

**Morgantown High School**

**Handbook**

**For**

**Parents and Athletes**

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### **Alma Mater**

We sing our song, of praise to thee,  
Beloved Red and Blue.  
Your proud sons and daughters,  
Pledge loyalty to you.  
Each year, each day, along the way,  
our hearts will love thee best.  
We hail thee Alma Mater,  
Our own, our M. H. S.!

### **Athletics Mission Statement**

The interscholastic athletic program is a significant element in the overall mission of Morgantown High School. It reflects the concept of the mind/body relationship. Like all programs at MHS, participation is designed to promote the growth of our students through exposure to worthy role models, good sportsmanship, and school loyalty. While winning will always be an important goal of any team, winning the Mohigan way will be the single outcome by which success will be measured. The MHS Mohigans are dedicated to following all rules and regulations outlined by the West Virginia Secondary Schools Athletic Commission and pursuing Mohigan Excellence.

### **Athlete/Coach/Parent Relationship**

The ideal that we seek at MHS is for coaches, students and parents to recognize all the goals and desires we have in common and work constructively together in order to enhance the student's athletic experience. All parties should want the student-athlete to grow in a positive direction and benefit from athletic participation. There are few endeavors that are healthier for young people than sports. Students learn to compete in a society based on fair competition.

They learn how to interact with other students who are trying to achieve the same team oriented goals, much like they will later in life. They remain physically fit. John Wooden, the great basketball coach of UCLA in its glory years, had a most appropriate response to reporters when asked how he would gauge the success of his team in a particular year. Wooden responded that, “success could only be measured by looking at where the players were five to ten years later and seeing what kind of young adult they had become. It is the long-range outcome that should receive the most emphasis.”

Should a parent have a concern about the athletes' place on a team, they should contact the coach and make an appointment to see them. Appointments should be made ahead of time and should not occur right after a game. E-mail or other form of messaging is often the least effective way to voice a difference of opinion. Speaking with the coach in person or phoning are the preferred communication methods. There is nothing wrong with disagreeing as long as you are not disagreeable. The coach's perspective is team oriented and the parent's perspective will be an individual one. At times, these will not fully complement each other.

Many high school athletes have parents who themselves were athletes. It would be naïve to think that the parents will not “coach” their children to some degree. However, parental coaching should never be at odds with the coaching priorities of the team's coach. If this were to happen, the outcomes for the player can never be beneficial. Please do not put your athlete in this precarious position.

### **Athletic Chain of Command**

At Morgantown High School, the following chain of command is in effect:

- Head Coach

- Position Coach
- JV or Freshmen Coach
- Assistant Principal/Athletic Director
- Assistant Principal
- Principal

If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program, the athlete should first contact the appropriate person. If there is no resolution, the chain of command will be followed.

### **Athletic Department Conduct**

While under the supervision of the coaching staff at Morgantown High School, and while engaging in any activity connected with a team, an athlete must, at all times, place the best interests of the team and the school above their own personal interests. This includes all practice sessions, contests, traveling to and from such events and in any other situation where the purpose of the activity is related to team membership.

In cases where the conduct of an athlete becomes inappropriate as a representative of our school's interscholastic program, the athlete may be subject to expulsion from the team. Such measures will be taken only after consideration of the circumstances by the coach.

The following is a list of violations, which our coaching staff considers to be unacceptable behavior and which would, in all probability, result in the forfeiture of team membership. This list should not be considered complete, since there could be other infractions occurring of the same severity.

1. Use of drugs
2. Use of tobacco and or nicotine products

3. Use of alcohol
4. Stealing or theft
5. Flagrant misconduct bringing yourself or team into negative scrutiny.
6. Insubordination
7. Excessive (3) unexcused absences from sport (practice or game).
8. Poor sportsmanship
9. Hazing
10. Excessive unexcused (3) school absences.
11. Cyber/electronic/social media bullying or harassment that manifests itself as a distraction to school or team.

**1<sup>st</sup> offense**- The athlete must sit out the next game.

**2<sup>nd</sup> offense**- The athlete is suspended until a meeting can be held with AP/AD, head coach, athlete, and parent/guardian.

