



2023-24 Officials Guidebook





2023-24 OFFICIALS GUIDEBOOK

Published by The Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc.

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[MHSAA Officials Home Page](#)

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ONLINE RULES MEETINGS

Online rules meetings are available in all sports for the 2023-24 school year to limit travel and alleviate time constraints. Limited in-person meetings may be available but will require pre-arranged scheduling and minimum attendance numbers.

Officials will be required to successfully complete a rules meeting prior to officiating any high school (varsity or subvarsity) contest in the sport. While not mandatory to officiate at the middle school/junior high level, it is still recommended to ensure a good understanding of the rules, policies, protocols and expectations of the MHSAA.

Rules meetings will remain available for credit from the date of release through the closing of registration for each sport. Consult this page for all rules meeting information and schedules.

[Consult this page](#) for rules meeting information and schedules.

Rules Books, Case Books, and Officials Manuals will be sent annually to registered officials when applicable.

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MHSAA OFFICIALS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the exciting and critically important avocation of officiating school sports. The *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* has two purposes: First, it is intended to provide prospective officials with the information necessary to determine if they have the desire, ability and character to become one of the essential ingredients to interscholastic athletics in Michigan. Second, it provides both new and veteran officials reminders of policies and procedures that must be followed if they are to remain in good standing with the Michigan High School Athletic Association and its more than 1,500 member junior high/middle schools and senior high schools.

Registration as an MHSAA official is a privilege and, as with all privileges, there are responsibilities that are outlined in this *MHSAA Officials Guidebook*. All MHSAA member schools have online access to this *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* to be reminded of officials' responsibilities to them and, just as importantly, their responsibilities to officials. All registered officials with the MHSAA are responsible to have a knowledge of, and adhere to, the information contained in this document.

NOTE: Throughout this publication, where regulation or interpretations of the *MHSAA Handbook* are quoted or paraphrased, the words are in **bold italics**. All MHSAA officials must comply with these regulations.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association became a private not for-profit corporation in 1972. Membership in the MHSAA is comprised of individual junior high/middle schools and senior high schools, approved annually through resolution by their respective boards of education. While athletic contest officials do not have direct membership in the MHSAA, in 1977 the Attorney General, in an opinion upholding the preeminent authority of local school boards with respect to interscholastic athletics, stated "boards of education could provide in their rules that interscholastic contests engaged in by their respective schools be refereed by officials registered by the association."

The policies of the MHSAA are determined by a 19-member Representative Council, 14 of whom are elected by the schools, four of whom are appointed by the Council to provide for representation of females and minorities, and one of whom is the designee of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Contest officials serve on some of the committees that develop recommendations for the Representative Council.

All registered officials also receive the MHSAA's seasonal publication, *benchmarks*, published during the fall, winter and spring. Each issue contains several pages geared toward officiating news and contest rules. Unlike most other state high school associations in the country, the MHSAA receives no dues or tournament entry fees from member schools. MHSAA services to member schools and officials are among the most complete of any high school athletic association in the country.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS

While officials are contracted to perform services by schools, their function is by definition independent and the officials have complete control of the contests they officiate. As independent contractors, officials are responsible for their own scheduling, personal equipment, uniforms, insurance, transportation, education and training expenses associated with officiating. MHSAA registered officials are deemed "Independent Contractors" who are contracted to perform a specific task. The official is an independent contractor who offers services and is not an employee of the person or institution contracting for those services. All independently contracted officials are required to register with the MHSAA in order to officiate contests involving MHSAA member schools. Registered officials agree to comply with all regulations and requirements outlined in the *MHSAA Handbook* and this *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* as part of that registration, and furthermore, agree to the pre-determined penalties for violations of these regulations and requirements outlined in the Adverse Action Procedures for Officials and Assigners.

Officials are not eligible for unemployment compensation, disability or worker's compensation benefits and the contracting entity is usually not liable for the independent contractor's actions. Therefore, each contracting entity should review this matter with its local counsel to enable it to make its own determination regarding the practice to follow with regard to officials who serve its needs as independent contractors.

GENDER and ETHNICITY POSITION STATEMENT

The MHSAA believes equity is more than being in compliance with the law. It is a spirit and personal ethic. It is a commitment to do what is right and fair for all athletes, officials, coaches and athletic administrators. It means creating an atmosphere and an environment where opportunities and resources are distributed fairly to all – an atmosphere where no person experiences discrimination. It is the position of the MHSAA that its member schools monitor their athletic programs to ensure that athletic offerings are equitable and meet the interests and abilities of student-athletes. While the MHSAA does not have the authority to promote specific interpretations or to rule on compliance issues regarding federal and state laws, it does believe that all concerned should take steps to promote the spirit and intent of equity.

COVENANT WITH SPORTS OFFICIALS

MHSAA officials are held to a high standard of professionalism, conduct and performance. It is the MHSAA's goal that when officials work hard, give their best effort and do the right thing, the MHSAA will support and defend officials in carrying out their duties. In this aim, the MHSAA pledges to:

1. Work on behalf of officials to ensure they are safe from physical assaults and verbal abuse, and encourage member schools to provide secure environments so that officials' persons and property are protected before, during and after a contest.
2. Make efforts to limit liability as a result of decisions made through the normal and reasonable execution of their officiating duties.
3. Make postseason tournament assignments on the basis of merit, skills and abilities of the officials assigned. Officials will not be discriminated against for assignments.
4. Clearly identify and communicate the expectations of MHSAA officials.
5. Provide officials with fair treatment and due process when they are the subject of investigation regarding alleged misconduct, not adhering to standards within the *MHSAA Handbook* and *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* or for improper contest management or misapplication of rules.

CODE FOR MHSAA ATHLETIC OFFICIALS

MHSAA Registered officials shall:

1. Register with the MHSAA each year on a timely basis (by deadline) and attend all required meetings and trainings. Officials will not work interscholastic contests with officials who do not hold current registration in the sport.
2. Join and actively participate in a Local Approved Association for officials (see mhsaa.com for a listing of associations around the state).
3. Accept contracts and officiate contests for which they are qualified and experienced. They shall execute and honor contracts in a timely and ethical manner, and complete reports and follow-up obligations resulting from a contest.
4. Be prepared, physically and mentally, to officiate according to the principles and philosophy promoted by the MHSAA.
5. Not use or possess tobacco or tobacco-like products including e-cigarettes or other devices of any kind within sight of players and spectators; neither shall the use of alcohol, marijuana or other intoxicant (even if otherwise legal) be permitted on the day of, and prior to, the contest.
6. Cultivate professional relationships with partners, players, coaches, administrators and spectators. Refrain from comment to the media, especially statements concerning decisions made during the contest.
7. Commit to a personal lifestyle that avoids sexual misconduct, use of illicit drugs and public abuse of alcohol, and will not in other ways impinge upon your perception in the community to fulfill the obligations and standards of the MHSAA "Code for Athletic Officials."
8. Officiate according to the rules and manuals adopted for MHSAA competition. Officials should be willing to acknowledge and correct one's own errors, hold firm to correct but unpopular decisions and support the decisions of other officials. Officials shall not publically criticize the decisions or actions of other officials, including disparaging other officials to school administrators or coaches.
9. Exercise self-control at all times and guard against baiting or taunting, which may generate a loss of poise or demeanor that can erode the professionalism expected of officials in even the most difficult circumstances.
10. Hold to and maintain the basic tenets of officiating which include honesty, integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, professionalism, discretion and tactfulness.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

As social media and networking continue to increase in popularity, MHSAA Registered officials must understand the importance of participating in various communication platforms in an appropriate and ethical manner befitting the position of an impartial arbiter. Violations of the standards included in this guideline which are determined as unbecoming of an official and in violation of the “Code for Athletic Officials” may cause for the suspension of an official’s registration with the MHSAA.

