fall-2025.pdf>.

- NEW Maximum Score Policy – Double Par + One Stroke. Par 3's - max score of 7, Par 4's - max score of 9, Par 5's - max score of 11.
- Golfers are not required to play the maximum number of strokes on a hole before picking up. They may pick up at any point during the hole and take the maximum score for that hole.

As for postseason dates, see below:

- Sectionals: Either Tuesday, October 14th or Wednesday, October 15th
- States: Monday, October 20th
- New England's: Sunday October 26 and Monday October 27.

Soccer

There has been much discussion, from both referees and coaches, regarding the "shin guard rule" and expectations of the enforcement of this rule. As with any rule, it is the expectation that we as an Association follow the NFHS rule and support the officials in its enforcement.

The NFHS guidelines regarding shinguards is as follow.

1. Professionally manufactured.
2. Age- and size-appropriate.
3. Worn under socks.
4. Worn with bottom edge no higher than 2 inches above the ankle.
5. Must meet NOCSAE Standards at time of manufacture.
6. NOCSAE seal and height range permanently marked on front of shinguard.
7. May not be altered.

The MIAA Soccer committee believes that high school students wearing "micro-guards" are in violation of the above rule. Shinguards must be a reasonable size and cover more of the shin than a "micro-guard." The MIAA expects that coaches will continue to be responsible for their student athletes wearing reasonably sized shinguards. Game officials are NOT expected to do a shinguard check prior to games but should continue to ask coaches if their student athletes are properly equipped as part of the pre-game process. If a game official observes a player wearing "micro-guards," it should be handled the same as if a player is improperly equipped for other reasons (jewelry, etc.). We thank everyone in advance for their attention to this matter and wish you a successful season.



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"Extra Week" - Fall 2025 Football

Although most fall football schedules are probably completed, please accept this as a reminder of the football "extra week" in the Fall of 2025. Labor Day is early, 9/1/25 and Thanksgiving is late, 11/27/25 (this is the second year in a row of this occurrence). As has been the case in the past, this creates an extra weekend in the qualifying period before the beginning of the state tournament. The extra week is labeled "1A". Schools can schedule a maximum of 8 games in the 9-week period between Labor Day and the cutoff date of Saturday, 11/1/25. More detailed information can be found at this [link](#).

MIAA Sport Committee Liaisons

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Baseball | Keith Brouillard | Jim Clark |
| Basketball | Pete Smith | Steve Dubzinski |
| X County/Track | Keith Brouillard | Peter Smith |
| Field Hockey | Sherry Bryant | Jennifer Treacy |
| Football | Richard Pearson | Keith Brouillard |
| Golf | Phil Napolitano | |
| Gymnastics | Richard Pearson | |
| Ice Hockey | Phil Napolitano | Jim Clark |
| Lacrosse | Richard Pearson | JJ Alberts |
| Rugby | Phil Napolitano | |
| Ski | Steve Dubzinski | |
| Soccer | Steve Dubzinski | JJ Alberts |
| Softball | Sherry Bryant | |
| Swim | Richard Pearson | |
| Tennis | Richard Pearson | |
| Unified Sports | Peter Smith | Steve Dubzinski |
| Volleyball | Sherry Bryant | Jennifer Treacy |
| Wrestling | Phil Napolitano | JJ Albert |

Student and Coach Contest Disqualification Forms

Updated [Student](#) and [Coach](#) Contest Disqualification Forms are available in the "Members Only" and "Officials" sections of the MIAA website. Please share these updated forms with your league assigners and have the forms available at all competition sites. When a student or coach is disqualified from a contest, the respective forms must be completed by the game official and submitted to the athletic director in charge of the contest before leaving the site. For additional information, please reference [MIAA Handbook Rule 49](#).

Student and Coach Contest Disqualification Report (2024-25)

Each year, the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee reviews student and coach contest disqualification data for all MIAA sponsored sports. Please [click here](#) to view the contest disqualification data from the 2024-25 school year. The Sportsmanship Committee continues to monitor the increasing number of disqualifications over the past few years and will be communicating with sport committees as the school year begins.

MIAA Student Advisory Committee

The MIAA Student Advisory Committee held their orientation on August 21, 2025. Twenty (20) student leaders from across the Commonwealth participated in team building exercises and goal setting activities at the MIAA Office and Franklin High School. These students are representing the 200,000 student athletes across the MIAA. [Click here](#) to view the list of 2025-26 MIAA Student Advisory Committee members.