**3<sup>rd</sup> offense**- The athlete may be removed from the team.

### **Athletic Letters**

All varsity athletes are eligible for a letter (or pin) at the conclusion of the season. Athletes will receive only one letter the first time they letter in any sport, followed by pins in following years of participation if they:

- Have finished the season in good standing. This includes meeting all academic requirements, returning all uniforms and equipment, and finalize all other team responsibilities.
- Maintained regular and consistent attendance at practice sessions and all contests.
- Letter winners must have met the minimum play requirement set by each coach.
- Lettermen jackets can be purchased from Balfor.

### **Responsibilities of an Athlete**

Athletes are to complete and adhere to the following behavior expectations.

1. The team's goals, welfare, and success must come before any individual.
2. An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. This also includes weekend and holiday periods.
3. Players must be receptive to coaching.
4. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
5. As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but also the coaching staff and Morgantown High School.
6. If injured, an athlete must report all injuries to either the coach or, more importantly, to the athletic trainer.
7. If an athlete is injured you may be exempt from practice but not daily treatments and rehab.

8. If an athlete is a member of a varsity team, they should avoid family vacations during the season, which includes try-outs, practice, and games. It is unfair to the coach and team and it negates the team-building concept, which is being built if you go on vacation. Missing team functions because of a vacation could negatively affect an athlete's position on the team.
9. To participate in any extra-curricular activity the athlete must be in school by the athlete's lunch period or through the lunch period, making half a day of instruction.
10. Uniforms must be turned in at the end of the season. Failure to do so will prohibit participation in the next sport.

### **Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents should support each athlete on the team and support requests by Athletic Department, MHS Athletic Boosters, and each sports' specific parent group. Parents should work in the concession stand as requested by each individual sport and MHS Athletic Boosters.

## **CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT/CONSEQUENCES**

### **WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion is a brain injury. It is caused by a bump or blow to the head or even a non-contact jarring of the head. Concussions can occur in any sport and with a seemingly small impact, even a "ding" or "getting your bell rung" can be severe. All concussions should be considered serious and be evaluated by a health care professional. You cannot see a concussion, but there are common signs and symptoms that can help us to diagnose one. These may appear



immediately following impact, or may take hours or days to fully present themselves. Some athletes may show a number of these and some show just one, they may last hours or weeks.

#### **COMMON OBSERVABLE SIGNS:**

- Appearing dazed or confused, vacant expression
- Confusion about position or assignment
- Forgetting instructions just given
- Unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moving clumsily/unbalanced/uncoordinated
- Answering questions slowly, slurred speech/difficulty following a conversation
- Loss of consciousness (even briefly)
- Showing behavior or personality changes
- Inability to recall events happening prior to or after impact

#### **COMMON SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE:**

- Headache or “pressure” in head, thumping/pounding in head
- Nausea/vomiting
- Balance problems
- Dizziness
- Double or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to lights or sounds
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy/feeling fatigued or lacking normal energy
- Concentration or memory problems/shortened attention span
- Confusion
- Just does not “feel right”
- Increase in emotions – sad, irritable, nervous, anxious
- Repeatedly making the same comment, asking the same question

**\*\*RETURNING A CHILD TO PLAY TOO EARLY OR A REPEAT CONCUSSION  
OCCURRING BEFORE THE CHILD HAS FULLY RECOVERED CAN LEAD TO A**

**LONGER RECOVERY TIME AND INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF HAVING LONG-TERM PROBLEMS. IN SEVERE CASES A SECOND HIT CAN LEAD TO SEVERE BRAIN SWELLING (SECOND IMPACT SYNDROME) WHICH CAN HAVE DEVASTATING, EVEN FATAL, CONSEQUENCES.**

### **CONCUSSION TESTING**

MHS utilizes an innovative program for our contact-collision student-athletes called ImPACT (Immediate Post Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing). It is a non-invasive computerized exam that establishes a cognitive baseline for each individual athlete, which we use in the event of a concussion. The results, along with other methods, are used to help establish the extent of injury, when the injury is healed, and when it is safe for the athlete to return to play. ImPACT was founded by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Sports Concussion Program. It is fast becoming the "Gold Standard" in recognizing and bettering the management of concussion type injuries. The system is utilized throughout professional sports and has been mandated in the NHL.

