



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Purpose

This document is intended to assist Dance Team coaches in understanding and applying MSHSL rules and policies. School administration and coaches are responsible for compliance.

Coaches who are uncertain about whether an activity is permissible should consult their Athletic/Activities Director. Athletic/Activities Directors may contact the MSHSL for clarification or official interpretation when needed. Athletic Directors remain the primary source for local implementation and interpretation of rules.

Winter Competitive Season

How is the Winter Competitive Season defined?

The Winter Competitive Season begins on the first allowable practice date, which is 17 weeks prior to the State Tournament. The season concludes on the final day of the State Tournament.

During this period, coaches may provide full instructional, choreography, and competitive coaching to team members.

After a team's competitive season concludes, student-athletes may participate in non-school programs consistent with MSHSL eligibility rules.

Tryouts, Clinics, and Recruitment

Can spring tryouts or evaluations be held?

No. Tryouts, evaluations, rankings, placements, or team selection activities involving returning athletes are not permitted outside the defined season.

Schools may hold informational meetings, orientation sessions, or beginner clinics for prospective students. However, returning athletes may not participate in activities that are used to evaluate, rank, place, or select team members for a future season.

The method of evaluation does not change this restriction. Activities conducted in person, virtually, or through submitted materials (such as videos) may be considered evaluations if they are used for team selection, placement, or assessment purposes. Schools with questions regarding specific situations should consult their Athletic Director and seek clarification from the MSHSL before proceeding.



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

How long may tryouts occur during the season?

Tryouts may occur during the first week of the season and may last up to six days within a one-week period. No tryout activity may occur on Sunday.

Can recruitment or spring/fall clinics be held?

Yes, for prospective students only. Clinics must be introductory in nature and may not include:

- Returning athlete participation in evaluation or training
- Choreography development tied to the current team
- Team practice or selection activities

Current team members may assist as demonstrators only.

Coaching Contact & Out-of-Season Activities

Can coaches meet with athletes outside the season?

Yes, for administrative purposes only. Examples include:

- Team registration
- Rule review
- Season planning—including Team apparel/shoe sizing
- Goal setting
- Tryout logistics

Coaches may not provide instruction in choreography, technique, or skills outside the season or summer waiver period.

Can coaches meet with captains outside the season?

Yes, for administrative purposes only. Meetings may not include instruction, choreography, training, or routine development.

Can choreography, routines, or “playbooks” be shared outside the season?

Choreography, formations, counts, and routine development are considered coaching instruction and are prohibited outside the season and summer waiver period.



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Can athletes submit choreography ideas in the offseason?

Yes, if unsolicited. Coaches may receive ideas but may not provide feedback, instruction, or engage in collaborative development outside permitted periods.

Can coaches work with athletes during the offseason?

No, except for approved summer waiver periods or general open conditioning guidelines outlined by MSHSL.

Open Gyms, Conditioning, and Fitness

Open Gyms and Offseason Conditioning

Yes, open gyms and offseason conditioning programs may be held if they meet the following conditions:

- Open to all students
- Voluntary participation
- Approved by school administration
- Do not include coaching instruction, correction, choreography, or team practice structure
- Do not include dance-specific skill instruction

Open gyms must not function as team practices or include organized choreography or routine development outside of the summer waiver period. Conditioning programs must be limited to general fitness activities such as strength, flexibility, endurance, and aerobic conditioning.

Coaches may supervise only for safety purposes.

Participation in any open gym or offseason conditioning program may not be required as a condition of team membership and placement.

Can coaches require participation in offseason programs?

No. Participation in camps, clinics, studios, conditioning, or open gyms must always be voluntary.



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Summer Waiver Period

What is allowed during the summer waiver period?

The summer waiver allows instructional contact between coaches and athletes, including:

- Choreography instruction
- Skill development
- Routine creation
- Team training activities

All participation must remain voluntary and open to all interested students.

Can summer participation be used for team selection?

No. Summer activities may not function as tryouts or roster evaluation.

Studios, Outside Programs, and Coaching Roles

Can students participate in studio dance?

Yes. Students may participate in non-school dance programs throughout the year. During the winter season, however, students may not compete in non-school events in dance styles that are the same as or substantially similar to styles contested in MSHSL competition, such as Jazz or High Kick.

