

**Michigan Lutheran Basketball Association (MLBA)
State Tournament of Champions
Rules and Regulations**

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

- 1.01 There shall be two divisions of competition based upon gender and as further defined.
- 1.02 Each division tournament will be laid out accordingly from the number of applications received, with the tournament not exceeding 16 teams. The number of teams in the tournament can be fewer if the application process deems so.
- 1.03 The tournament will be conducted on a single-elimination basis for the championship. There will also be a consolation bracket where teams will continue to play after an opening round loss.
- 1.04 Each team selected to play will participate in a minimum of two games. Teams applying must be willing and able to play from the AM on Saturday to the late afternoon or early evening on Sunday.
- 1.05 The state tournament will be held annually on the weekend containing the first Friday in March or adapted as needed by ruling of the Committee.

TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA

- 2.00 It is suggested each team play a minimum of (15) and at least one non-league tournament. See rule 3.03. This allows for maximum possibility for seeding.
- 2.01 The tournament directors of the MLBA shall select, or cause to be selected by whatever means in their opinion is appropriate in the circumstances, the most representative teams from the state in each division.
- 2.02 The tournament directors reserve the right to require preliminary playoffs to narrow the field if necessary.
- 2.03 Preference in team selection will generally be given in the following order, provided the applications arrive to the directors before the stated date:
STATEWIDE, REGIONAL, METRO, AND LEAGUE TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS,
LEAGUE CHAMPIONS, LEAGUE DIVISION CHAMPIONS, AND OTHER CHAMPIONS.
- 2.04 Any team that is not a champion of a tournament, league, or league division shall be considered independent. Independent teams will be considered for state tournament play after the preference listed above, and are encouraged to apply. Runners-up could very well be invited to participate to round out a given division if necessary.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY

- 3.01 All teams must be an established squad which has represented a Lutheran grade

- school in an established league and/or tournament during the current basketball season.
- 3.02 Each team is allowed a maximum of five (5) non-uniform persons to serve as coaches, managers, etc, and at least one (1) of them must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- 3.03 A team must have completed a minimum of ten (10) official games prior to applying for tournament. This means that if the league in which a given team participates does not have ten (10) games on the schedule, said team must schedule the appropriate number of official non-conference or tournament games to reach the minimum requirement.
- 3.04 Schools that combine to form one team must be submitted in writing to the MI District Superintendent of Lutheran Schools in advance of application. Teams must compete as one team all season. No more than two schools are to be combined on one team.
- 3.05 Rosters are not to exceed 15 players.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- 4.01 Players must be students of the represented Lutheran grade school and have complied with the eligibility requirements of their league and/or tournament(s). A student is required to be a full-time student of the school.
- 4.02 All players must have participated in at least 50% of the team's total scheduled games. Exceptions may be permitted in case of injury or similar circumstances, provided advance approval is requested in writing from the tournament directors and obtained. (See Rule 9.01)
- 4.03 No student is eligible to participate in the same sport for two different schools during the same academic year. Practices are considered participation. Transfer exceptions may be considered if submitted as laid out in Rule 9.01.
- 4.04 All students from grades 4-8 are eligible to participate in the tournament provided they have not completed the requirements for 8th grade graduation. Only one roster per school may be admitted. Team rosters may be combined for the state tournament roster, if necessary, i.e.: A school's Varsity, 8th, 7th, or A grade/level teams may be combined for the season to form one state application. Or a school's Junior Varsity, 6th, 5th, or B grade/level team may be combined with their Varsity, 8th, 7th, or A grade/level team to form one application.
- 4.05 No student shall be a member of a high school team of any kind.
- 4.06 A player may not have reached the age of fifteen (15) prior to **September 1st** of the academic/tournament year. Exceptions to this rule will only be heard from a Principal's written request as outlined in Rule 9.01.
- 4.07 All coaches must prove their player's birth dates with a copy of their certified birth certificate on site at team registration. Coaches can register at site between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
- 4.08 Any player unable to comply with Rules 4.01 through 4.07, as applicable, will not be permitted to participate in the tournament under any circumstances.