Our athletes take the test prior to or in the beginning of their season every other year, to establish their personal baseline. We will establish baselines every two years as monitored by the MHS Athletic Trainers. The computer formatted test, and usually takes about 1 hour for team testing. It tracks information such as memory, reaction time, processing speed, and concentration. We, then, use this baseline information to compare the results to retests after injury. We are able to use the information ourselves or share it with the athlete's pediatrician/specialist when necessary to aid in care and return-to-play decisions. Signing the handbook sheets acknowledges you have been informed about what a concussion is and how to recognize one, and gives us permission to use the ImPACT test.

### **Morgantown High School Philosophy**

In addition to embracing and committing to this philosophy, Morgantown High School, we will also encourage and promote:

- The belief that athletes should participate in multiple sports and **not** specialize in any one specific sport. The playing of one sport exclusively or year round is a relatively new phenomenon. This may lead to “burnout.” Rick Wolff, co-founder and chairman of the Center for Sports Parenting, points out that there are many studies showing burnout is a real problem for kids in their early teens and he notes that burnout usually affects athletes who have been playing one sport for a long time.
- The concept of the broadest-based participation made possible by offering a variety of teams, extending the opportunity for participation to as many students as possible and to maintain a safe environment.
- The premise that all teams are considered vital for our student-athletes and each is a valued part of our athletic program. No one sport is more important than any other.
- The approach that all teams are treated fairly.

### **Electronic Devices Policy**

All MHS students are responsible for the proper use of their personal electronic devices at all times with regards to any MHS sponsored travel event or function. Violations or infractions as a result of the misuse of any electronic device may result in administrative issued penalties

### **Eligibility Requirements for Athletes**

Student-athletes must maintain a 2.0 GPA in the semester prior to participation. Student-athletes may gain eligibility at a 9-week grading period, but cannot lose eligibility at a 9-week grading period.

- Fall sports use the determination for eligibility based on the semester GPA posted second semester. If students take summer school, those grades will be averaged into the second semester grades.
- Winter sports use the determination for eligibility based on first nine weeks' grades, but can gain and/or lose eligibility when second semester grades are issued.
- Spring sports use the determination for eligibility based on the first semester grades. Eligibility can be gained using third nine weeks' grades.

All WVSSAC guidelines governing eligibility must be followed.

### **Expressing Concerns**

When expressing the occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

- Never approach a coach immediately after a contest. This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your athletes or the team.
- Call the following day and make an appointment, which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
- Raise your concerns in a calm and civil manner and have them written down so nothing is forgotten or left out. Yelling, being rude or using foul language are totally unacceptable.
- Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation.

- Always keep in mind that sports teams are exactly that, a team. Decisions will be made in light of the team concept and school. They may not be the best for you or your athlete but in the best interest of the team or school.
- Issues not appropriate to discuss with the coaches are: playing time, team strategy, play calling, and other athletes.
- Appropriate concerns to discuss include the treatment of your child, ways to improve their performance, and safety issues.

### **Hazing**

For the maintenance of a secure and safe environment, the school will not tolerate any form of hazing either as a type of initiation or some form of team spirit building. Hazing and bullying by students or coaches will not be tolerated. If a coach or athlete becomes aware of an instance of either hazing or bullying it should be reported immediately and directly to the administration. Hazing includes any conduct, whether on school grounds or not, which willfully or recklessly endangers but is not limited to beating, branding, head shaving, forced calisthenics, forced consumption of any food, beverage, drug, or other substances. The school will take appropriate disciplinary action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, coach or other employee who is found to have violated this policy. **The discipline will result in entering the 3-step suspension process, unless overly severe, immediate termination may be appropriate.**

### **Physicals and EMRs**

All athletes must have a physical dated after May 1 to participate in athletics. The entire physical must be completed by student, parents/guardian, and medical provider. All athletes

must also complete and submit the EMR form before participation is permitted. The entire packet must be completed before permission to participate is granted. The packet contains the physical, Emergency Medical Form, Insurance, Release of Information, Eligibility.