Determinations are based on the nature and characteristics of the performance, not solely on the title or category assigned by a studio or competition. Because dance styles often overlap and may be described differently by various organizations, there is no exhaustive definition of "Jazz" for eligibility purposes. If a routine contains movement qualities, technique, and performance elements that are substantially similar to those used in MSHSL competitive dance, participation may not be permitted regardless of how the routine is labeled.

When uncertainty exists, students and coaches should consult school administration before participating. If it is unclear whether a routine falls within a permitted category, the safest interpretation is to consider it not permitted during the winter season.

Can coaches also work at dance studios?

Yes. However, coaches may not provide instruction to their school athletes outside the season or summer waiver period in restricted competitive styles. Coaches must avoid any recruiting advantage or perceived conflict of interest.



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Can fall and winter coaching staff overlap?

Coaching assignments are determined by school administration and must comply with MSHSL rules regarding coaching contact and season limitations. A coach who serves as a fall coach and then becomes a winter coach during the same school year may not return to coach the fall season the following year. Likewise, a winter coach may become a fall coach the following year, but if they coach during the fall season, they may not return to coach the winter season in that same school year. Schools should carefully consider coaching assignments to ensure compliance with applicable rules and avoid creating impermissible coaching contact between seasons.

Can outside choreographers be used during the season?

Individuals who are not part of the school's dance team program may provide instruction such as technique classes, clinics, critiques, or performance feedback. However, outside individuals may not be involved in the development, creation, or modification of a team's competitive choreography during the season.

Choreography should be developed by individuals who are part of the school's dance team program and whose involvement complies with applicable MSHSL rules and school policies. If a student-athlete is involved in choreography development, there must be a legitimate intention for that individual to be a member of the program consistent with established rules and expectations.

Fundraising and Team Events

Fundraisers and Revues

Coaches may organize, direct, or participate in dance-related fundraisers or dance revues only during the winter competitive season or an approved summer waiver period. Outside of these timeframes, coaches may not conduct dance activities, rehearsals, performances, or other instructional events connected to fundraising or revues.

Winter teams may participate in another school's revue only if the event occurs during the winter competitive season and all participation complies with MSHSL rules and school approval requirements.

General Fundraising Expectations and Participation

Coaches may assist with non-instructional fundraising activities outside the season when the activity is approved by the school, participation is voluntary, the activity does not involve coaching or instruction, and participation is not required for team membership.



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Fundraising may not be required as a condition of participation in the program. Requiring fundraising violates MSHSL Undue Influence rules and expectations regarding voluntary participation.

Can coaches schedule or organize photography sessions?

Fall programs may hold organized team photography sessions as part of their seasonal activities.

For winter dance teams, organized photography sessions should not occur prior to team selection, as a roster has not yet been established. Once the winter competitive season begins and teams are officially formed, photography may take place as part of normal in-season activities.

All photography sessions must occur during the allowed season timeframes and may not take place on Sundays.

Booster Clubs

What may booster clubs provide for a dance team?

Booster clubs may generally support programs through approved purchases, fundraising efforts, and team enhancements such as:

- Uniforms
- Equipment
- Transportation (if approved by district)
- Team enrichment
- Assistant coaching support (if processed through school employment systems)

All expenditures must be approved through school administration.

Booster Club Funding and Limitations

Booster clubs may not provide benefits that create participation inequities, circumvent district policy, or violate MSHSL eligibility or amateurism rules. All booster club support must be approved through school administration and follow district financial processes.

Booster clubs may not:

- Pay coaches directly outside of district employment structures
- Provide individual athlete incentives or payments
- Create unequal benefits among team members
- Circumvent school or MSHSL approval processes
- Replace required school oversight of expenditures
- Fund camps, clinics, or individual training opportunities such as technique classes or in-season clinics



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Camps and clinics must be paid by students or families. Students may individually fundraise through school-approved processes, with funds managed through appropriate school activity accounts when applicable. It is always important to discuss your district and school policies with the athletic director or school administration.

Can a booster club pay for a guest instructor or adjudicator to provide feedback to the team?

Yes. A booster club may fund a guest instructor, clinician, adjudicator, or other qualified individual to provide instruction, evaluation, or feedback to the team, provided the activity is approved by the school and conducted in accordance with district policies and MSHSL rules. The purpose of the activity must be educational and benefit the team program as a whole. Schools should ensure that any outside individual working with students meets applicable district requirements/policies and that appropriate school oversight is maintained. Booster club funding must support the team program and not provide exclusive benefits to individual athletes.