1. Officials should treat social media communications as public at all time – even if created with private intentions. Electronic communications are almost never completely removed from platforms and you should expect that your communications may be read by anyone at any time.
2. Officials should recognize their conduct online reflects on local associations, assigners, partners and the wider officiating community.
3. Officials serve as ambassadors and should promote the avocation in a positive light by expressing pride and professionalism in online and social media communications.
4. Officials may not malign or openly criticize another MHSAA official in any form of public or shared electronic communication. Such actions are unprofessional and undermine the sports officiating avocation.
5. Officials may not post or publicize critical comments about players, coaches, administrators or schools for which they work.
6. Officials may not engage in online communication which purports to be speaking on behalf of the MHSAA.
7. Officials should not engage in online debate or discussion about specific plays, rulings or controversies which they were involved.
8. Officials should avoid publically posting specific details for their (or other’s) game assignments prior to the conclusion of the contest.
9. Officials have unique access to private information and should not share other official’s information personal details or assignment information without expressed consent from the official.
10. Officials shall never have personal electronic communication devices on their person during a contest and should never record or simulcast live action of a contest unless permission is granted by the schools and/or the MHSAA. In potential or expected emergency situations, officials should leave their phone with the school administrator.
11. Officials are prohibited from connecting with students (“follow”, “friend request”, direct message, etc) on any social media platform which includes any public sites, private sites and direct messages of any kind with high school or junior high/middle school students.

OFFICIALS CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Neutrality is paramount for an official to maintain integrity and credibility, and avoiding even the appearance of partiality should be considered in every assignment accepted in both the regular season and postseason tournament. It is the official’s responsibility to notify their assigner (regular season) or tournament manager (postseason tournament) when a possible conflict of interest arises, so that a possible change in assignment may occur. All potential conflicts are not equal and depend on the sport and the circumstance. An official’s residence, in itself, should not be considered a conflict of interest. Additionally, it will not be considered a conflict if a student participating in the “Legacy” Program officiates contests at the junior high/middle school level. This following list is not exhaustive and officials should use their best judgment in determining whether a conflict exists. Some potential conflicts include:

1. Official’s child attends or is a recent graduate, i.e., within 4 years, of a participating school
2. Official (or immediate family member) is a current or former staff member, i.e., teacher, coach, employee or board member, at a participating school.
NOTE: An exception may be considered for cross country, track & field and/or swimming & diving.
3. Official serves in a formal advisory capacity for a team in the specific sport within 12 months from officiating a participating team.
NOTE: This is not intended to discourage officials from participating in preseason sportsmanship programs, being invited to discuss rules changes or interpretations or from officiating preseason scrimmages.
4. Official has a close connection or relationship to the coach of a participating school.

5. Official is a recent graduate, i.e., within 4 years, or a closely connected alumni of a participating school.
6. Official is a varsity coach in the sport he/she officiates.

NOTE: Varsity coaches are limited to officiate only at the first round of the sport-specific postseason tournament.

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS OF OFFICIALS

MHSAA officials are expected to maintain a certain level of competency by remaining current in rules knowledge and application; officiating theory and philosophy; and mechanics, signals and techniques. Officials should display professionalism, focus, composure, dependability, consistency and contest management skills. They should be approachable and good communicators, but should avoid unnecessary fraternization with coaches or players.

Officiating, like any other avocation, requires time and experience to reach the upper-echelons. It is the goal of the MHSAA that the most qualified officials officiate our postseason tournaments in each sport. While skills in judgment and accuracy are important, they only make up part of the package of a quality official. The best officials have a firm grasp of rules knowledge and practical application, have strong relationship and communication skills, understand that all of officiating decisions begin with timing and utilize common sense and fair play in enforcement.

RECRUITMENT OF OFFICIALS

The MHSAA has a continued commitment to do everything it can to recruit, train and retain officials for interscholastic sports. Concurrently, the MHSAA Representative Council recognized the need to take an active role to increase the number of women and minorities available to officiate interscholastic sports. In May 1986, the MHSAA Athletic Equity Committee was created to develop a specific plan of action to meet these goals.

Recruitment by the MHSAA occurs in many ways: by informing people how to become officials, by sponsoring clinics and rules meetings to prepare candidates for officiating, and by assuring newcomers and veterans that assistance and education will continue throughout their years of officiating.

A successful campaign to recruit and retain officials involves more than MHSAA efforts. The best recruiting tool Michigan has is a current active official and a Local Approved Association which offers accepted training and educational activities. Each year, the MHSAA conducts a Recruiting and Mentorship Coordinator Workshop to develop a recruiting campaign for implementation by Local Approved Associations. This year's campaign is geared toward "Sports Empty Nesters" – primarily focusing on parents of current high school students or recent graduates. Promotional resources and campaign materials can be secured from the MHSAA by association leaders.

Officials are educators who must have an eye for the interested potential official. A potential candidate for officiating is someone who likes sports, physical activity, direct involvement, and wants to contribute directly to the lives of the young adults in our state.

There is no better support for a new official than the opportunity to receive proper training, encouragement, and the chance to officiate alongside an experienced official.

REGISTRATION POLICIES and PROCEDURES

IMPORTANCE OF REGISTERED OFFICIALS

MHSAA registered officials agree to comply with minimum standards for their registration classification. These minimum standards subject them to criminal history background checks; testing in general practices, rules and mechanics; access to membership in a Local Approved Association; and remedial training – all of which help to make sure that contests are officiated safely and fairly by the best and most qualified individuals available. The use of unregistered officials increases risk and liability for schools, and may impact insurance coverage for student-athletes and officials.

Officiating unregistered undermines the basic tenets in officiating including honesty, integrity and fairness. Beyond that, it allows unregistered officials to get something for nothing and cheats the officials that do the right thing and register annually as required.

WHO MUST REGISTER

Michigan High School Athletic Association *Handbook* Regulation II, Section 7 (high schools) and Regulation IV, Section 7 (junior high/middle schools) requires the use of MHSAA registered officials in all interscholastic contests involving member schools. The use of registered officials is required for the following:

- Swimming, Cross Country and Track & Field – The referee and/or starter
- Volleyball – Both referees
- Baseball, Basketball, Competitive Cheer, Football, Ice Hockey, Gymnastics, Boys and Girls Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball and Wrestling – All officials
- Bowling, Golf, Skiing or Tennis – No requirements

OFFICIATING UNREGISTERED/IMPROPERLY

Officials jeopardize their officiating future when they work sports for which they are not registered; and the MHSAA catastrophic accident insurance plan excludes them from coverage during such activity. In addition the liability insurance for each registered official does not exist for a person not registered with the MHSAA.

An individual who officiates knowingly and intentionally unregistered shall be subject to suspension for at least one season. Incidental cases where an individual officiates unknowingly unregistered is subject to review by the MHSAA staff before subsequent registration will be accepted. In either case, any subsequent registration for the unregistered official will require payment by that individual for all registration fees for which he/she is in arrears, including any appropriate late fees. Additionally, the individual is responsible to pay the \$50 **Working Unregistered** penalty fee and/or may be placed on probation (*i.e., ineligible for tournament consideration in all sports for one or more years*).

Individuals that officiate high school contests before completing the required rules meeting in that sport will be responsible to pay the \$25 **Working Improperly** penalty fee.

PREVENTING UNREGISTERED OFFICIATING

Ensuring the use of **ONLY** registered officials for contests involving MHSAA member schools is a shared responsibility between officials, schools and assigners. The MHSAA maintains an updated online Officials Directory where currently registered officials can be verified.

OFFICIALS

If it is learned that an unregistered person is present to function as an official, the MHSAA registered official shall 1) advise the host, 2) remind the host that no MHSAA registered official may work any part of a contest with an unregistered person, 3) delay the start of the contest until a replacement is provided, 4) work the contest only with the registered officials present with the mutual consent of all schools, or 5) postpone the contest. Each contracted official has a responsibility and obligation to assure that he/she works only with MHSAA registered officials. Registered officials are never to work with anyone who does not hold current MHSAA registration in the sport. It is never an option to accept or use the services of an unregistered official.

ASSIGNERS

Assigners shall not assign any unregistered official to a contest involving an MHSAA member school. It is the assigner's responsibility to make certain that officials are registered, even if they are assigned in advance of the registration period of that season. Assigners that have a practice of assigning contests in advance of the season must re-check to see that the assigned officials have registered by the contest(s) date(s). Assigners that assign officials that are not registered by the date of the contest are subject to MHSAA action, including the revocation of their assigning privileges with MHSAA member schools.

SCHOOLS

It is ultimately the responsibility of host schools in particular, and all schools in general, to use only currently registered officials in those positions that require MHSAA registered officials. Schools, conferences and leagues that utilize third-party Registered Assigners must be certain that they are only assigning officials to their contests that have completed all of their registration requirements by the contest date. Schools may also be certain that officials are registered with the MHSAA for a current year by requesting to see the official's registration confirmation or ID. An official creates a cooperative and professional tone by offering the information before being asked.

