



THE OFFICIAL WORD

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A Publication of the Montana Officials' Association

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HITTING THE MARK

It is hard to believe we are heading towards post season play for our fall activities. From most reports, the fall regular season has gone well, and we hope for good weather for our fall post season events.

Universal Athletic / MOA – The agreement with Universal Athletic to be the official supplier of officiating apparel and accessories for MOA members has not been renewed. Both parties agreed to the non-renewal because of various factors. We are researching other official's apparel companies and possible agreements that would benefit our officials and the MOA.

Rule Enforcement - It is important to enforce all NFHS and MOA rules. The following rules have been violated this year and in the past. I attribute some of the violations to inexperienced coaching staffs and some first-time administrators. However, it is especially concerning that some of these violations were endorsed /approved by the officiating crew. Some examples this year and from previous years are:

- Officials agreeing to officiate a contest where one team asked to use non-MHSA approved eighth graders, so the varsity team would not have to forfeit
- Officials allowing players to have piercings or illegal headbands because the coach has a doctor's note. The school must submit the doctor's note to the MHSA office for review and if we do approve, we will send a letter for the coach to carry to show the officials. However, the Executive Board approved, allowing schools to submit a request on behalf of an individual to have a Daith piercing (Daith Only) to the Executive Director for review. If approved, a letter would be in the possession of the coach.
- Some coaches at sub varsity football games requested to play an extra quarter or quarters to get the players more time (violation of NFHS, MHSA and MOA rules). It also becomes a liability issue if a player is injured during an extra quarter played beyond the rules.
- In volleyball, even though the officials should not be involved, we have had officials state it was acceptable for teams in Class C to start more than two players from the sub varsity match in the varsity contest.

- We have had MOA members work with non-MOA's during varsity contests (the contests should not have been played).
- Six-player football – only three officials worked the varsity game when four are required (the game shouldn't have been played).
- Varsity Volleyball – we had a pool leader ask a school if it was all right if they only sent one varsity MOA to be R1 and to have a coach be the R2.
- Officials Uniform – I have been to several volleyball matches this fall and I have had to speak to several officials about wearing the proper uniform. It is misconduct and, of course, if we expect players and coaches to follow the rules, officials need to follow MOA rules also.

These are just a few examples and, once again, I want to relate the seriousness of these situations if some incident had taken place during the contests that could have precipitated legal action against the administrations of the schools involved and the game officials for violating MHSA / MOA policy. Violations of MHSA / MOA rules and policies are extremely serious, and noncompliance can place the school, coach and official in a precarious legal position. Also, there could be a question on whether MHSA catastrophic and concussion insurance coverage would be in effect in a situation where properly certified officials were not used, or rules and policies have been purposely disregarded.

NFHS Network – Continuing in partnership, the MHSA and the NFHS Network are excited to build on the success of the past six school years of high school post season broadcasts. Also, many schools are members of the School Broadcast Program (SBP) and have approval to stream their regular season games on the NFHS Network. Once again, the NFHS Network will video stream live MHSA 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. **Remember that officials are not allowed to wear microphones, cameras etc. during any MHSA contest.**

Football, volleyball, and soccer playoffs are underway and one question that continues to be asked when postseason play arrives is how officials are selected for playoffs, district, divisional and state tournaments and

championships. I usually include an explanation of the selection process for each sport from the staff members responsible but again this year we have placed those explanations on the MHSAs website under the MOA tab.

Mark Beckman, MOA Commissioner

MOVING?

Update your demographic information on your Dragonfly account at max.dragonflyathletics.com.

Most of the problems experienced by officials not receiving MOA information including books, clinic info 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 15-28, 2021

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 MHSAs office, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to day the test opens. A request for upgrade form is available on the MHSAs 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 by June 1st; 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 MHSAs/MOAs 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 MHSAs office. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLINICS MUST BE VIEWED BY **November 28th, 2021.** TO SATISFY YOUR 2021-22 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 rule's 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 post season assignment.* **The 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 or students. 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 bmichelotti@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. 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.

Re-serves: Rule 8-1-5 and 6 states... "Each player may have only one re-serve during a team's term of service. A re-serve shall be called when the server releases the ball for service, then catches it or drops it to the floor. The first

referee shall cancel the serve and direct a second and last attempt at serve. The server is allowed a new five seconds for the re-serve. A re-serve is considered to be part of a single attempt to serve." **A tossed ball that contacts a backboard or its supports hanging in a vertical position over the serving area is a service fault and not eligible for a reserve.**

Captains: Rule 1-6-2 continues to allow a team to have more than one captain at the pre-match conference. This more accurately reflects what many states (including Montana) already permit by allowing more than one captain to attend the pre-match conference as many teams have co-captains. The head coach and captain(s) from each team must attend the pre-match conference. Remember by MHSA guidelines, the volleyball pre-match conference (with the head coaches and captains) and coin toss will occur before the twenty (20) minute warm-up.

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 your 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.

Halftime Intermission – Homecoming and Parents Night

Remember, football coaches must be back on the field or be on their way to the field before the twelve-minute half-time is expired. It is important to communicate that game management should notify both teams when there are three minutes left in the intermission.

Schools, however, do have the option of using longer half-times because of homecoming or parent's night, and officials should encourage this option for homecoming and parent's night. By NFHS rule, half times can be extended up to twenty minutes, provided the opposing coaches have been notified five minutes prior to the game. Remember, the additional three minute warm-up period is always mandatory.

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 11-16 – First Round
- October 18-23 – Semi Final Round
- October 28–30 Championship Games
- Higher seeded teams will host

Class AA Playoff Structure

- October 19 – First Round
- October 23 – Quarter Final Round
- October 26 – Semi Final Round
- October 30 – Championship Games
- Higher seeded teams will host

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:

2021-22 Basketball Rules Book, Case Book, Officials Manual, Rules Revisions & Preseason Guide

2021-22 Wrestling Rule Book, Case Book & Preseason Guide

Concussion/Rules Clinic Training Information and Instructions