

MEDICAL COVERAGE AT MSHSAA POST-SEASON EVENTS

Prepared by the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee

A physician examining athletes in junior and senior high schools must use good judgment in deciding whether or not to restrict a student from competition. The purpose of this presentation is to summarize some of the important factors to help physicians arrive at a logical conclusion so a student is not unnecessarily prohibited from competing or allowed to compete when he/she should be disqualified.

There are two major considerations for restricting persons from participation in athletics:

1. Is there a disease or condition which prevents the individual from competing fairly with normal persons?
2. Is there a disease or condition which might be aggravated by athletic competition?

Both of these are relative and circumstances alter decisions. It is the examining physician's responsibility to determine qualification or disqualification for athletic participation.

The designated tournament manager should assume responsibility for the following items:

I. Send the Tournament Physician the Following Items and Information Prior to the Event:

- A. Tickets or information as to where they can be picked up.
- B. Parking information and pass, if necessary. Reserve a space for physicians.
- C. Specifically where and to whom to report upon arrival at contest site.
- D. Reminder to bring along normal emergency materials.
- E. Copy of MSHSAA policies regarding tournament physicians.
- F. Make hospitality room available to tournament physician and guest.

II. Upon the Physician's Arrival:

- A. Familiarize him/her with the facilities including:
 1. Where he/she will be seated.
 2. Location of training room, if one is available.
 3. Location of telephone.
- B. Provide him/her with:
 1. Normal procedures for calling an emergency vehicle.
 2. A pad of paper on which to make notations regarding injuries attended to during the course of the event, instructions for an athlete, a coach, a parent, second tournament official, etc.
- C. Introduce him/her to:
 1. Licensed athletic trainer, if one is available.
 2. Participating coaches.
 3. Physicians traveling with the competing teams, if any.

III. Familiarize Yourself and the Tournament Physician with the Following MSHSAA Policies:

- A. The tournament physician's relationship to:
 1. Licensed athletic trainers. The tournament physician's opinion shall always supersede that of a licensed athletic trainer.

2. Physician traveling with a competing team.
 - a. If the coach wishes, he/she may have such a "team physician" attend to his/her player. Such a "team physician" must be seated near the team bench if he/she is to do the initial examination of an injured athlete.
 - b. If such a "team physician" is seated elsewhere, the tournament physician shall be the first responder with the athlete, and then at an appropriate and convenient time, turned over to the "team physician."
 - c. Teams should be alerted to the requirement that any "team physician" they bring with them must be identified and introduced to the tournament manager, tournament physician and contest officials.
 - d. To avoid creating any situation in which the tournament physician and "team physician" might be in disagreement as to whether or not an athlete can continue to competition, the decision will be made by the tournament physician.

B. Tournament physician's responsibility and authority:

1. Basic purpose of having a tournament physician in attendance is to:
 - a. Render medical assistance.
 - b. Render medical judgments regarding whether or not athletes should be allowed to continue to participate.
2. When an athlete is taken from a competition site to a hospital/off-site medical facility for diagnosis/treatment due to injury or illness, a MSHSAA "Return to Competition" form signed by the attending off-site physician must be received at the competition site for the athlete to be permitted to return to competition in the same tournament or contest. **The designated tournament medical professional shall have the final judgment and shall make the final determination on return to competition situations.**
3. In some cases, it may be necessary to defer final judgment regarding further participation for a given athlete to the next attending tournament physician whether it is in another session of the same tournament or in a subsequent tournament.
***NOTE:** It is imperative that the tournament physician notify the tournament manager and/or the MSHSAA staff member in attendance of the need for future physician examination of an athlete before continued participation. It is highly desirable that details be provided any subsequent tournament physician in writing by the original tournament physician.*
4. Before leaving a tournament, or an individual tournament session, a tournament physician should notify the MSHSAA personnel on hand and/or tournament manager of any significant injuries he/she has attended to. Written records of such injuries should be kept and should include the following information:
 - a. Number and/or name of injured athlete and school.
 - b. Nature of the injury.
 - c. Treatment given.
 - d. Instructions given and to whom:
 - 1) Coach
 - 2) Athlete
 - 3) Parent
5. Tournament managers might wish to provide visiting schools with emergency telephone numbers and/or physician's names for use during off hours in the event they find themselves in need of medical attention, prescription medicines, etc.
6. The designated medical professional (physician or ATC) onsite at MSHSAA state events determines if a student-athlete is able to return to the same competition.

From time-to-time, athletic injuries will occur that are either unique or outside the general area(s) of expertise of the first attending physician. In such cases, the athlete and/or his/her parents may wish to ask for a second opinion regarding the return of their son/daughter to competition.

The following guidelines are designed to assist member schools and coaches in those schools in dealing with such cases:

- Usually one opinion is all that is needed. It is best if the physician involved is the family physician or one he/she has recommended if the injury is outside his/her area of expertise.
- If a second medical opinion is desired, the first physician should be so informed by the parents or legal guardian. The physician selected should be one who has appropriate specialty training with experience with the type of medical problem involved.
- The ultimate responsibility for deciding whether or not an athlete returns to competition rests with the parents or legal guardian. This includes which physician's advice to follow if there is a divergence of opinions between physicians.
- Member schools are strongly urged to make their position on such questions a matter of written record.
- If a tournament physician has been designated, he/she shall have the final judgment on returning to that competition and his/her decision cannot be overruled.