



THE OFFICIAL WORD

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A Publication of the Montana Officials' Association

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COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

My first year is off to a great start and much of that is due to the commitment and support from our officials across the state. The post season for fall is just around the corner, the fall regular season has gone well, and we hope for good weather for our fall postseason events.

Recruitment and Retention – Attached you will find the toolkit for recruitment and retention strategies, developed from the feedback at the NFHS Officials Consortium in April, the subsequent sectional meetings, and the one-on-one follow-up meetings. We were fortunate to have one of our own, Jay Lemelin, MOA official and Regional Director in Billings as a major part of this committee. This document contains the barriers to recruitment and retention of officials, as well as the strategies for improvement in each area.

We will share this information with our member schools as well so we can work collaboratively to build and maintain a healthy officials' pipeline across the country and at all levels of sport. Getting this information in the hands of Athletic Directors is especially critical, as many of the suggestions for improvement rest in the hands of the schools, as they host contests at their schools.

Rules Interpreters – This summer, we announced that the MHS/MOA was going to add rule interpreters for many of our sports. We put this change into place and added rules interpreters in Football and Volleyball, while keeping our rule interpreter in Soccer.

Here are our current fall rules interpreters and MHS/MOA Staff Liaisons:

- Football – Travis Huntsinger – MOA Official from Bozeman and the MHS/MOA Staff Liaison is Scott Wilson (swilson@mhsa.org)
- Volleyball – Laura Sundheim – MOA Official from Hardin and the MHS/MOA Staff Liaison is Kip Ryan (kryan@mhsa.org).
- Soccer – Scott Lockwood – MOA official from Helena and the MHS/MOA Staff Liaison is Amy Bartels (abartels@mhsa.org).

This process has worked very well this fall. We have been able to add great information to our memos and our rules interpreters have provided excellent leadership in their

sports. The rules interpreters will serve a 4-year term with the option to renew at the end of that.

MOA / MHS/MOA Leadership Committee - Also last summer, we approved the addition of another committee that will work to strengthen relationships between the MOA and MHS/MOA. This committee will be made up of key MHS/MOA and MOA members and will have their first meeting in October. The committee will be announced in the near future.

This important committee will work collaboratively to solve some of the recent challenges with schools and officials. This includes issues such as the recruitment and retention of officials, official pay, assignments, and many other topics. A guiding document for many of these concerns/solutions are mentioned in the NFHS Recruitment and Retention article that is attached to this publication.

We understand we have lots of work to be done and are excited about working together to solve our challenges across our great state!

NFHS Network – Continuing in partnership, the MHS/MOA and the NFHS Network are excited to build on the success of the past seven school years of high school post season broadcasts. This year, we added an excellent option to each official's membership. For a small fee that was included in registration this year, each official now has full access to watch all games broadcast on the NFHS Network. The NFHS Network will video stream live almost all MHS/MOA regular season games (Varsity and JV), MHS/MOA postseason games, and MHS/MOA state championship games/meets in numerous sports throughout the entire year. The games will be available by subscription pay and can be accessed through www.mhsa.org.

Volleyball Ballots - Last year, the MHS/MOA Executive Board passed a new rule for postseason volleyball, basketball and wrestling that if an MHS/MOA school does not submit a postseason ballot, the school would be fined \$100. For the 2022 volleyball season, we are excited to report that we received 100 % of the completed ballots back from our MHS/MOA Schools. Kip Ryan in our office did an outstanding job working with schools to ensure all schools had input to the volleyball officials hired for the post season. No Fines were given out this volleyball season for ballots!

Great things happen when administrators, coaches and officials work together. Let's keep this going for the rest of the school year.

We are looking forward to a great postseason. Give us a call if you have any questions.

Brian Michelotti, MOA Commissioner

MOVING?

Update your demographic information on your Dragonfly account at www.max.dragonflyathletics.com. Most of the problems experienced by officials not receiving MOA information including books, clinic information, etc. could be avoided by ensuring that your information is current. If your information changes close to the season, please email the MOA office at abartels@mhsa.org to ensure that your information is correct.

WINTER SPORTS EXAM DATES

Basketball and Wrestling- Apprentice, Certified and Master Exams

November 14-27, 2022

Exams for all sports are administered exclusively online on your Dragonfly account. If you are registered to take the exam watch for instructions to come prior to the testing.

NOTE: If you wish to take the upgrade exam you must notify the MHSa office, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior today the test opens. A request for upgrade form is available on the MHSa website under the forms section of the MOA tab. Please contact Amy Bartels with those requests. Upon receipt of your upgrade request, your name will automatically be added to the test list if everything is in order. If there is a problem with your request, we will contact you via email. Please remember that upgrading will be denied for a one-year period for **failure to:** 1) complete the required number of study clubs; 2) view rules clinics prior to the published deadline; 3) pay annual MOA dues 4) complete yearly concussion training prior to the published deadline or 5) receive a favorable evaluation from your regional evaluation committee.