### **Participation on an Athletic Team**

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at Morgantown High School is a privilege and not a right. Maintaining one's membership on the team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. However, unlike recreational teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does **not** exist. In an effort to win on the varsity level a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time. Although everybody wants to win, the sub-varsity levels will stress fundamentals and teamwork.

### **Practice Sessions and Games**

All practices and games in season are mandatory. MHS provides optional activities offered by most sports during the 3-week instructional period occurring in Weeks 50, 51, and 52. Those weeks are the final 3 weeks in June and end leading into the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to use a reference as the calendar does change slightly each year depending on when those leading Mondays hit. The WVSSAC permits FLEX days coaches may use out of season.

### **Purpose of JV and Freshman Teams**

JV and freshmen teams exist to provide those athletes who are unable to participate on the varsity squad an opportunity to develop the skills, physical maturity and experience needed for the varsity level. While the athlete's age, size, or skill level may be the limiting factor in not making the varsity team, participation on a JV or freshmen team may enhance the athlete's potential to make the varsity squad in the future.

Compiling a great record or winning a championship should not be the primary objective of a JV or freshmen team. The development of athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a JV or freshmen squad, while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning the Mohican way, learning, dealing with adversity and enjoying being a member of a team should be the ultimate goal.

### **Athletic Training**

MHS works very closely with HealthWorks Rehab and Fitness for our athletic training services. We have 2 full time certified athletics trainers that provide coverage for our athletes. Athletes should report all injuries to the athletic trainers and should use full disclosure so that athletic participation can be done safely. Athletes will treat all members of the athletic training staff and the training room with respect.

### **The Realization of Scholarships (from the NCAA)**

There are nearly 7 million boys and girls who play high school sports. There are only 126,000 NCAA student-athletes who receive either a partial or a full scholarship. That means only 1 in 56 high school athletes will have the opportunity to translate their athletic success into financial assistance. If you are looking for financial assistance do not put all your eggs in one basket. Some educators have estimated that there are 30 times more scholarship dollars available for college academic scholarships than there are for athletic scholarships. It is the dream of many young athletes and parents to earn an athletic scholarship, but please keep things in perspective. The higher the GPA, the better opportunities are that a college will offer you a scholarship.

If student-athletes would like to pursue college athletics, the student should communicate with the coach to enlist assistance in the recruiting process. Coaches will provide direction and use contacts obtained to assist in the recruiting process. Coaches are expected to be honest and candid when providing opinions of athletic performance, work habits, response to coaching, dedication to team, etc. The lion's share of the work in recruiting falls on the student-athlete and parent.

### **Who plays a role in recruiting?**

#### **The athlete**

- The athlete should complete an athletic/academic resume including sport specific statistics, vitals, test scores, GPA, extra curriculars, etc.
- The athlete should create a highlight film for distribution. This can easily be done using Hudl.
- The athlete should complete the FASFA and apply to all colleges where there is mutual interest in attending.
- The athlete must meet the required GPA and ACT and/or SAT score to gain admission and athletic eligibility. The athlete must be certain to enroll in courses required by the NCAA.
- The athlete should coordinate communication with the coach during the recruiting process for input and unity of message.
- Promptly fill out questionnaires and inquiry forms.
- The student must register on the NCAA Clearinghouse.



### **The parent**

- The parent should complete the FASFA and ensure the student-athletes completes application to colleges.
- The parent should ensure the ACT and/or SAT is taken and that all required course are scheduled.
- The parent should remain in contact with the coach to see where each school is in the recruiting process.

### **The coach**

- The coach should work closely with college coaches in giving accurate information and assist in the distribution of information.

### **The counselor**

- The school counselor will assist in the application and academic scholarship acquisition process.

### **The assistant principal/athletic director**

- The assistant principal/athletic director will assist in the NCAA Clearinghouse process.

