**Start Rule Update**

Here is what we currently have. I will highlight where the MHSAA is updating the rule.

**Current Start Procedure –** Providing physical advantage to, or disturbing the athlete in the start area, is forbidden. By order of the starter, the athlete must appear at the start within one minute of that announcement. Failure to enter the start gate, ready to race with equipment fully intact, within the one-minute window may result in a disqualification.

By order of the starter, the athlete must plant his/her poles in front of the start line, or where indicated. The starter must not touch the athlete at the start. Pushing off from the start posts or other aids is forbidden, and the athlete must start only with the help of ski poles.

An athlete who is not ready to start one minute after being called by the start official may be disqualified. The Jury may excuse such a delay if, in their opinion, the delay is due to “force majeure”. For example, delayed arrival at the start due to breakdown of an athlete’s personal equipment or minor sickness does not constitute “Force Majeure”.

Delays caused by late arrival or absence of preceding athletes will be taken into consideration. The starter makes the decision after consultation with the Jury and must record start numbers and names of athletes who were not allowed to start because of late appearance, or who were allowed to start in spite of late appearance, or who were allowed to start provisionally.

**MHSSCA Update:**
By order of the starter, with the command “Ready” the athlete must plant his/her poles. The timer will then give the command “Go”. The athlete will have 10 seconds to leave the start. If needed the starter will count down the last 5 seconds for the athlete “5, 4, 3, 2, 1”. If the athlete has not left at this time they will be disqualified. The starter must not touch the athlete at the start. Pushing off from the start posts or other aids is forbidden, and the athlete must start only with the help of ski poles.