



THE OFFICIAL WORD

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A Publication of the Montana Officials' Association

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HITTING THE MARK

This addition of the MOA Official Word has been purposely delayed so we could give you the most up-to-date information on the start of fall sports as we deal with this pandemic. These are unprecedented times.

During a recent MHSAA Executive Board meeting, the Board approved various directives, requirements and recommendations regarding the return to MHSAA Fall Activities. Along with the National Federation of High School Associations, the MHSAA Executive Board believes the resumption of sports and other activities is crucial to the growth, development, and mental and emotional wellness of our Montana youth.

The process utilized to come up with these directives, requirements and recommendations included consultation with national, state and local experts from the CDC, NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), the Governor's directives, state and local health departments and input from state activity associations across the country. For the return to fall activities, school's will follow these MHSAA requirements, along with the Governor's directives, and the directives from their local health departments.

Once again, we believe that the safety and well-being of our student activity participants is paramount. These requirements, both general and activity specific, attempt to reduce the possibility of transmission of coronavirus for our student activity participants and for coaches, officials and fans of MHSAA activities.

Actions

All fall sports practices will begin on the scheduled dates (Tier 1). First contests can be played on the scheduled dates if the required number of practices for that sport is met.

Football / Volleyball / Soccer

There will be no multi-team events (triangular, invitational tournaments, etc.) in the sports of football, soccer and volleyball. The status of allowing multi-teams events in relation to the current phase and restrictions in place later in the season will be reevaluated accordingly.

There are general requirements for all fall sports along with sport specific requirements. There are also requirements specific to officials for volleyball and football (these are included with this Official Word).

General Requirements for All Sports

1. Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, officials and administration should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
2. No out of state competition or teams traveling from out of state for competition, unless it is in a dual format and approved by the MHSAA Executive Director.
3. Always maintain social distancing of 6 feet while on the field/court of play when possible.
4. Everyone must have their own beverage container that is not shared. Safe handling practices should be adhered during hydration, which includes refilling, retrieval and identification of water source.
5. Time-outs (if applicable) may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length for safe hydration practices. Social distancing requirements must always be followed.
6. Cloth facial coverings are allowed for players, coaches and officials. Facial coverings must be a single solid color and unadorned, except the mask can include the school logo/name and bear only a single manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference (partial or whole) that does not exceed 2¼ square inches with no dimension exceeding 2¼ square inches. Face Coverings must be worn per the Governor's directive.
7. Gloves are permissible for all players, coaches and officials.
8. The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest/event as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
9. Administrators must limit the number of non-essential personnel who are on the field/player surface area throughout the contests.
10. Attendance at MHSAA events is dependent on host site and local health department guidelines and restrictions.

General Officials Requirements/Considerations

Uniform - LEGAL UNIFORM

- Long sleeves are permissible. Long pants are permissible.
- Undergarments are permissible but must be of a similar length for the individual and a solid like color for team.

OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

- Air horns are permissible.
- Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
- Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside:
 - Fox 40 Mini
 - Fox 40 Unisex Electronic - 3 tone
 - Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) - orange
 - Windsor - (3 tone) grey
 - Check the market for other choices.
- Facial coverings must be a single solid color and unadorned, except the mask can be black and white striped and bear only a single manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference (partial or whole) that does exceed 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension exceeding 2 ¼ square inches.
- Gloves are permissible.

Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring remains with the coaching staff and school personnel.

1. Rules Requirements

PREGAME CONFERENCE (Also see the specific sport requirements)

- Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team; or speak with the team representatives in a separate meeting.
- Use of headsets with other crew members (if applicable).
- Script the conference to ensure consistency with both teams.
- Coin Toss – See sport specific requirements (no coin toss in volleyball)
- Move the location of the pregame conference to the center of the court/field. All individuals maintain a social distance of 3 to 6 feet.

- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.
- Maintain social distancing while performing all pregame responsibilities.
- Encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 3 to 6 feet.
- Maintain social distancing of 3 to 6 feet between the substitute, officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the area designated for substituting.

OFFICIALS TABLE

- Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommended distance of 3 to 6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential and may need to find an alternative location. Space available at the table is a variable in determining the number allowed at the officials table.

PREGAME AND POSTGAME CEREMONY

- Suspend pregame protocol of shaking during introductions.
- Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.
- If available, dressing facilities for game officials should be large enough for them to use social-distancing protocols and should be properly cleaned and sanitized prior to their arrival.

2. Personal Responsibilities

TRAINING

- Attend online meetings to review the rules for the coming year (in-person meetings can occur in accordance with your local health department requirements).
- Start physical training using online video or complete skills alone. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should be cleared by your medical provider prior to initiating an exercise program.

COMPETITION

- If you do not feel well and COVID-19 symptoms are present, notify the contracted school, your crew members, your assigner and stay at home.
- Take temperature in the morning and then again prior to leaving home/work for a contest.