### **Risks of Athletic Participation**

In spite of protective equipment, the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are some risks associated when someone participates in athletics. Injuries in some of our activities can and do occur. Parents are not to enter the field or court until summoned by the trainer. In extremely rare cases, death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. At Morgantown High School, we will do all we can to ensure a

safe and healthy environment for our athletes. We provide certified athletic trainers and adult supervision capable of rendering basic care to students participating in interscholastic athletics at practices and games. Contact sports will have priority when assigning trainers. While MHS tries to protect our athlete's best interest that can't always be said for participation outside of school. If your child participates and is injured in a non-MHS sponsored sport, please report any injury to our training staff before he participates for MHS. This is critical when dealing with head injuries, but all injuries.

### **Selecting (Cutting) the Team**

While our ultimate goal is to promote the greatest athletic participation possible at Morgantown High School, it is necessary in some sports to select a squad. This may occur due to limitations of our facilities, equipment, regulations specific to some sports, travel restrictions, and other factors. Sometimes players are cut only to come back the next year and contribute to the team. The most famous example has been Michael Jordan.

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his or her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the head coach with the help of his staff. It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's JV team, for example, do not automatically make either the JV or varsity squad the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being a senior does not ensure that an athlete will make the team.

Parents should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and will be available to answer athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many athletes and even for their parents, we unfortunately cannot keep everyone in every sport. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to try out again next season or to try another sport or activity. There are numerous clubs and organizations at MHS in which one can participate. Athletes can excel in different sports other than the ones they would like to play. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

### **Athletic Boosters**

The Morgantown Athletic Boosters is an organization that funds **ALL** sports at MHS and serves our student-athletes very well. Participation in the Boosters is strongly encouraged to ensure MHS continues to support the athletic programs at a high level. Athletic boosters fund meals, travel, equipment, video, facilities, and other endeavors at MHS.

### **Team Captains**

There are many good reasons for having captains of a team. These athletes may serve as positive role models, links between the team, the coach, and school leaders. They are players who others look up to in good times and bad. A good captain can be a real asset to the team and coaching staff.

While some coaches may allow their team to select captains, the ultimate responsibility lies with the coach. It is also important to understand that serving in the capacity of a captain is not reserved solely for seniors on a team, but rather, this position is for the athlete who is best suited to filling the responsibilities. Captainship can be from game to game or the season upon the coach's discretion.

### **Team Travel**

Teams either will be transported to away contests by Monongalia County School buses or approved private, carriers. We may be forced to car pool with parents driving. NO ATHLETE MAY TRANSPORT THEMSELVES TO A CONTEST OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTY.

Athletes are expected to travel to and from these contests with their team.. If you wish to return with your parents, the coach must be notified in writing at the event.

If an athlete leaves a contest with parents, the parent should make contact with the coach to indicate that they are leaving. For safety and legal reasons, athletes may only leave with their parents/guardians unless permission is granted by both parties.

During travel, teams are to wear uniforms/warm-ups/casual wear/or school polos as specified by the coach. The coach will determine what is appropriate for that sport. All parties who travel as a member of the Mohigans will travel with intent of being a guest. Mohigans will leave all locker rooms, dugouts, sidelines clean from debris and trash.

### **What is a MOHIGAN and why that name?**

Morgantown High School was known for the award winning high level yearbook. The title of the book was the **Morgantown High Annual. When compiling a nickname for the athletic teams, the first few letters of each word were taken Morgantown High Annual to form Mohigan. As to align with the well-known Mohican, the Indian theme was adopted even though the name was derived from a yearbook. Many foes often refer to MHS as the Yearbooks in competitive banter.**

## **The Mohigan Way**

The Mohigan way is a simple credo that implores our student-athletes, coaches, and fans to do all that is fair and right in victory and defeat. Our athletes should do absolutely everything within the rules in their power through preparation to win. The Mohigans win with class. If the contest is not won, the Mohigans will be gracious in defeat and offer congratulations and good wishes to the opponents all the while knowing all was done in an effort to win. The coaches will do all that is fair and right in preparation to provide a game plan to win the game. The coaches will demonstrate, and expect in return, sportsmanship and fair play. The fans will cheer positively for our team and will refrain from negative cheers directed toward the other team. Our fans will focus our energy on positively cheering on our team. Mohigan Excellence is the result!