

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2013 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 552 (Washington County Delegation)  
Ways and Means

---

**Public Secondary Schools - Fall Sports Season - Start Date**

---

This bill enables a local board of education to authorize high school sports teams at a school that is a member of the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to begin practicing for fall sports not more than 14 days before the date set by MPSSAA as the date teams may begin practicing.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2013.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill is directed at local public high schools and therefore State finances are not affected.

**Local Effect:** The bill authorizes, but does not require, an earlier start date for fall sports practices. Local school systems that opt for an earlier practice date may incur minimal additional costs associated with pay for coaches and with opening facilities for use earlier in the year.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal. Some high school-age summer employees may leave summer employment early to devote time to sports practice, but it is assumed that small business employers can adjust and find replacement employees.

---

**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), as established by the State Superintendent of Schools, governs the athletic program for all high school students in Maryland public secondary schools that are members of MPSSAA. Local school systems

may adopt rules governing their athletic programs that are more restrictive than those of MPSSAA; less restrictive rules may not be adopted.

Per COMAR, the fall sports season begins the sixth Saturday following the first full week in July and concludes with the final date of the county, conference, district, regional, or State tournament. MPSSAA member schools and coaches must confine practice for all students or teams to the seasonal limitations. A member MPSSAA school may not participate in a regularly scheduled game until at least 20 calendar days have elapsed after and including the first day of practice. Golf is the only exception to this regulation.

Failure to comply with regulations constitutes a violation which results in specified penalties against the MPSSAA member school and either the student or the coach, or both. Depending upon the severity of the violation, more than one penalty may be imposed against the MPSSAA member school, student, coach, or all of the above.

**Background:** MPSSAA is governed by a Board of Control and Executive Council that is represented by school superintendents, athletic coordinators, principals, athletic directors, and coaches. In addition, there are many standing and tournament committees that administer the 24 State tournaments as well as many other programs. MPSSAA currently includes nearly 200 public high schools, with almost 114,000 student-athletes participating in 24 sports.

Fall sports include cross country, football, field hockey, golf, soccer, and volleyball. According to the rules set forth in COMAR, the first practice day for fall sports was August 11 in 2012 and will be set at August 17 for 2013.

---

### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 18, 2013  
ncs/rhh

---

Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510