- Notify site administrator immediately if temperature is elevated above 100.3 or a level recommended by your local or state health department.
- "Vulnerable individuals" are defined by CDC as people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Officials fitting this description may wish to seek medical advice prior to returning to officiating.
- Communicate with school athletic administrator about school/corporation contest expectations.
- Upon arrival at site and throughout the contest, wash and sanitize your hands frequently.
- Travel – considerations should be given to travel policies.
- Do not share uniforms, towels, apparel and equipment.
- Maintain social distancing of 3 to 6 feet while in the locker room and/or on the court/field.
- Bring your own beverages.
- Facial coverings must be a single solid color and unadorned, except the mask can be black and white striped and bear only a single manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference (partial or whole) that does exceed 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension exceeding 2 ¼ square inches.

The work of our MOA Board, member schools, MHSA Executive Board and MHSA/MOA Staff continues through these difficult times. I applaud their willingness to update and revise our rules and regulations, and to formulate plans for the resumption of fall activities, guiding the Association in a very positive direction even during unprecedented times.

As you can see by the following year in review, the MOA, through action by the Regional Directors have brought forth rules and regulation changes/additions for the benefit of the MOA membership. The Regional Directors meet twice a year, in December and then again in June to discuss issues related to officiating MHSA sports. The Directors made a few changes for next year and a short summary of those actions includes:

- *Allow the use of wireless communication by soccer officials*
- *If a fourth soccer official is used during the post season the fee will increase from \$12.00 to \$24.25.*
- *Dues are outstanding after June 1st of each year (previous date was May 15th). A \$10.00 late fee will be assessed for dues paid between June 1 – June 15 and a \$25.00 late fee if dues are not paid on or before June 15th.*

- *If an official chooses to reinstate membership, he or she will not be charged a late fee if they have one year's break in service.*

The MOA Regional Directors and MHSA/MOA Staff continue to work diligently to review and to adjust how we operate the MOA in partnership with the MHSA. By doing our best and by the willingness to change when needed, those who we serve will continue to reap the benefits from the services provided by the MHSA and MOA.

Once again, on behalf of the MOA Regional Directors, the MHSA Executive Board and the MHSA/MOA Staff I want to thank you for your support and for your willingness to provide input during these unprecedented times. The MHSA/MOA office staff is here to serve and if you have any questions, comments or concerns please let us know. And, on behalf of the Regional Directors and MHSA/MOA staff we hope for a return to some type of normalcy in our everyday lives, sooner than later.

Please stay healthy and safe.

There are moments when troubles enter our lives and we can do nothing to avoid them. But they are there for a reason. Only when we have overcome them will we understand why they were there. – Paulo Coelho, *'The Fifth Mountain*

And now I would like to welcome our new Regional Directors, Chuck, Lea and Austin and have them share a little about themselves:

Chuck Dotson-Region 1

Hello Fellow MOA Members. My name is Chuck Dotson and I will be filling out the term of Todd Fiske as Region 1 Regional Director. In my 38+ years of officiating basketball I have served as an assignor and President of the Flathead Valley Basketball Officials Pool. I am now truly excited about taking on a new role as Regional Director.

I am a native of Washington State and was a member of the crew team at the University of Washington. I have lived here in Montana since 1987. I am currently a sales representative for Thompson River Lumber. I have been married to my wonderful wife, Terri for over 38 years. I am the father of three beautiful and successful children and the grandfather of three grandsons.

I enjoy spending my spare time traveling during the spring. In the summer, I like playing golf, playing softball and boating on Flathead Lake. I am a member of the chain gang for Flathead High School football games during the fall. Of course, my winters are devoted to officiating basketball.

My passion for sports and athletics led me to officiating. Officiating has allowed me to stay involved with high school student athletes and build lifelong relationships with officials and administrators throughout the great state of Montana.

Once we work through these strange and difficult times that we are currently facing, please enjoy the sports seasons for 2020-21! I look forward to working for all officials in the state of Montana during my term.

Lea Potoczny-Region 5

My name is Lea Potoczny and I have been a member of the Montana Officials Association and the Great Falls Volleyball Officials Association (GFVOA) for over ten years. I have been on the Great Falls Volleyball Officials Association board of directors for eight years, serving as both the treasurer and vice-president. I've been selected to officiate numerous post-season tournaments at the district, divisional and state tournament levels.

I was a coach for the Great Falls Volleyball Club for 10 years. I was born and raised in Chinook, where I was a three-sport athlete all four years of high school and I am still active in sports in my community in Great Falls.

I earned my Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from the University of Montana. I am the Chief Operating Officer for the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, where I've worked for 14 years. My husband Joe is a football official, and we have three grown children, Julia, Tim and Sam.

Austin Stradley-Region 9

My name is Austin Stradley. I am the new Regional Director for Region 9. I give all credit and thanks to Bruce Shipp before me for helping fuel my passion for officiating and stepping into this role.