WINTER RULES CLINICS ONLINE

The MHSa/MOA rules clinics are again being provided in an online format. A detailed information sheet explaining the procedure for accessing these clinics is included with this newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact the MHSa office. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLINICS MUST BE VIEWED BY **December 2nd, 2022** TO SATISFY YOUR 2022-23 RULES CLINIC REQUIREMENT You must upload your certificate of completion to your Dragonfly Account and *keep a copy as proof of your clinic attendance.*

Failure to complete rules clinic(s) by the published deadline will result in a loss of rating and renders an official ineligible for postseason assignment.

CONCUSSION TRAINING

The online concussion course must be viewed **every year**, after June 1st, for an official to be eligible for the coming school year. **The deadline for viewing the course will coincide with the deadline for viewing the rules clinic for each sport, whether you will officiate by that date or not.** For officials who work more than one sport, you must complete the concussion course by the rules clinic deadline for your first sport of the year. The concussion course must be completed only once per school year, but it must be completed before officiating any high school scrimmage or game. The penalty for not completing the concussion clinic by the deadline will be immediate suspension from the MOA until proof of concussion training is produced. Also, as with rules clinic deadlines, *if you fail to complete concussion training prior to the published deadline, you will incur a loss of rating and loss of eligibility for postseason assignment. An MOA official, by Montana state law, cannot work any scrimmage or contest until the concussion clinic has been viewed.*

REPORTING EJECTIONS

Officials **in all sports** must report, in writing, ejections of coaches, students **and this year spectators.** These reports must be submitted to the MOA office within 48 hours of the incident. If we do not receive the reports in the appropriate time frame, we cannot send the report to schools in a timely fashion. Reports that are delayed are in violation of MOA rules, so please submit them within 48 hours of the incident. They can be faxed to 406-442-8250 or emailed to adoran@mhsa.org.

EJECTION PROCESS & PROCEDURE

Please remember it is important, in most situations, to talk briefly with the other official or with other members of the crew about ejecting a participant. Sometimes this allows time to reflect on the situation and gather other viewpoints, if appropriate. It is vital to get the correct number, and name, if possible, of the player and to record that number. After you eject a participant (coach or player), use the proper reporting process per your sport's rules and execute the ejection. Remember to inform the coach whether or not the ejection was for unsporting conduct. Make sure you understand who can remain on the premises and those who cannot. If a spectator must be ejected from the premises, the official must first contact the contest administrator and **the administrator** must remove the spectator from the premises. Use law enforcement if appropriate and available.

It is never acceptable for the contest official, after a contest is finished, to review a tape or film of a game or get together

post game and change or overrule an ejection after it is issued. Sport-specific and MHSA rules do not allow ejections to be overturned by game officials. It is also wise not to discuss your ejection with school personnel, parents or the media. Simply use the proper procedure in reporting and enforcing the ejection, report the ejection to the MHSA within 48 hours and direct any questions to the MHSA or your local regional director after the incident. Refrain from commentary on the MHSA ejection rule and how it applies to students or coaches or adding your opinion regarding the conduct that was displayed. We need only the simple facts of the ejection and a brief explanation of the incident.

VOLLEYBALL INFORMATION AND RULES CLARIFICATIONS

Jewelry:

Just a reminder, the wearing of jewelry in warm-ups as well as during competition is prohibited. Ear buds fall into the jewelry rule, athletes should not wear these during warmups. If a referee observes a player in warm-ups wearing jewelry, the head coach of that player shall be notified and have her withdrawn from participating until the jewelry is removed. It is preferred the contact be only with the head coach. There is no further action necessary unless the player does not remove the jewelry and is charged with unsporting conduct with a card issued at the start of set. Remember that tape can't be used to cover jewelry. **The Daith piercing for migraines is an earring and considered to be jewelry, therefore illegal unless approval has been given by the Executive Director and the coach has a letter stating such.**

Reminder – Hair control devices:

In an effort to allow a practical means of controlling a player's hair, provided the item used does not pose concern of injury to the player, NFHS Volleyball Rules permit the wearing of unadorned, flat barrettes no longer than two inches to be worn along with bobby pins and flat clips. The NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee feels that these items do not create a concern for risk of injury and can securely be fastened and serve as an efficient means to control a player's hair. **A volleyball player can wear a hair control device made of soft material and no more than three inches wide.** Reflective material or sequins, on headbands, should not be hard, unyielding or easily removed. If a legal item worn in the hair becomes loose and falls to the floor and this becomes a problem because the contest is being delayed resolving the problem, the R1 may call unnecessary delay and the player must correct the problem before returning to play.