The prompt and regular submissions of officials' ratings during the season will provide both schools and the MHSAA a better opportunity to identify and address individuals officiating unregistered.

Schools which allow unregistered individuals to officiate their contests subject themselves to the penalties outlined in the *MHSAA Handbook*, including but not limited to censure, probation with or without competition, loss of revenue sharing privilege and/or expulsion. No matter how competent the individual, schools that utilize the services of unregistered officials (even in emergency situations) place themselves in a precarious position with the MHSAA, insurers and the law.

ANNUAL REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

EACH OFFICIAL'S MHSAA EMAIL/USERNAME AND ARBITER EMAIL/USERNAME MUST BE THE SAME EMAIL IN ORDER TO ENSURE COMMUNICATIONS AND TOURNAMENT INVITATIONS ARE RECEIVED.

The registration application period runs from June 1, 2023 to May 20, 2024, and officials' registrations during this period will expire on July 31, 2024. No person may be permitted to register for specific sports after these deadlines:

- Last Monday in October – Football
- Second Monday in March – Competitive Cheer, Gymnastics and Ice Hockey
- Third Monday in May – Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Boys and Girls Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Swimming & Diving, Track & Field, Volleyball and Wrestling

Renewal emails are sent to all individuals registered in any sport the previous school year. The MHSAA is not responsible for mail or email delivery delays or failures, and officials are responsible to renew their registrations by the noted deadlines whether they receive notice or not. Officials should notify the MHSAA of any email and address changes ASAP. Individuals registered as officials the previous school year in any sport are subject to a \$30 late fee for each sport season in which they register in a sport after the following deadlines.

- August 18, 2023 – Football and Volleyball
- November 17, 2023 – Basketball, Competitive Cheer, Gymnastics, Ice Hockey, Swimming and Wrestling
- March 22, 2024– Baseball, Boys Lacrosse, Girls Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball and Cross Country and Track

Amending your registration with additional sports before the deadline outlined above after your initial registration has been processed only requires the payment of the sport fee(s) (if applicable). If the MHSAA office is closed on the late fee deadline, the deadline will advance to the next business day. The late fee will not be waived for any reason.

MINIMUM REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To register as an official with the MHSAA, applicants must be 18 years old, and have graduated from high school or no longer attending high school (See MHSAA Student "Legacy" Officials Program on page 31 for an exception).

The MHSAA reserves the right to reject or revoke the registration of any person who (a) officiates contests for which he/she does not hold a current year registration; (b) fails to honor contracts; (c) fails to present a positive model for youth in terms of personal habits and conduct; or (d) if in its discretion the MHSAA determines that it is unlikely the individual can comply with the requirements set forth. The MHSAA reserves the right to reject an application if there is doubt the applicant can satisfy the community expectations for an official. This includes, but is not limited to, applicants with convictions for any listed offense as defined in the Sex Offenders Registration Act.

MANDATORY EXAMS

All new officials (as well as those not registered the previous year) are required to complete the Principles of Officiating online course and quiz; as well as take an *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* test with a score of at least 70%. The purpose of these requirements is to acquaint officials with MHSAA protocols. Mechanics examinations are mandatory for new officials in either football or basketball (as well as those not registered in that sport the previous year).

Upon receipt of the application for registration, examination instructions for all mandatory exams will be emailed to the registrant by the MHSAA. All exams must be completed online. The *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* and Principles of Officiating PowerPoint can be found under [General Officiating Resources of the Officials page of the MHSAA website](#). Mechanics manuals are located on each sport-specific official's page found on the [Officials page of the MHSAA website](#). Registration for new officials (including those new to football or basketball) will only be completed and confirmed after successful completion of the mandatory exam(s).



CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS

All officials that apply for registration with the MHSAA are subject to criminal history background checks. The official's signature/approval on the registration form gives consent for the criminal history background check to take place. An official who has been convicted of a criminal offense may have his/her registration denied or rescinded. MHSAA staff will review any information submitted by an applicant or others, regarding criminal history and make an individual and confidential determination regarding the official's registration status.

Current state law prohibits public and nonpublic schools from hiring or assigning people whose criminal record checks indicate they have been convicted of a "listed offense" as defined in the Michigan Sex Offenders Registration Act. Any conviction of any of the twenty-seven (27) "listed offenses" at any time shall disqualify an individual from MHSAA registration privileges. Here is link to the Michigan State Police site (FAQ #15) that includes the "listed offenses":

<https://www.michigan.gov/msp/services/sex-offender-reg/more-info/sex-offender-registry-faqs#15>

If the criminal history check reveals the registration applicant has been convicted of a crime, other than a "listed offense", MHSAA staff shall make an individual and confidential decision on the registration status of that individual. Crimes involving violence or threats of violence, controlled substances or financial crimes shall be evaluated in light of the circumstances of the crime, when the crime occurred and the restorative/corrective actions taken by the applicant since the conviction took place.

Any applicant who is denied MHSAA registration may appeal the initial staff decision to the Executive Director, then the Executive Committee and finally the Representative Council. In each case, the applicant has 14 days to submit a written request for appeal based on the published MHSAA Due Process procedures. Any applicant that is denied for criminal history reasons will have their registration fees refunded.

The information provided must be truthful, complete and accurate or the application will be returned or the registration rescinded. Date of birth, gender and race information is required to obtain accurate retrieval of records. The data will be kept CONFIDENTIAL and will only be used for criminal history background checks and cumulative data analysis (e.g., total number of male and female officials). All officials will be subject to ongoing, regular criminal history background checks..

REGISTRATION FEES*

The basic officials registration fee is \$70 and includes registration in up to two sports. Registration in additional sports beyond the second is \$16 per sport registered. The Legacy Student Officials registration fee is \$38 and includes registration in up to two sports. Registrations with the MHSAA include membership with the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO).

LATE FEES

A registration late fee will be assessed to officials registered in any sport during the previous school year (i.e., 2022-23) if they fail to submit a renewal application for registration by the late fee deadlines outlined on page 7.

INSUFFICIENT FUNDS

If an individual issues a check to the MHSAA for any purpose which is returned by the bank, the individual's registration will not be completed until the returned check balance is satisfied; as well as the payment of a \$30 NFS fee. If multiple registration applications are paid for using the same check returned by the bank for insufficient funds, none of the registrations will be completed until all fees for all of the associated applications are successfully submitted.

OUT-OF-STATE or TRANSFER REGISTRATIONS

Residents of all other states are permitted to apply for full-fledged registration with the MHSAA for the same fees and requirements as a Michigan resident. These out-of-state registrants will be tested and will receive rule books, case books and have access to officials manuals and other materials provided to Michigan registered officials. Officials who reside outside of Michigan may be limited in their consideration for MHSAA postseason tournament assignments. See page 25 for details.

RECIPROCAL OFFICIALS

The MHSAA will again permit reciprocal registration for out-of-state residents that are fully registered/licensed officials in their state of residence to register with the MHSAA as a Reciprocal official. Reciprocal officials will be able to register with the MHSAA at a reduced rate but reciprocal registration will include no NFHS books, manuals or resources as those will be supplied by the official's state of residence. Reciprocal officials are eligible to work MHSAA tournament contests at the first level (District or Regional depending on the sport) if those tournament requirements have been completed.

TRANSFER OFFICIALS

Officials which held (or hold) residence in another state and wish to apply for full-fledged registration in Michigan that includes immediate postseason consideration at all levels may apply for “Transfer” status with the MHSAA. In Michigan, “Approved” is the highest level an official may obtain. This status is traditionally achieved by receiving a minimum of 16 ratings with an average of 3.0 or better over a three-year period. If granted this temporary status, transfer officials will be classified as “Approved” for a maximum period of two (2) years. During this time, transfer officials must still complete all other requirements if they would like postseason consideration. After the two-year “Transfer” status expires, the transfer official will be classified by the ratings received during their period of Michigan registration.

To obtain “Transfer” status in Michigan, an official must have been at the highest level in his/her home state in the sport(s) for which he/she is applying for registration in Michigan. This must be indicated on the Transfer Official Information form, to be completed by the official’s previous state athletic association office. This form is available under [General Officiating Resources of the Officials page of the MHSAA website](#).

ADVERSE ACTION PROCEDURES FOR MHSAA OFFICIALS

As independent contractors, officials agree through their annual registration with the MHSAA to abide by the standards in the *MHSAA Handbook* and the *MHSAA Officials Guidebook*, avoid impropriety and not to participate in, or contribute to, misconduct.

