



Executive Director's Update

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

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

August 27, 2026

An Update from Executive Director Robert Baldwin

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

NFHS Hall of Fame 2026



Congratulations!! Mary Lou Thimas was honored at the NFHS Summer Meeting on June 29th in Salt Lake City Utah. Mary who for 60 years in Massachusetts has been the guiding light as an official in the girls sports of field hockey and lacrosse.

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The National High School Hall of Fame was founded in 1982 by the National Federation of State High School Associations to honor high school athletes,

coaches, officials, administrators and others. In 2003, individuals from the performing arts area became eligible for induction.

MIAA Board of Directors August 19, 2026 Meeting

The MIAA Board of Directors met on Wednesday August 19, 2026. The following is a selective recap:

- Football: Starting with the 2027-28 school year, the top eight teams from Division 1 & 2, as determined by power rankings, will compete in a single-elimination **Division 1A** tournament. No opt-outs will be allowed. The Division 1A tournament will feature nine championship games in early December. Only the top eight teams from each division will qualify for the tournament, down from 16. That will require one fewer week of playoffs, creating a ninth regular-season game. The minimum number of wins to qualify for the tournament, previously three, is eliminated. The goal of the proposal includes reducing the number of nonplayoff games, which will go from two weeks to one, as well as preserving Thanksgiving games.
- The Board unanimously approved new **standards for number of championship divisions** per sport, as determined by the number of participating schools – [click here](#) to view.

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, 2026
- o Winter – December 15, 2026
- o Spring – April 1, 2027

Fall 2026 Eligibility Appeals Board Schedule

- August 18
- August 27
- September 8
- September 29

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 18, 2026**.

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	9/10/26	Belchertown HS
2 & 3	Keith Brouillard	9/22/26	Hudson HS
4 & 5	Peter Smith (4) & Phil Napolitano (5)	9/17/26	Whittier RVTHS
6 & 7	Mike Rubin/Steven Dubzinski (6) & Bob Baldwin (7)	9/14/26	MIAA Office
8 & 9	Bob Baldwin (8) & Richard Pearson (9)	9/15/26	Middleboro HS

Objective Process to Adopt and/or Remove a Sport

The MIAA website has been updated to include a category of "Emerging Sport" and outlines a pathway to achieve "Championship Sport" status – as approved unanimously by the MIAA Board of Directors on November 12, 2025.

A "sport" is defined as an athletic activity for the purpose of competition against teams or individuals within an interscholastic competition structure. It operates under standardized rules ratified by at least one official regulatory agency and/or governing body. MIAA member schools are currently offering, and may continue to offer, a School-Sponsored Sport that does not fall under the jurisdiction of the MIAA.

This process should only be utilized by member schools that wish to submit a proposal for consideration of adding an Emerging Sport under MIAA governance. [Click here](#) for more information.

MIAA Tournament Passes

MIAA Tournament Passes will be mailed to the High School Principal beginning the week of August 31st.

Tournament Director Vacancy

The MIAA is currently looking to fill a Tournament Director position for Division 1 Wrestling.

[Click here](#) for more information.



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2026 Schedule Commitment Deadline & Process

With practices and tryouts for Fall 2026 sports now under way, this is a reminder that the MIAA schedule commitment deadline is Friday, September 18. 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 18.

After that point, no changes can be made to your opponents or the number of games/matches that can be played. After the September 19 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 2026-27 school year:

- FALL 2026
 - o First contest date: Sunday, September 6 (Thursday, September 10 for Football, Sunday, August 30 for Fall Golf)
 - o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, September 15
 - o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, September 18
- WINTER 2026-2027
 - o First contest date: Thursday, December 10
 - o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, December 15
 - o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, December 18
- SPRING 2026-2027
 - o First contest date: Thursday, March 25
 - o Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, March 30
 - o Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, April 2

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

Soccer Shin Guards

There have been some questions regarding the “policing” of shin guards and protocol around this. Please read the rules and the direct interpretation from the NFHS.

The MIAA Rule is: 78.1.3 Shin guards must be worn by all players during contests and practices.

Directly from the NFHS

The NFHS Rule is 4-1-6

ART. 5 . . . Shin guards shall:

- a. Provide adequate and reasonable protection;
- b. Be professionally manufactured, age and size-appropriate;
- c. Not altered to decrease protection;
- d. Be worn under the socks, and worn with the bottom edge no higher than 2 inches above the ankle (see illustrations regarding shin guards);

e. Meet the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) standards at the time of manufacture. The NOCSAE mark and height range shall be permanently marked on the front of the shin guard.

Officials should verify with coaches if their athletes are legally equipped in a pre-game meeting. Additionally, we encourage officials to make sure they are checking these things while teams warm-up on the field. If noticed on the field after the game has started the referee can warn or caution the head coach when an illegally equipped player is discovered and the illegally equipped player shall be instructed to leave the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play. The team may elect to play person down or substitute for the illegally equipped player.

Good Luck as the season begins.