TEAM APPLICATION FOR INVITATION

- 5.00 Each team must submit an application to the state tournament
- 5.01 The official application link will be emailed to the school principal and athletic director and must be complete in every way.
- 5.02 The tournament entry fee of \$175.00, which must be a check or money order made out to the Michigan District, is due the Friday before the start of the tournament. The tournament fee is paid after schools have been notified they are accepted into the tournament.
- 5.03 The window for entry applications will be **February 1-8, 2026**. Teams admitted to the state tournament will be notified no later than **February 12, 2026**.
- 5.04 The application must also include copies of a team's complete schedule, final or current league standings, copies of tournaments participated in, and a list of all final scores in games completed before the application send-off.
- 5.05 Team roster information, coaches' information, logo, and team picture are due by **February 18, 2026**, after teams are notified of their acceptance, and all information will be submitted online. Failure to submit this information by the deadline will result in your team not being represented in the official tournament program.
- 5.06 The tournament directors reserve the right to contact league representatives or tournament committee members not affiliated with the school applying if questions arise when considering applications.

PLAYING RULES

- 6.01 MHSAA basketball rules will be in effect unless directly superseded by the following rules.
- 6.02 All games shall have two (2) certified referees who are members of officials' associations selected by the tournament board.
- 6.03 Six (6) minute quarters will be played. Three (3) minute overtime periods will be played if necessary.
- 6.04 The three-point field goal is mandatory in all state tournament play.
- 6.05 Any coach, bench member, player, cheerleader or fan ejected before, during or after a game shall be ineligible to participate in their team's next scheduled game. The tournament directors will meet prior to the team's next game to decide if further actions should be taken or punishments handed down. Their decision will be final, and there will be no appeal process.
- 6.06 Any protest must be submitted to the tournament directors in accordance with the MHSAA rules immediately following the incident in question. The tournament directors will adjudicate the protest with play suspended, and the judgment may not be appealed once play resumes.
- 6.07 At no time will video replay of any kind be utilized in making decisions about on the court action.

EQUIPMENT

- 7.01 All practice basketballs will be provided for pre-game warm-ups. The tournament will use basketballs of different sizes based on gender.
- 7.02 Each team is required to have two (2) sets of basketball shirts; each to be of contrasting basic colors with numbers on the front and the back. Shorts must be of the same conventional style and color for the entire team. A team may borrow uniforms from a school in their area to fulfill this requirement. MHSA rules on uniforms apply.

AWARDS

- 8.01 A team award will be presented to the first, second, and third place finishers in the championship bracket, as well as the first place finisher in the consolation bracket. Additional team award(s) may be presented.
- 8.02 A team award will be presented for overall Christian sportsmanship both on and off the court.
- 8.03 An individual award will be presented to each member of the state champions.
- 8.04 An individual award will be presented to the members selected to the All-Tournament team.
- 8.05 For the first-place girls and boys team that will be attending nationals the district office will pay the national entry fees.

GENERAL

- 9.01 Requests for exceptions to any of the MLBA rules must be submitted in writing to the tournament directors. travis.grulke@michigandistrict.org
- 9.02 Principals, Athletic Directors, coaches and managers will be responsible for their team's Christian behavior both on and off the court during the entire time at the state tournament. The tournament directors will assume the right to penalize any team for actions by their coaches, staff, players, or fans both on and off the court.
- 9.03 Housing, transportation, and other travel costs will be the responsibility of the team participating in the tournament.
- 9.04 Coaches and players must comply, and be eligible in compliance with, all rules set forth by their own league and/or tournament(s) participated in, as well as the rules given here. The state tournament rules will not operate to make a player or team eligible when that player or team was not eligible in their own league and/or tournament(s).

- 9.05 Teams may not take the court prior to ten (10) minutes before game time unless it's the day's first game, then it is 30 minutes prior. The maximum pre-game warm-up is ten (10) minutes and the minimum is six (6) minutes. Halftime varies between six and ten (6-10) minutes based on the schedule. Several minutes prior to the start of game announcements will be made. Introduction of starting five and prayer will be made for Round 1 and Round 2 and entire team introduction and prayer in Round 3.
- 9.06 Teams who are not ready to begin at the scheduled game time risk forfeiture.
- 9.07 The official score sheet must be checked and approved for each team no later than thirty (30) minutes prior to their first scheduled game time. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a technical foul being assessed to the non-complying team's coach, and the complying team will be awarded two (2) foul shots and possession of the ball to start the game. Any subsequent change of uniform number would be the only reason for early check-in for additional games.
- 9.08 The playing of music before or during a game by a specific team is prohibited. The tournament directors reserve the right to also deem any other noise-makers illegal if the need arises.
- 9.09 MLBA will not send out awards to schools that choose not to stay for the awards ceremony. Arrangements to pick up the awards must be made by the school.
- 9.10 The tournament directors reserve the right to collectively amend, add to, or allow exceptions to the rules of the state tournament when deemed appropriate.