If there is a substantiated allegation about an individual’s misconduct, failure to adhere to the standards outlined in the “Code for Officials,” the egregious mismanagement of contests or the persistent misapplication of MHSAA or playing rules, the individual may, after investigation, be censured, placed on probation, suspended or refused registration for one or more years. These actions are not a list of, and do not require, progressive enforcement measures and any may be enforced at the discretion of the MHSAA based on severity or frequency of the violation(s).

Categories of actions include:

- **CENSURE:** A written reprimand
- **PROBATION:** A period of review during which an official is ineligible for postseason tournament consideration in all sports
- **SUSPENSION:** A period of temporary inactivity as a registered MHSAA official
- **PERMANENT SUSPENSION:** Expulsion, denial of MHSAA officials registration privilege

Such actions may be taken by the MHSAA staff after the official has an opportunity to respond in writing to the allegations, but a personal conference is not required. The action may be appealed by the official to the Executive Director. The request to appeal must be received in writing within 14 days after notice of the MHSAA staff’s action is postmarked or personally received, and may include a personal appearance if requested. All actions taken by the MHSAA are governed by the Due Process Procedure of the MHSAA, as published in the current *MHSAA Handbook*.

VIOLATION PUBLICATION POLICY

In an effort to assure that member schools are aware of individuals who are not in compliance with MHSAA procedures, the MHSAA Representative Council adopted a publication policy that certain action taken with regard to officials shall be reported in the *MHSAA benchmarks*.

The reporting of action taken regarding officials has these goals: First, in order to support the vast majority of individuals who maintain their professional obligations, the MHSAA will identify those who are negligent. Second, it is important to inform schools regarding the status of the official they hire to promote the use of qualified persons and to protect schools from liability or embarrassment caused by unqualified or unprofessional persons. The following are potential violations that may be reported in *benchmarks*:

1. Officials who violate *MHSAA Handbook* Regulations shall be reported upon the first instance which results in an MHSAA penalty. The report will include the person's name, city, violation, the comment "**VIOLATED MHSAA REGULATION (specify)**" and the action taken.
2. Officials disciplined for behavior deemed unprofessional by their conduct of failure to adhere to the "Code for Athletic Officials" may be reported upon the first instance. The report will include the person's name, city, the comment "**UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**" and the action taken.
3. Officials who violate the Failure-to-Fulfill policy shall be reported upon recognition of the second incident within a three school year period. The report will include the person's name, city, the comment "**FAILED TO FULFILL CONTRACT**" and the action taken.
4. Persons who officiate any contest involving an MHSAA member school without being registered may be reported. Those working unregistered must complete the late registration procedure and pay the related fees within 30 days of the violation to avoid publication of their name. The report for those who fail to comply will include the person's name, city, the comment "**WORKING UNREGISTERED**" and the action taken.
5. Persons who officiate any high school contest (varsity or subvarsity) before completing the required rules meeting in that sport may be reported. Those working the high school level improperly must pay the related fees within 30 days of the violation to avoid publication of their name. The report for those who fail to comply will include the person's name, city, the comment "**WORKING IMPROPERLY**" and the action taken.
6. An official who submits registration fees by check which are twice returned for insufficient funds, a closed account or any similar reason will be reported. The report will include the person's name, city, the comment "**UNRESOLVED BUSINESS**" and the action taken.

EMBLEMS, LOGOS, PATCHES and UNIFORMS

MHSAA EMBLEMS and LOGOS

The MHSAA emblem or logo on a uniform indicates to school officials, players and spectators that, as an official in the performance of your duties, you are affiliated with and have the support of the Michigan High School Athletic Association. MHSAA officials shall only wear approved uniforms containing the proper MHSAA emblem or logo (depending on sport-specific guidelines) while officiating contests including MHSAA member schools. Additional MHSAA emblems and patches may be purchased for \$1 each at the time of registration.

OFFICIALS' UNIFORM PATCHES

Optional patches are limited to Local Approved Association and American Flags (neither to exceed 2"x3"). All other patches and numbers shall be removed from uniforms while officiating MHSAA contests. Memorial patches may be worn by officials of a Local Approved Association if previous approval is received from the MHSAA, and must meet the following criteria:

- Dimensions shall not exceed more than 3" in any direction
- Shall be located on the right sleeve on the center of the shoulder or below any patch already located in that position
- May be worn for the current and/or next season of the same sport after the death occurred

Association Trainers are permitted to wear an MHSAA-provided "T" patch on the left sleeve of the uniform shirt or jacket, located on the center of the shoulder or below any patch already located in that position.

OFFICIALS' UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS

Officials are expected to wear the proper attire for the sport to be officiated. Uniform shirts should be replaced before they become worn or discolored due to age, perspiration and repeated washings. A proper uniform means quality attire properly fitted and cleaned. Pants and shorts should keep their color. Properly-maintained uniforms and equipment influence the perceived image of the official and help to build confidence and credibility with players, coaches and spectators because the official looks the part.

Officials who work on crews of two or more individuals should wear matching or coordinated uniforms. In most cases this means that all officials on the crew should wear identical uniform shirts, pants or shorts, caps and accessories. However, there

are instances where one or more officials wear one article of clothing that is not the same as the other(s). For instance, it is permissible for the plate umpire in baseball to wear a shirt when the base umpire wears a jacket. It is not a professional look, though, for the umpires in the above example to both wear uniform shirts, but each of a different color. The key is that regardless of the uniform selection, it must be mandated or approved by the MHSAA, it must contain the appropriate MHSAA emblem or logo and it must coordinate with the other member(s) of the crew.

Officials from time to time may choose to wear accessories that support a cause (e.g., a football crew all wearing pink whistles during a contest to commemorate breast cancer awareness). This is permissible as long as it is subtle and in good taste, every member of the crew matches and is an infrequent occurrence. This exception does not apply to mandated uniform shirts, caps etc. If there is a question as to whether the article of clothing or accessory is permissible, officials should contact the MHSAA office for confirmation beforehand.

SPORT-SPECIFIC UNIFORM AND ACCESSORIES INSTRUCTIONS

Baseball – Umpires shall wear a navy blue polo-style shirt with red and white sleeve and collar stripes, and gray slacks. The uniform shirt shall have a horizontal MHSAA logo above the left pocket area. All other articles of clothing, e.g., turtleneck, undershirt, jacket or plate coat) shall be navy blue. Ball bag(s) may be either gray or navy blue. The plate umpire may wear a different uniform top than the base umpire(s); but if multiple base umpires are assigned, they should all wear the same uniform shirt or jacket in style and color. A navy blue umpire cap is required and may be embroidered with the MHSAA logo on the front. Hats with the MHSAA logo are required for any postseason assignments above the District level of the tournament. The belt, shoes and socks shall be black. **OPTIONAL:** Umpires may also wear a powder blue polo-style shirt with navy and white (or red) sleeve and collar stripes as long as all members wearing a shirt wear the same color.

Accessories – Equipment such as masks, indicators and brushes can be of any color. Gloves (if worn) shall be black.

Basketball – Officials shall wear a black and white (1”) striped V-neck shirt and black pants. Officials shall wear a black warm-up jacket prior to the start of the game. The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA officials emblem worn on the left chest pocket area. The belt, shoes and socks shall be black. **NOTE:** Officials may not wear uniforms designed for the college or professional levels, including gray uniform shirts or uniform shirts with solid black shoulder panels.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles should be black.

Competitive Cheer – Judges are required to wear a solid white blouse or top and solid black skirt, suit, dress or dress slacks. Any additional garments such as a blazer shall be black. Shoes worn shall be solid black. Judges must wear an MHSAA officials emblem on the left chest pocket area of the blouse or jacket/blazer, or display the emblem in a clear vinyl badge holder suspended by a black lanyard around the neck. **OPTIONAL:** Judges may wear a long sleeve black pullover with the MHSAA horizontal logo in place of a jacket/blazer. Contact the sport director for authorized purchase options.

Cross Country and Track & Field – Officials shall wear a long sleeved jacket, sweater, pullover or shirt with a red body and collar. The uniform top shall have an MHSAA officials emblem or logo worn on the left chest pocket area. Starters must wear a yellow slip on the sleeve of their starting arm. Officials shall wear black or tan pants or shorts. **OPTIONAL:** Official may wear a red cap or visor.