MIAA Golf Educational Guide and Tournament Information

- The MIAA Golf Committee has made it a priority to provide educational resources to our member schools, coaches, and student-athletes regarding the USGA Rules of Golf. [Please click](#) here to access the MIAA Golf Educational Guide, and be sure to share this resource with your coaches and players.
- To access the 2026 MIAA Fall Golf Tournament Information, please [click here](#). Any tournament details not currently included will be updated as host courses and tee times are finalized.

Updated Volleyball Forms

Updated Volleyball Scoresheet, Deciding Set Scoresheet, Line-up Form, and Libero Tracking Sheet are available to be downloaded and printed directly from the [MIAA Volleyball Page](#). Please ensure your coaches and table staff begin using these revised forms.

MIAA Sportsmanship Expectations

Throughout the past school year, the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee has worked to create an updated resource regarding spectator sportsmanship expectations. As part of this process, the Sportsmanship Committee conducted workshop sessions at the MIAA Sportsmanship Summit, requested feedback from MIAA committees and participated in ongoing discussions to address the current needs of member schools.

Please view the [MIAA Sportsmanship Expectations](#), which go into effect for the Fall 2026 season. The goal of the Sportsmanship Committee is for this resource to assist schools in fostering a culture of positive school spirit and mutual respect at interscholastic athletic events.



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Endowment Fund Student Leadership Grants

The MIAA Endowment Fund offers grant opportunities to member school leagues that sponsor student leadership conferences/workshops. Grant amounts are a maximum of \$2,000 per league each school year. In order to request a grant, member school leagues must submit [this application](#). Please note:

- Grants are subject to budgeted availability each school year and provided on a first come-first serve basis.
- All approved grant requests will be processed **after** the student leadership conference/workshop has concluded.
- A final report including a copy of the agenda and/or program from the conference/workshop must be provided **after** the event has concluded.

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 2025-26 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 2025-2026 school year. If your school *did* have a disqualification, please email dharrington@miaa.net or call 508-541-9804 by Wednesday, September 9th, 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 2025-2026 school year, please email or call Donna Harrington by Wednesday, September 9th.

Student/Coach Contest Disqualification Forms

[Student](#) and [Coach](#) Contest Disqualification Forms are available in the "Members Only" and "Officials" sections of the MIAA website. Please share these 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 Sportsmanship Essay Contest

Students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to submit an entry in the 26th Annual MIAA Sportsmanship Essay Contest. The theme of this year's contest is The Stands Standards: Honoring the Game as a Spectator. Additional information can be found in the [essay contest flyer](#). Entries are due by 12:00pm on Thursday, October 15.

MIAA Student Advisory Committee

The MIAA Student Advisory Committee held their orientation on August 20, 2026. 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 2026-27 MIAA Student Advisory Committee members.

Student Ambassador Information

Registration for the 2026-2027 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](#).

Student-Athlete of the Month Award

Nominations are being accepted for the MIAA Student-Athlete of the Month Award. This award recognizes two student-athletes on a monthly basis (from September through May) who display excellence in the areas of academics, athletics and community service. Students in grades 9-12 who attend MIAA member schools are eligible to receive the award. To nominate a Student-Athlete of the Month please [click here](#).

SAVE THE DATE – InsideOut Initiative Kickoff (October 8)

In partnership with the New England Patriots and the NFL Foundation, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and InSideOut invite school principals and athletic directors to attend the launch of the [InSideOut Initiative](#) in Massachusetts. This initial event will take place on **Thursday, October 8** at Gillette Stadium from 9:30am-12:00pm. [Click here](#) to register for this free event and please see below for additional information:

InSideOut Leadership is the foundational InSide work of transformational leadership. Through intentional reflection, participants examine the people, experiences and values that have shaped who they are and how they lead. Participants will develop:

- Four Questions of InSideOut Leadership
- Transformational Purpose Statement
- Leadership Story
- Personal Definition of Success
- Core Character Skills

InSideOut Leadership builds the personal foundation leaders need to lead with greater purpose, authenticity, and intentionality - creating the conditions for more meaningful experiences for students, coaches, and the entire school community.



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Call for Nominations: MIAA Massachusetts Women in Athletics Distinguished Service Award 2026-2027

The MIAA yearly recognizes women who have worked with distinction on behalf of the girls' sports in their communities with the Massachusetts Women in Athletics Distinguished Service Award (MWADSA). This award celebrates the efforts of those whose contributions have had a lasting and profound effect on female student athletes. [Click here](#) to nominate – deadline Friday, October 9, 2026.

September Calendar

August 31 – Sports Medicine Committee (virtual)

September 9 – TMC

September 16 – Board of Directors (virtual)

September 16 – Golf Committee (virtual)

September 16 – Soccer Committee

September 23 – Student Advisory Committee

September 23 – Swim & Dive Committee

September 23 – Track Committee

September 24 – Football Committee

September 24 – Sportsmanship Committee

September 30 – Volleyball Committee

September 30 – Ice Hockey Committee

September 30 – Unified Sports Advisory Committee

Upcoming Events

September 29 – New and Aspiring AD's Workshop (MIAA Office)

October 8 – InsideOut Initiative Kickoff (Gillette Stadium)

Thanks for your continued support!

Robert Baldwin