FOOTBALL INFORMATION

Halftime intermission and warm-up procedure– Table 3-1 and Rule 9-8-1:

Rule Table 3-1 states:

- The game officials are responsible for ensuring that there is a three-minute warm-up period posted on the clock and **the clock immediately started** for use by the coaches immediately after the halftime intermission expires. The head coach is responsible for his team being on the field for mandatory warm-up time at the end of the scheduled halftime intermission.

Rule 9-8-1 states:

- No coach, substitute, athletic trainer or other team attendant shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner once the officials assume authority for the contest. Examples are, but not limited to:

The failure of a team to:

1. Comply with the restrictions of 3-2-2 at the coin toss or simulated coin toss.
2. Be ready to start the first half
3. Be on the field following the conclusion of the halftime intermission or be ready to start the second half at the conclusion of the mandatory warm-up period.

We have had problems with consistency in application of this rule in Montana. The following should clarify this rule change, define responsibilities, and identify the penalty sequence.

- Make sure that game administration notifies both head coaches prior to the game about any special situations at halftime. **Also at this time, game administrators can inform the head coach that it is their responsibility to set their own timer to ensure they are back on the field at halftime on time.**
- In Montana, halftime will be twelve (12) minutes with a mandatory additional three (3) minute warm-up period. The only exceptions to this rule are homecoming games, parents' nights, etc. To increase the amount of time for the halftime intermission for these special situations, the opponents must be notified no later than five minutes prior to the game. The maximum time allowed for this is 20 minutes.
- Coaches are responsible for returning to the field on time. Before a team goes to the locker room for halftime, coaches must check the clock and set their own timer to ensure they return to the field on time. Game administration is not responsible for ensuring teams are back on the field on time. Coaches must ensure their team is back on the field for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up time at the end of the scheduled halftime intermission. The rule states even if both teams are not on the field after the halftime intermission expires, the 3 minutes on the warmup period will begin.
- Officials must return to the field prior to the end of the halftime intermission, which is before the beginning of the 3-minute warm-up period.
- If a team is not on the field or clearly making a move to be on the field after the halftime intermission expires (normally 12 minutes), an unsportsmanlike conduct

penalty will be assessed to the head coach, and it will be enforced on the second half kickoff.

- If a team is not on the field after the half time intermission and not on the field or clearly making a move to be on the field for the mandatory warm up period – only one total unsportsmanlike conduct penalty should be assessed to the head coach. An example of this can be found in NFHS Casebook Situation 3-1-1
- If the team does not come back to the field, this may result in application of Rule 3-6-3, which states failure of a team to play within two minutes after being ordered to do so by the referee will result in forfeiture. This would be a last resort.

Process for Hiring Postseason Officials in Football

One question that is always asked when postseason play arrives is how officials are selected for the playoffs and state championship games. Here is how the selection process works for football:

The hiring of football officials for the post season playoffs is a collaborative effort between the MOA office and each of the eleven MOA regions. Coaches do not vote on these officials, but towards the end of the season, the MOA local pools verify availability and rank each official in their area. When the playoffs begin, the MOA office determines geographically which football officiating pool would be appropriate to cover each round of the playoffs. Then the MOA office receives recommendations from the MOA Regional Director or his designee about crew assignments for each game. After all of this input is gathered and evaluated, the MOA office assigns the most qualified and available officiating crews for all five of the levels of football games in Montana. This process has worked effectively in assigning well-qualified officiating crews for all classes for the past several years.

SOCCKER SEASON CONCLUDES IN OCTOBER

This year's state soccer finals for Classes AA and A will start this month.

Class A Playoff Structure

- October 10-15– First Round
- October 17-22 – Semi Final Round
- October 27-29 Championship Games

Class AA Playoff Structure

- October 18 – First Round
- October 22 – Quarter Final Round
- October 25 – Semi Final Round
- October 29 – Championship Games

Playoff officials are assigned by the MHSA office with input from the local pool leaders using a list of available officials.

FALL RULES CLINIC SUMMARY

The attendance for football, soccer and volleyball rules clinics was as follows:

FOOTBALL:

Total	
Officials	348
Coaches/Administrators	707

SOCCKER:

Total	
Officials	150
Coaches/Administrators	172

VOLLEYBALL:

Total	
Officials	274
Coaches/Administrators	496

MAILED TO OFFICIALS:

2022-23 Basketball Rules Book, Rules Revisions & Preseason Guide

2022-23 Wrestling Rule Book & Preseason Guide

Attached

NFHS Official's Toolkit for Recruitment and Retention of Officials