Football – Officials shall wear a black and white striped shirt with 2” width stripes (long or short sleeve). The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA officials emblem worn on the left chest pocket. Black football officiating pants with the contrasting white side stripe shall be worn. All officials shall wear black belts, shoes, and socks. The referee shall wear a solid white cap while all other officials wear the black cap with white piping. **OPTIONAL:** Crews may wear black officiating shorts for scrimmages or subvarsity contests only.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles should be black. The penalty flag shall be yellow and the bean bags used by a crew must match and may be black, blue or white. Gloves (if worn) shall be black.

Gymnastics – Judges are required to wear a solid white blouse or top and solid black skirt, suit, dress or dress slacks. Any additional garments such as a blazer shall be black. Shoes worn shall be solid black. Judges must wear an MHSAA officials emblem on the left chest pocket area of the blouse or jacket/blazer OR display the emblem in a clear vinyl badge holder suspended by a black lanyard around the neck.

Ice Hockey – Officials shall wear a black and white striped long sleeve collared shirt with either 1” or 2” width stripes as long as the entire crew matches. The MHSAA officials emblem shall be worn on the shoulder of the left sleeve of the shirt. Black hockey officiating pants shall be worn.

Accessories – A black ice hockey helmet is required equipment and must be worn during warm-up periods. An HECC-approved half-face shield is required equipment for MHSAA ice hockey officials. Black skates are required. Whistles should be black or silver.

Boys Lacrosse – Officials shall wear a black and white striped shirt with either 1” or 2” width stripes (long or short sleeve), as long as the entire crew matches in wearing either the traditional (1”) or new, wide striped (2”) shirt. The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA officials emblem worn on the left chest pocket. Black shorts (minimum 6” inseam), full-length black nylon wind pants or black football-style officiating pants with the contrasting white side stripe shall be worn as long as all members of the crew match. Officials shall wear a black cap with white piping. The socks shall be black over the ankle. Shoes shall be black. OPTIONAL: Officials may also wear a black and white striped or solid black long sleeve jacket if all wear the same.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles should be black. The penalty marker shall be a weighted yellow flag (15 inches x 15 inches). Gloves (if worn) shall be solid black.

Girls Lacrosse – Officials shall wear a black and white striped shirt with 1” width stripes (long or short sleeve). The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA officials emblem worn on the left chest pocket. Black shorts (minimum 6” inseam), kilt or full-length black nylon wind pants shall be worn as long as all members of the crew match (i.e., kilts to shorts, pants to pants). Officials shall wear a solid black cap or visor. The socks shall be black over the ankle. Shoes shall be black. OPTIONAL: Officials may also wear a black and white striped or solid black long sleeve jacket if all officials wear the same.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles should be black. The penalty marker shall be a weighted yellow flag (15 inches x 15 inches). Gloves (if worn) shall be solid black.

Soccer – Officials shall wear a USSF yellow/gold shirt. The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA officials emblem worn on the left chest pocket area. Black shorts (recommended 4” above the knee) shall be worn. Black shoes and black stockings with horizontal white stripes are required. OPTIONAL: USSF red, black, green and blue are also permitted, as are older versions with pinstripes, as long as they are not similar to either team’s jerseys and all officials wear a matching color. NOTE: It is recommended that officials wear matching uniform styles during the regular season; matching uniform styles are required starting in the Regional round of the MHSAA tournament.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles may be of any color.

Softball – Umpires shall wear a navy blue polo-style shirt with red and white sleeve and collar stripes, and gray slacks. The uniform shirt shall have a horizontal MHSAA logo above the left pocket area. All other articles of clothing, e.g., turtleneck, undershirt, jacket or plate coat, shall be navy blue. Ball bag(s) may be either gray or navy blue. The plate umpire may wear a different uniform top than the base umpire(s); but if multiple base umpires are assigned, they should all wear the same uniform shirt or jacket in style and color. A navy blue umpire cap is required and may be embroidered with the MHSAA logo on the front. Hats with the MHSAA logo are required for any postseason assignments above the District level of the tournament. The belt, shoes and socks shall be black. OPTIONAL: Umpires may also wear a powder blue polo-style shirt with navy and white (or red) sleeve and collar stripes as long as all members wearing a shirt wear the same color.

Accessories – Equipment such as masks, indicators and brushes can be of any color. Gloves (if worn) shall be black.

Swimming and Diving – Officials shall wear a solid white, short-sleeved collared polo-style shirt and navy blue pants. The uniform shirt shall have a horizontal MHSAA logo above the left pocket area. Officials shall wear white shoes and socks. If a belt is worn, it shall be black or navy. OPTIONAL: During the regular season ONLY, officials may wear navy shorts with lengths extending between mid-thigh and the knees. Beginning in the 2023-24 season, official’s uniform shirts may be the Smitty “bright blue” with the MHSAA logo as long as all officials present match in color. Note that the default color for 2023-24 is white.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles may be of any color.

Volleyball – Officials shall wear a solid white, short-sleeved collared polo-style shirt and black pants. The uniform shirt shall have a horizontal MHSAA logo above the left pocket area. A black warm-up jacket is recommended but, if utilized, shall be worn by all members of the crew. Undergarments, sweatshirts or shirts that extend below the cuff of a short-sleeved officials

shirt are prohibited. **OPTIONAL:** From the start of the season until September 15 in hot weather conditions officials may wear black shorts with length extending between mid-thigh and the knees if all officials present agree and wear the same. If shorts are worn by the crew, socks shall not extend above the ankle. Beginning in the 2023-24 season, officials uniform shirts may be the Smitty “bright blue” with the MHSAA logo as long as all officials present match in color. Note the default color for 2023-24 is white.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles should be black.

Wrestling – Officials shall wear a black and white (1”) striped V-neck shirt and black pants. The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA officials emblem worn on the left chest pocket area. Officials’ belts (if worn), shoes and socks should all be solid black. **OPTIONAL:** Officials may also wear a gray V-neck shirt or an event-provided shirt as long as all officials in attendance wear the same style/color. Officials may also wear a black warm up jacket.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles should be black. Officials shall carry a flip-disk with one red side and one green side and wear one red (left wrist) and one green (right wrist) wristband.

PLAYING RULES and ENFORCEMENT

BASIC TENETS

The playing rules which govern athletic competition between Michigan schools are determined by the Michigan High School Athletic Association according to Regulation II, Section 8. In sports for which the National Federation of State High School Associations publishes a code of rules, those rules govern MHSAA member high schools’ competition without exception (MHSAA Regulation II, Section 8).

Some modifications of National Federation rules are made by the MHSAA for junior high/middle school competition. In addition, member schools may request modifications of rules (deviation request) for subvarsity competition that would reduce competitive demands on younger athletes. No modification of rules may be made without the express written approval of the MHSAA as indicated on a properly authorized “Deviation Request” form (*MHSAA Handbook*).

NOTE: Officials may not grant deviations of Federation rules except when presented with written permission from the MHSAA.

EXPERIMENTAL RULES and QUESTIONNAIRES

Experimentation in the playing rules is conducted annually by the National Federation through implementation of new rules and interpretations within the states. These experimental rules, when in effect, carry the same weight as the codified playing rules. An official may not ignore or fail to enforce these or established playing rules because he/she believes that the rule is improper or incorrect. It is important that officials apply and enforce the rules as they are written and in accordance with the interpretations of the NFHS and the MHSAA.

Each year, the National Federation prepares and distributes a questionnaire in each of the sports for which it publishes playing rules for comment to coaches and officials nationwide. In addition, the National Federation provides a submission period in which new rules and revisions may be proposed. Through this input to the national surveys and through direct representation by Michigan personnel on National Federation committees, the MHSAA and its membership can affect the direction of high school playing rules nationally.

Officials who wish to voice a concern or offer recommendation to a specific sport committee may do so by writing to the appropriate MHSAA staff member. MHSAA sport committees meet annually.

Five sports – bowling, golf, tennis, competitive cheer and skiing – observe rules codes that are not developed by the National Federation. The rules for bowling shall be those of the U.S. Bowling Congress. Golf utilizes those of the United States Golf Association, while the tennis rules shall be those of the United States Tennis Association. The rules for competitive cheer and skiing are those developed by the MHSAA.

SITUATION MANAGEMENT and OFFICIALS REPORTS

NOTE: For the purpose of this *Guidebook* in reference to players, coaches, administrators or spectators being removed from contests or contest facilities by contest officials, the words “ejected” and “disqualified” are synonymous.