This coming year will be my 4th year officiating basketball under the MOA and 3rd in football. Officiating has become a major part of my life, especially since last summer when I attended Rob Tesch's camp in Helena. I met some awesome officials and coordinators from all around the state that will end up being lifelong friendships. I am looking forward to expanding my skills on and off the court/field and working with the fellow directors from around the state to make Montana a continued success for officials!

Beyond the court, my wife, son, and I run a janitorial supply company and love every minute of it. It gives me the freedom to go and officiate as much as I'd like to and my wife to go and coach. Fall and winters are crazy for us, but we wouldn't trade it for the world!

I am grateful for the opportunity given to serve in this position and continue to build relationships with guys and gals around the state!

Concussion Training Requirements: With this school year ended it is important to remind you once again of the requirements of the Dylan Steigers' Protection of Youth Athletes Act. In respect to officials, the MHSА/MOА requires each official to take the NFHS Concussion in Sports course each year. That course must be taken after June 1st for the subsequent school year and must be completed before officiating scrimmages or contests. Officials, whether MOA or non-MOА, must complete the training before officiating sub varsity games and/or elementary/junior high contests and the school district must verify those officials have completed training. Also, the pool will need to check that all officials have completed the concussion course before assigning those officials to any MHSА contest or to any school district contest at any level. Officials will be immediately suspended from the MOA until the concussion course is completed.

SUMMER HOURS

MHSА/MOА summer office hours are 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. **The office will be closed on Fridays.** Starting the week of August 17th-21st office hours will return to 8:00-5:00 Monday-Friday.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

As a reminder to all MOA members, if you move, or for any reason have a change of address, please **notify this office** with that change as well as changing your address on your Dragonfly account. A change of address card at the post office will **not** be sufficient to forward your 2020-21 rules books to you **without a fee**. These books, along with registration instructions are sent out to you as bulk mailings, and the post office does not freely forward bulk mail. Please call or email Amy at the MHSА office with a change of address. **If an extra fee is incurred to forward mailings to you, you will be responsible for that extra fee.**

Updating your address in Dragonfly does NOT update the MOA database – please send your changes directly to the MOA office.

DUES MEMO

If you have not paid your dues and wish to renew your membership you must remit your dues plus a \$25.00 late fee. You will be required to retake the exam for your sport and score appropriately to retain your rating to be eligible for the upcoming season. In addition, as a result of paying your dues after June 15, 2020, you will be denied the privilege of upgrading for a period of one year.

2020-21 EXAM DATES

Listed below you will find the dates that have been finalized for the MOA qualifying exams this year. **All exams are now administered exclusively online via the Dragonfly Website within your account.**

August 13th-September 1st, 2020

- **Apprentice** Exam - Football, Soccer and Volleyball

August 17th-August 26th, 2020

- **Certified and Master** Exams - Football, Soccer and Volleyball

November 20th-December 9th, 2020

- **Apprentice** Exam - Basketball and Wrestling

November 24th-December 3rd, 2020

- **Certified and Master** Exams Basketball and Wrestling

March 3rd-March 23rd, 2021

- **Apprentice** Exam Softball

March 9th-March 18th, 2021

- **Certified and Master** Exams Softball

Minimum scores for passing the exam are as follows:
Master – 85%; Certified – 80%; Apprentice – 60%

Those officials wishing to take the exam in order to upgrade their rating must send the Request to Upgrade Form to upgrade a minimum of **seven** days prior to the opening date of the exam. The upgrade form is available on the MHSAs website under MOA. Assuming you meet all other requirements, your name will be added to the list to take the exam. You will not be contacted by this office unless there is a problem with your request, but if you want to verify that your request was received, feel free to contact Amy via email or contact the MHSAs office.

MOA HANDBOOK & MEMBERSHIP LIST

We no longer produce a hard copy of the MOA Handbook, but you can view it on the MHSAs Website under MOA. We will also make available on that webpage a printer friendly copy for your convenience. As in the past few years, the officials' membership roll will not be included as part of the MHSAs Handbook. This list will, however, will also be available on and the MHSAs website on the MOA Page. It will be updated after each set of exams, late registrations, etc., so it will actually be a much more complete and current list.

MOA ELECTION RESULTS

Region 1- Chuck Dotson – appointed to fill the remaining portion of Todd Fiske's term

Region 5-89 out of 199 votes
Lea Potoczny-52 votes
Bo Scott-37 votes

Region 7-29 out of 273
Jay Lemlin-29 votes

Region 9- 10 out of 75 votes
Austin Stradley-10

Region 10-17 out of 44
George Maruska-17

There was a total of 591 ballot invitations distributed of which 145 members voted.

2020-21 CLINICS

An enclosure was/will be sent in your rules book packet. Please keep in mind that failure to complete the rules clinic requirement in your sport(s) will render you ineligible for any postseason contest. Also, your rating will drop one classification and can only be restored when you complete the next rules clinic offered for your sport(s).