Student Ambassador Information

Registration for the 2025-2026 MIAA Student Ambassador Program is now open! Principals and Athletic Directors can register students by [clicking here](#). More information about the MIAA Student Ambassador Program can be found on the [Student Ambassador Program Page](#).

MIAA Sportsmanship Honor Roll

Each year, the MIAA Sportsmanship Honor Roll is published to recognize schools that did not have any students or coaches disqualified from a contest at any level during that school year. A draft of the 2024-25 MIAA Sportsmanship Honor Roll is now available and can be viewed at [this link](#). To ensure the accuracy of this document, please review the steps below and respond accordingly if necessary.

If your school is included on this list:

Please ensure that your school did not have any student or coach disqualifications at any level during the 2024-2025 school year. If your school did have a disqualification, please email dharrington@miaa.net or call 508-541-9804 **by Friday, September 5th**, so that the final version of the Sportsmanship Honor Roll can be updated and published.

If your school is NOT included on the List:

If your school is not currently on the list and **did not** have any disqualifications at any level during the 2024-2025 school year, please email or call Donna Harrington **by Friday, September 5th**.

MIAA Student Athlete of the Year

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is proud to announce that the Harry Agganis Student-Athlete of the Year Award recipients for 2024-2025 are Ainsley Kearney of West Springfield High School and Lucas Andrade of Brockton High School. Ainsley and Lucas exemplify the true meaning of successful student-athletes as they are great leaders and teammates as well as involved community members. The MIAA continued partnership with the Agganis Foundation promotes student-athletes and celebrate those that best represent the qualities for which the award is named, Harry Agganis. Considered by many to be the greatest athlete to come out of the state of Massachusetts and a native of Lynn, Harry was born on April 20, 1929, to Greek immigrant parents. He later starred in football, basketball, and baseball at Lynn Classical High School. He played college football at Boston University, where he was named an All-American and was



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inducted into the school's Hall of Fame. Although having options to play professional football and baseball, Harry chose to play baseball for the Boston Red Sox, becoming a fan favorite before his tragic death of a pulmonary embolism at the age of 26.

We congratulate Ainsley, who will be attending the University of New England and Lucas, who will be attending the University of Rhode Island.

Team Up 4 Community

The MIAA is excited to partner with Team Up 4 Community to present the 2025-26 MIAA Community Service Challenge. The goal of this program is to promote the positive impact that students at MIAA member schools are making by giving back to their communities. Through an online platform, school administrators, coaches and students can submit information about specific community service projects completed between August 2025 and April 2026 to be considered in this challenge. [Click here](#) for more information.

NATA - National Athletics Trainers Association Survey

ATOM - Athletic Trainers of Massachusetts is part of NATA who is sponsoring a survey of athletic directors across the country to better understand the support and supervision of athletic trainers across the country. This survey is a continuation of the data NATA began collecting in Fall 2023 through a previous secondary school athletic trainer survey. Your insights as an athletic director are vital in helping identify trends and improve advocacy efforts on behalf of ATs across the country.

Please complete the survey by September 15th using the following

link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SSATC_AD

We kindly ask that each athletic director complete the survey only once. Additionally, please feel free to share this link with any colleagues or fellow ADs who may also be able to provide input.

The Fall 2025 Game Officials Newsletter is now available!

Click the link below to access the latest edition, featuring important NFHS rules updates and other valuable information. We extend our sincere gratitude to all our dedicated game officials. Your time, effort, and passion for officiating are essential in providing hundreds of thousands of students with the opportunity to experience the joys and camaraderie of high school sports. Thank you for everything you do!

[Fall 2025 Game Officials Newsletter](#)

Upcoming Events

October 9 – Student Leadership Summit

November 6 – Sportsmanship Summit

December 12 – Becoming a Student of Leadership Workshop

Calendar

August 25 – Spots Medicine Committee (Virtual)

September 10 – MIAA Board of Directors

September 15 – Sportsmanship Committee

September 15 – Swim & Dive Committee

September 17 – Football Committee

September 17 – Golf Committee

September 17 – Soccer Committee

September 24 – Ski Committee

September 24 – TMC

September 24 – Unified Sports Advisory Committee

September 25 – Track Committee

September 26 – Student Advisory Committee

Thanks for your continued support!

Robert Baldwin