PERSONAL ATTACKS

Personal attacks have no place in school sports. Coaches and players that direct personal attacks to contest officials before, during or after a contest are subject to immediate ejection. Personal attacks serve no purpose except to degrade or demean another person. Personal attacks come in three categories:

- Abusive, defamatory or derogatory words or phrases based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion or disability.
- Perceived credible threats or threatening behavior
- Personal insults

Most personal attacks in the first category are self-explanatory. Referencing someone in a derogatory manner by their disability, chiding someone because of their age or religion, using disparaging nicknames based on an individual’s ethnicity or name-calling based on gender or sexual orientation are all completely inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Threats or threatening behavior seem simple enough on their face; however, this category includes more than explicit threats of physical violence. Those, of course, are certainly ejectable, but so is threatening the use of submitting poor ratings as a punitive measure for calls and decisions. Coaches and administrators serve an important role in the rating of contest officials and this privilege should not be abused. Ratings should be submitted objectively and based solely on the criteria listed within the ratings categories. Coaches or administrators who threaten to submit lower ratings (or the insinuation of such) to influence or intimidate an official will be subject to ejection from the contest. This policy does not prevent negative ratings of officials, but ensures that ratings are not being used to coerce officials during the course of their duties.

Personal insults include name calling; the use of derogatory or disparaging comments directed towards an official; or openly questioning the integrity, impartiality, honesty or character of an official. Generally, the use of “You” or “You’re” followed by any disparaging comment would be considered a personal insult.

Coaches, players and administrators should refrain from personal attacks during heated conversations or situations of disagreement. When there is a dispute with an official’s decision, they should focus their disapproval on the judgment or ruling and avoid directing it towards the official personally. Spectators and participants should be aware that often seemingly innocuous statements in the mind of the person making them can be interpreted as a personal insult by others. Some comments that are considered personal insults include:

- “You’re awful!”
- “This crew stinks!”
- “You’re cheating us!”
- “You guys are so bad.”
- “You’re a liar.”
- “You are a jerk.”

NOTE: This personal insult policy applies to officials as well, and violations by officials will result in appropriate action by the MHSAA.

USE OF PROFANITY

The use of profanity is never acceptable; however, absence of profanity does not mean that the comment is any less of a personal insult. Using this type of offensive language cannot be dismissed merely because it wasn't audible to others, or because it was a conversation only between the offender and the official. The MHSAA expects all spectators and participants to maintain a respectable level of personal decorum during contests – even in private conversations.

TAUNTING

1. DEFINITION

“Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters. “Examples of taunting that would lead to ejection include but are not limited to ‘trash talk’; physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game; reference to sexual orientation; ‘in the face’ confrontation by one player to another; standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player (MHSAA Regulation V, Section 3).”

2. ALL SPORTS

“In all sports, officials are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike foul that disqualifies the offending bench personnel or contestant from that contest/day of competition (and the next contest/day of competition). A warning may be given but is not required before ejection (MHSAA Regulation V, Section 3).”

3. ALL MHSAA TOURNAMENTS

“At all MHSAA tournament venues, tournament management may give spectators one warning for taunting. Thereafter, spectators who taunt others are to be ejected by security (MHSAA Regulation V, Section 3).”

OTHER EJECTABLE OFFENSES

The offenses included in the *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* subject to ejection should not be construed as an exhaustive list; but rather, a supplement to the playing rules regarding ejections and disqualifications for each individual sport.

POST-CONTEST EJECTIONS

When a student or coach commits an ejectable offense against an official following the conclusion of the contest, but before the officials have left the facility and/or grounds, an official may disqualify the student or coach as though it had occurred during the contest.

NOTE: This does not apply to situations where an official from an earlier contest remains at the facility as a spectator of a later contest.

EJECTION PROTOCOL

Whenever an official is required to eject an athlete or coach from a contest, there is a protocol that is required:

1. Within the rules of the sport, announce the ejection by making eye contact with the ejected player or coach. Do not make physical contact with the individual. Eye contact can be made from a distance of twenty feet, but should not require an official to be closer than six to ten feet from the individual.
2. Request the player to go immediately to the bench/head coach.
3. One game official will go to the sidelines, make eye contact with head coach and announce that the player (identify by number or lane or some accepted method) has been ejected from this contest and state the reason.
4. Unless players create a disturbance, they may remain on the bench. (“[MHSAA Disqualification Guide](#)”)
5. The ejection of a coach requires that the official approach the coach, announce the ejection to the coach and request that the coach leave the competition area. Ejected coaches must be out of sight of officials, players and spectators. In

- addition, the official must ask which coach or school representative will function as the head coach in the ejected coach's absence.
6. If a coach is ejected from a contest and an assistant coach or an assigned school representative is not available to continue as coach, the event is terminated and forfeited to the opponent. Only assistant coaches or school representatives (verified by the Superintendent or Principal) may act in place of the coach. (MHSAA Regulation V, Section 3(B)).
 7. The ejected coach shall leave the competition area and go to the locker room (indoor sports) or the bus or other area. An ejected coach may not be allowed to become a spectator. ("**MHSAA Disqualification Guide**")
 8. Following the contest, an official shall contact the athletic director of the offending person's school before noon of the next day following the ejection to advise the administration that an ejection occurred and the names of those ejected. This contact may be made after the game contest if an administrator is present or by phone or email the next day. The content of the report SHOULD NOT be emailed to the athletic director directly.
 9. Within 24 hours, an official shall file a written account of the ejection using the **MHSAA OFFICIALS INCIDENT REPORT WRITING GUIDE**. If the ejection was a result of an unsportsmanlike act, conduct or language, the official that ejected the offender must write the report. If the ejection was procedural, the crew chief or lead official may write the report on behalf of the crew.
 10. Incidents that include multiple ejections by individuals from the same school may include all ejected persons in one report. If ejections occur for both participating schools, two separate reports must be completed - though the narratives submitted may be the same for both reports.
 11. Action to eject a coach, player or team representative may not be revoked by the official.
 12. The MHSAA will await the school response from the violating school noting the action taken. Officials should not cite or communicate additional penalties regarding further suspension from play outside of the specific contest in which the ejection occurred. The MHSAA and school will determine and communicate additional penalties that may be imposed. If an official believes that a school permits an ineligible player to participate in future contest, the officials should contact the MHSAA office."

PROTESTS

According to the *MHSAA Handbook*, a protest of a contest is not allowed by the MHSAA when it is based on judgment decisions of officials or on misinterpretation or misapplication of playing rules (MHSAA Regulation V, Section 1). Officials are required to adhere to all provisions of the playing rules which allow for the review of decisions during contests.

TEAM REMOVED FROM COMPETITION

According to MHSAA regulations, if a team is removed from competition in protest, the contest is forfeited to the opponent. The coach and principal of the removed team must appear before the Executive Committee to indicate why additional action should not be taken (MHSAA Regulation V, Section 3(A)). Officials are to notify the MHSAA office promptly in writing when this occurs using the Officials Report Form.

OFFICIALS' EMERGENCY DECISIONS

The MHSAA is confident that with the guidance and direction provided by various MHSAA policies and procedures, every official will exercise common sense "in the spirit of the rules" and according to MHSAA regulations to successfully handle any emergency which arises. An official's decision will be appropriate if the basis for an emergency decision is the adopted rules of the contest and the MHSAA regulations.

Decisions which are not supported by acknowledged and accepted policy or rules will place the officials and the schools involved at risk. An emergency that requires medical attention for an athlete requires the official to maintain his/her role as an official. Officials are not encouraged to take an active part in providing medical care to an injured athlete. The official shall supervise the event within the rules and make such decisions as are necessary within the rules of the contest. Officials will continue to have no role in the determination or diagnosis of a possible concussion.

Officials in MHSAA contests shall act in accordance with the prescribed playing rules in regard to injuries sustained by participants and MHSAA policies. When an official observes that a player has been, or appears to be, injured, he/she will notify the player's head coach. If the playing rules provide that the player is removed from play for a specified period of time, that player shall also be removed.

This notification procedure will apply to all apparent injuries, but does not include a diagnosis or prognosis of the status of the player. An official shall have no role in determining concussion (or symptoms of concussion) other than the obvious one where a player is either unconscious or apparently unconscious. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise that the player should be examined by a health care professional for an exact determination of the extent of injury.

