

ATHLETIC RECRUITING AND UNDUE INFLUENCE

A specifically appointed committee of the Michigan High School Athletic Association met in January to study the MHSAA transfer regulation. One suggestion it is making to the MHSAA Representative Council is that the **HANDBOOK** be clearer and more complete on the subject of what is permitted and what is not in the contacts between students and schools, both public and nonpublic. The topic of athletic recruiting and undue influence has concerned several other state high school associations; and recently, the Illinois High School Association adopted some new rules. After the announcement of the new rules in Illinois, the **Chicago Tribune** contacted school personnel for reactions and developed a series of questions it felt the IHSA must address before implementing the new rules in July. Here we provide the MHSAA response to similar questions. The answers apply to both public and nonpublic schools. Schools should consult the MHSAA Handbook Regulation I, Section 10

CAN HIGH SCHOOL COACHES OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES...?

1. Call athletic recruits?
No.
2. Send athletic recruits questionnaires, cards or letters?
No.
3. Visit prospective athletes and their families at their homes (even if the parents request the visit)?
No. No.
4. Entertain specific prospective athletes and their families in the school?
No.
5. Attend meetings with parents and students as requested through the school administration for information purposes?
Yes, provided the meeting is for all students, not just athletes.
6. Sponsor "junior high nights" at the high school for athletes?
Not if exclusively for athletes. If for all students, okay.
7. Speak at grade school athletic banquets?
Yes.
8. Visit elementary schools to discuss a specific athletes possible enrollment with the player, his teacher and counselor?
No.
9. Transport prospective athletes to high schools for entrance exams, or athletic events?
No.
10. Attend grade school basketball games for the purpose of evaluating and recruiting specific prospective athletes or their parents.
No.
11. Ask their own players or alumni to discuss the merits of their program with athletic recruits by phone, in person or through letters?
No. This is Pre Arranged Contact and undue influence.
12. Give elementary school players free passes to their high schools' games?
Not if exclusively for athletes. If for all students, okay.
13. Invite specific prospective athletes to their summer camps?
No.
14. Reduce or eliminate the fee for summer camps for certain athletes based upon the high school they may or may not attend?
No.
15. Do anything in numbers 1-14 above because the parents or athlete indicated an interest in the high school?
No. Even if the parents or athlete initiated the contact and indicate a interest in the high school, coaches must restrict themselves to what is proper and appropriate actions with prospective students.
16. Initiate contact with a student at a junior high/middle school or other high school about attendance at the school?
No.
17. Have anything at all to do with a student/athlete attending high school?
Yes. MHSAA HANDBOOK Interpretation #82 states: "If it is a faculty member's responsibility to recruit students (not just athletes) and that person, makes such contact irrespective of athletic eligibility, such contact is permitted. However, anything done for athletes that is not done in comparable fashion for all students is undue influence.
18. Do the rules and interpretations on undue influence apply to both public and nonpublic schools?
Yes.
19. What should a coach do when a student or parents of that student at a junior high/middle school or other high school contact the coach about attending the coach's school?
MHSAA HANDBOOK Interpretation #83 states: "...the coach should politely refer the student or parent to the appropriate school personnel (those who have the responsibilities for seeking and processing prospective students).
20. And finally, how will a school be allowed to discuss its athletic programs at general open houses? What can a general high school recruiter say about his institution's athletic programs when he speaks to the general student body at a grade school? In either case, for example, can a school representative describe the number of state titles his school has won, the number of its athletes currently attending college on athletic scholarships and the percentage of its athletes who attend college?
MHSAA HANDBOOK Interpretation #80 states: "Individuals not exclusively representing athletic interests of a high school may make general presentations (not just athletics) to eighth grade students (not just athletes). There should be a diversity of presenters, speaking on a variety of topics to students of all interests."