Undue Influence

What is Undue Influence?

[MSHSL Bylaw 307](#) prohibits school representatives from requiring or pressuring students to participate in:

- Camps, clinics, workshops, intensives, etc.
- Open gyms or captain's practices
- Studios or non-school teams
- Offseason training programs including guest instructors

Coaches may encourage participation but may not require it.

What are prohibited coaching actions?

Coaches may not:

- Require offseason participation
- Direct students to specific studios or programs
- Organize captain's practices
- Influence non-school team placement
- Require fundraising as a condition of participation

Students must have full freedom to participate in other activities or take time away from sport participation.



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Eligibility, Transfers, and Cooperatives

How is transfer eligibility determined?

Eligibility is determined under MSHSL transfer rules and may involve residence, enrollment, or exception criteria. All determinations are reviewed by the Athletic Director and MSHSL.

How are cooperative teams formed?

All cooperative sponsorship processes, decisions, and approvals must be led by school administration rather than coaching staff. Coaches may provide input when requested but may not initiate, direct, or manage cooperative sponsorship arrangements.

Cooperative sponsorships must be:

- Approved by MSHSL
- Administered by school districts
- Supported by formal agreements
- Based on enrollment and boundary considerations

Feedback, Rules, and Governance

How do coaches receive competition feedback?

Through:

- Judges' score sheets
- Meet feedback systems
- Advisory committees
- Approved communication channels, such as official feedback forms, coach meetings, post-event surveys, and communications established by tournament management or the governing body, may be used to provide feedback or seek clarification regarding competition procedures.

How are rule interpretations requested?

- Contact Athletic Director
- AD consults MSHSL if needed
- Formal appeals follow MSHSL procedures



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

How can coaches provide feedback to MSHSL?

Through:

- Dance Activity Advisory Committee
- MADT
- Surveys and review processes
- Athletic Director communication channels

How are classes, sections and state tournament structure determined?

Competitive Section placement are based on:

- Enrollment
- Geography
- Competitive balance (number of teams)
- Participation trends
- Operational review

For additional information, connect with your Athletic Director. Resource document of Components of [Classification and Competitive Section Placement](#)

Section Tournaments:

Each region assigned oversight responsibility for a section tournament is accountable for ensuring the event is conducted in compliance with all Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) rules, policies, and expectations. While all section tournaments must meet the same standards for eligibility, competition administration, judging, safety, and event management, certain operational aspects may vary by region based on local circumstances, facility considerations, and available resources. As a result, implementation details such as ticket pricing, event schedules, the time of day a tournament is conducted, staffing models, and the number of officials utilized may differ from one region to another, provided these decisions remain consistent with MSHSL requirements and do not compromise the integrity or fairness of the competition.

Why do section tournaments operate differently from one region to another? Shouldn't all sections run the same way?

While the MSHSL establishes the rules governing competition, regions responsible for administering section tournaments may implement certain operational procedures differently based on local facilities, resources, staffing, scheduling needs, and regional policies. As a result, aspects such as event schedules, ticketing procedures, warm-up logistics, seating arrangements, and other tournament operations may vary from section to section.



MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL DANCE TEAM

Questions & Answers

Coaches who have questions about regional guidance, section handbooks, or tournament procedures should first work with their Athletic Director, who serves as the school's representative to the MSHSL and can help seek clarification or advocate for changes through the appropriate channels. Coaches may also provide feedback through advisory committees and other approved communication processes established by the MSHSL or region leadership.

State Tournament:

The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) is responsible for the planning, administration, and oversight of all aspects of the State Dance Team Tournament. This includes, but is not limited to, establishing the tournament schedule, assigning competition and practice spaces, coordinating event staffing and officials, managing ticketing and spectator operations, producing tournament programs and communications, securing and administering sponsorships and partnerships, and ensuring compliance with all League policies and procedures. The MSHSL oversees the overall operation of the state tournament to provide a consistent, equitable, and high-quality championship experience for participating schools, coaches, athletes, officials, and spectators.

Can coaches provide input on the State Tournament competition order?

Yes. The State Tournament competition order is determined by the MSHSL and follows established tournament procedures. Coaches seeking information about the current rotation schedule or wishing to propose changes should work through their Athletic Director and utilize advisory committees or other approved communication channels. Any proposed changes must align with MSHSL state tournament policies and procedures.