MHSAA OFFICIALS REPORT PROCEDURE

All reports should be submitted through the MHSAA Official Report System by logging into “My MHSAA” at MHSAA.com. Officials that refer incidents via online reports will receive notice by the MHSAA when the incident is resolved.

REQUIRED REPORTS

1. Ejected contestants, ejected coaches, and incidents of crowd disturbance, disqualifications or undesirable behavior.
2. Contests which must be cancelled or terminated by the officials for reasons except weather, or when a team is removed from competition in protest by a coach (*MHSAA Handbook* Reg. V, Section 3A).
3. Significant injuries by contestants that result in emergency procedures to take place.

Once an official has ejected a spectator or participant from a contest, the decision cannot be retroactively withdrawn once play resumes or the officials leave the area following the completion of a contest. An ejection during a contest must be reported and cannot be retracted by the official.

The MHSAA will request that the administrations of the school’s involved conduct internal investigations and voluntarily take punitive or remedial action when appropriate. Additionally, the MHSAA may conduct further investigations and require responsive actions by the schools involved.

REQUESTED REPORTS

When an official deems necessary, he/she may submit a report to notify the MHSAA of the following:

1. Praise of coaches, players, administrators, spectators or any other person or group affiliated or associated with a member school for demonstrating sportsmanlike actions, providing exceptional accommodations, or for any other commendable action;
2. Unsportsmanlike conduct by spectators which goes unchecked by the administration of the school(s) involved; and
3. Facilities, equipment or uniforms that fail to meet the minimum standards of the rule book.

MISCELLANEOUS RESPONSIBILITIES and POLICIES

ELIGIBILITY OF ATHLETES

It is the responsibility of schools to enter into competition only those students who are eligible under MHSAA regulations. Schools, not officials, must monitor adherence to these rules and all other *MHSAA Handbook* regulations. If officials suspect violations, they should report them to the MHSAA after the conclusion of the contest. Officials should not delay or cancel a contest when they believe ineligible athletes may be entered in the contest.

MEDIA and PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

COOPERATION WITH MEDIA

Officials are expected to be cooperative with photographers and members of the media in attendance at athletic events. If at all possible, officials should allow photographers and media members to be present in designated areas, with permission of the host school, in accordance with the rules and guidelines set forth and as not to provide a distraction or interference with the competition.

Officials should be polite and cordial with members of the media, but should avoid commenting on specific plays, calls or rulings from their own or other contests. Questions regarding MHSAA regulations and playing rules and interpretations should be directed to the MHSAA office. Officials should never offer comments to media personnel that criticize or disparage players.

USE OF FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographer MAY use electronic flash/strobe cameras during the progress of a sporting event as long as, in the opinion of the contest officials, the flash does not hinder the actions of or endanger the contestants. The final decision as it relates to electronic flash/strobe equipment rests with the judgment of the site management and contest officials when MHSAA staff is not present at an event. **IMPORTANT-** When determining whether or not the use of electronic flash/strobe equipment represents a hindrance to an event, do not evaluate the situation while looking directly at the strobe, but rather by taking the view of the game participant or the official who is focusing on the action, not the strobe, and is not aware of when the strobe is about to go off. Strobes properly positioned **DO NOT** pose a threat to the conduct of most contests. If, after careful consideration, the strobe is determined to be a problem, game management should work with the photographer using the strobe to review the strobe's placement, flash strength and direction. Sometimes, adjusting a strobe so that the flash bounces off the walls or ceilings will correct any potential problems. The only sports in which the use of electronic flash/strobe equipment is prohibited are: competitive cheer, gymnastics and diving. Requests to use strobe lights mounted to fixed positions shall be made well in advance of the contest. As a courtesy, contest managers or the MHSAA should inform participating coaches and contest officials that photographers have been approved to use strobe lights in fixed positions. Strobes should be placed in corner or ceiling positions, and should never be placed in the direct line of a basket in basketball or focal point common to that sport. Camera-mounted strobes must always be positioned similarly as fixed strobes. A camera operator with an on-board strobe shall shoot outside the edges of the free thrown lane in basketball, for example.

MEDIA and PHOTOGRAPHER PLACEMENT

Photographers for other sports shall be placed in positions in accordance with National Federation of State High School Associations National Rules. In the sports of football, for example, photographers shall be positioned behind the restraining line, which is two or more yards from the sidelines and end zones. In addition, photographers shall not be positioned in the team boxes between the 25-yard lines.

Also, in the sports of baseball and softball, photographers are prohibited from being in live ball areas. If a designated media area is used, it shall be established before the game begins, shall be outlined and shall be considered a dead ball area regardless of whether it is occupied or not.

In soccer, photographers should not be positioned within two yards of any sideline or endline. Some venues and events will have designated areas from which photographers may shoot. Game officials and host management have the authority to remove any member of the media for not staying in their designated areas in any sport.

SCHOOL CONTEST CONTRACTS

Officials in Michigan are independent contractors and are responsible for arranging their own schedules. Upon completion of registration, officials may contact junior and senior high schools or Registered Assigners in their area to advise them of their interest and availability. Regular season school contest contracts between officials and schools should be completed well in advance of all contests. They should include specific dates, times, locations, gender of teams, levels of competition and financial provisions. Contracts may be paper contracts or electronic agreements through online scheduling software and may be executed through third-party agreements with Registered Assigners.

The official's school contest contract which is intended to present the school and official with an agreement to govern cancellation of contests. These conditions promote "fair-play" and are listed below. Electronic school contest contracts meet this requirement. School representatives agree to communicate directly with the contracted official(s) prior to the contest, in the event changes or alterations of the school contests contract are necessary.

Unless other provisions are agreed upon in advance by the schools and officials involved, these conditions shall apply:

OFFICIALS SCHEDULES

Officials may not agree to officiate more than one contest on any day with different host schools except when all school contest contracts after the first include written notification that the official is contracted for an earlier contest which may cause late arrival and subsequent delay of that contest. Professionalism dictates that the attention and consideration given each contract shall be absolutely equal and that no student athlete or contracting school shall be jeopardized because an official may be obligated to another contest on the same day. The practice of "double-booking" is unbecoming of an official and will subject the official to school and league sanctions and loss of state association "registered" status.

When an official arrives on site and the schools have agreed to change the scheduled contest to a scrimmage, the official should officiate the scrimmage and will be compensated the same contracted fees for the originally scheduled contest.

REGULAR SEASON CONTEST DELAYS

When a league or conference does not have a written policy regarding late contest start time, the following MHSAA policy shall apply to a school's contract with an official:

1. If a team fails to arrive for a regular-season contest at the time stated on the contract, it shall be necessary for the host administration to delay the contest, declare the game forfeited, reschedule the contest or declare a "no contest."
2. If the host management has been notified of the reason for the delay and projected arrival, the official must stand by for 60 minutes beyond the schedule start time. When the team arrives, a reasonable amount of time must be provided for the visiting team to conduct a pregame warm-up. In any case, warm-up shall not be less than 15 minutes.
3. If the host management has not been notified that there is a delay and the reason for it, the officials have permission to leave the site, without obligation, 30 minutes after the contracted start time has passed.

NOTE: Officials that leave under this policy shall be compensated according to the Non-Act of God Policy.

NOTE: In MHSAA tournament play, the Participating School Tournament Information for each sport will prescribe the specific action to be taken. For regular-season play, league and conference policy supersedes the Regular-Season Contest Delays Policy, so coaches and officials should inquire with their league to see if any policy exists.

OFFICIALS WORKING SHORTHANDED

Officials who work with an incomplete crew from the number that was assigned are entitled to the fee, or an equal portion of the fee, for which the absent official(s) is/are contracted.

OFFICIALS FAILURE TO FULFILL

Officials will adhere to the following MHSAA policy which addresses failure to fulfill obligations for all contests.

1. In the event an emergency causes an official to be unable to fulfill a school contest contract, he/she should contact the athletic director or principal to advise him/her of the problem, or the assigner if the school utilizes a third-party Registered Assigner to contract officials. The official should never expect or allow another person to make the contact for him/her. They shall not send a substitute unless he/she has prior permission from the host school (or assigner).
2. In the event that a contracted official fails to arrive for a scheduled contest, those officials who are present may 1) officiate the contest with less than the usual number of officials; 2) replace the absent official with another registered official to fill-in or 3) cooperate with the involved teams to postpone the contest.

NOTE: It is never an option to accept or use the services of an unregistered official. See the Use of Unregistered Officials Policy.

3. Violations within five days of the contest date which do not include (a) family emergency, (b) personal injury or emergency medical condition or (c) unexpected employment obligations can expect action by the MHSAA which may include censure or probation, suspension or dismissal of registered status. In addition, an official who fails to honor a properly executed school contest contract may be required to pay the school the amount the school is required to pay the short-handed officials due to the official's failure to fulfill.

NOTE: If a school replaces an official with another when the originally-contracted official withdraws from the contract in advance or fails to arrive for a scheduled contest, there shall be no further financial obligation on either the school or the originally-contracted official, though it may still be reported as a failure to fulfill on the part of the official.

CANCELLED CONTESTS

ACT OF GOD POLICY

School contest contracts affected by acts of God or unplayable playing surface conditions shall be maintained according to this schedule:

1. If an official is contacted by a school representative or assigner prior to arriving on site and informed that the school contest has been cancelled due to an Act of God, the official is not entitled to any portion of the contracted fees.
2. If the school contest is cancelled after the official has arrived on site, the official is entitled to 1/2 of the value of the contract or a pre-negotiated travel allowance - whichever is greater.
3. If a school contest is suspended or cancelled after it has begun, or if an official arrives on-site and the contest is cancelled after it has been postponed more than one-and one-half hour from the original start time, the official is entitled to full payment of the contracted fees.

NOTE: In the event that a contest is cancelled when multiple contests are scheduled for the same day, the official is entitled to only the portion of fees in the contract for the contest(s) that were started.

NOTE: Acts of God shall not include low participation numbers due to player injuries, student disciplinary actions or other non-natural events (e.g., band concerts, school plays, class trips) that prevent participants' attendance at the scheduled contest(s).

NON-ACT OF GOD POLICY

When contests are cancelled for reasons other than acts of God (or unplayable playing surface conditions) within five days of the contest date, the official is entitled to full payment of the contracted fee. Of the contest is outside of five days of the contest dates, there shall be no financial obligation on the part of either party.

NOTE: In order to be compensated under this provision, officials (1) may not accept another contest (MHSAA or otherwise) on the same date of the cancellation or (2) refuse to accept a comparable MHSAA assignment for the same date and time, for same or greater compensation and within the approximate same distance radius from the official's home address.

SUSPENDED CONTESTS

Officials are to take action according to the rule book in the sport and that are consistent with the Game Suspension Guidelines. Terminated contests count as a game or day of competition. Suspended contests, continued from the point of interruption, will not count as an additional day of competition. Any contest or game which starts over is to be counted as a new game or day of competition (MHSAA Regulation II, Section 11 (D)).

Contests that are suspended and must be resumed on another date are treated as separate contests as they pertain to the official's obligations. Agreements to determine what compensation is appropriate for the resumed portion of the contest may be determined at the local level when agreed upon by schools, assigners and/or officials. Under no circumstance is an official from the original contest obligated to officiate the remainder of the contest at a later date.

INCLEMENT WEATHER and FIELD CONDITION GUIDELINES

- I. On threatening days, game management should consult with contest officials about steps to be followed if conditions worsen. When postponing or suspending an outdoor contest, officials and game management shall follow these guidelines:
 - A. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the contest must be postponed or suspended. The occurrence of lightning or thunder is not subject to interpretation or discussion – lightning is lightning and thunder is thunder.
 - B. Severe weather in the form of rain, snow, wind or fog may make the field conditions unplayable.
- II. When a contest is suspended, the home school administration shall attempt to arrange for the security of all participants.
 - A. Contestants and support personnel shall be moved to appropriate indoor facilities.
 - B. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard and the contest is postponed or suspended, contestants shall not return to the playing field until lightning has been absent from the local sky and thunder has not been heard for 30 minutes.
 - C. Spectators shall be advised of the action being taken to seek shelter. (Some hosts may be able to offer shelter to spectators but are not required to do so.)
- III. In considering the start or resumption of competition, the following shall apply:
 - A. Delays for contests scheduled prior to 3 p.m. must not accumulate to exceed three hours. Delays for contests scheduled for 3 p.m. or later must not accumulate to exceed one-and one-half hour. Delays on nights not followed by school for all the competing teams may be longer by mutual agreement of participating schools. A postponed or suspended contest may be rescheduled on a date/time mutually agreed to by the schools involved.
 - B. A decision to resume the contest within the time frame must be made by the officials who shall consult the home team and visiting team administration present at the contest.
 - C. The home school is responsible for the facilities and will be given priority consideration in the final decision if there is not consensus among the three parties.
 - D. The final decision shall consider liability and conditions of facilities as well as future schedules, need to play the contest and finally the quality of all other options.

NOTE: More restrictive local policies and MHSAA tournament policies would supersede these guidelines and should be shared with the opponents and official(s) prior to the contest, preferably in writing. Otherwise, and to the extent allowed by the playing rules code, the official(s) will make the final decision regarding game suspension once the game begins.

SCHOOL CONTEST CONTRACT DISPUTES

In accordance with the *MHSAA Handbook*, no dispute alleging failure to honor a contract will be considered by the MHSAA staff or Representative Council unless there is a properly executed school contest contract on file for the contest in question. (MHSAA Regulation V, Section 2). When an official believes that a properly executed contract has not been fulfilled by an MHSAA-member school, the official should attempt to resolve the issue in the following manner:

1. Contact the athletic director of the contracted school and request that the contract be fulfilled.
2. If no response from initial communication, email the athletic director a reminder of the request and include Ryan Wieferich (ryan@mhsaa.com) on the email.
3. If the school refuses to fulfill the contract, disputes the terms of the contract or does not respond to a second request, contact Ryan Wieferich directly (ryan@mhsaa.com) with a request for the MHSAA to resolve the issue. All contract information must be included in the correspondence, including the date, teams, contracted fee or any other terms.

Evidence of the accepted contract (e.g., signature of a paper contract or picture of accepted Arbitrator assignment) must be included

OFFICIALS' RATINGS

SCHOOLS' RATING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Representative Council adopted, in May of 1987, a *Handbook* regulation which makes clear and emphatic the responsibility of MHSAA member high schools to rate officials who work contests (home and away) involving their teams in sports for which officials' ratings are maintained (See Online Ratings below for specific sports). The MHSAA has integrated its online ratings system for schools with Arbiter using assigners so that the school contest(s) and assignments feed into a contest calendar. Additionally, schools may add officials to contest calendars when they are not immediately transferred.

High schools which fail entirely to rate any varsity officials during the season shall be subject to the penalties outlined under Regulation V, Section 4(A), including any or all, but not limited to, censure, probation with or without competition, loss of privilege or revenue sharing and/or expulsion. Regulation II, Section 7(B) applies only to high schools. Junior highs and middle schools are urged to rate officials as well. It is expected that athletic directors rate the officials or monitor the ratings by their coaches. While it is important that officials be rated while the contest is still fresh in the coach's mind, coaches are limited to submitting ratings only after 48 hours has passed so that a proper assessment of the official's work can be made when the intensity of the contest has had an opportunity to pass.

RATING CRITERIA

The current system serves the purposes of offering coaches an opportunity to provide input into the rating of officials, to provide officials knowledge of what coaches think of their work and to give officials a sense of where they rate in comparison to previous years and other officials. The MHSAA does not maintain this system to be a perfect procedure for determining every official's position amongst his/her colleagues. While it is recognized that ratings from coaches will not be exact, they are used as one of several factors for postseason tournament considerations of officials.

The MHSAA defines a "rating" as a subjective estimate of an official's ability as observed by a coach involved in the contest for which the official is rated. Ratings are mandated for varsity contests and strongly recommended for subvarsity contests. Coaches should rate each individual who works their game, whether home or away. In either case, the MHSAA does not inform officials of the rating given to them by individual schools; only what schools have submitted ratings on their behalf.

Ratings must be submitted online at mhsaa.com for the sports of baseball, boys and girls basketball, girls competitive cheer, football, ice hockey, boys and girls lacrosse, boys and girls soccer, softball, volleyball and wrestling. Coaches or school administrators need to log into the site using their email address and password to submit online ratings, and then follow the step-by-step instructions on the site to submit online ratings.

Officials are listed as Approved, Supplemental or General. An Approved official must have received 16 or more varsity ratings within a three-year period with an average of 3.0 or less. Supplemental officials include those officials with 6-15 varsity ratings or officials with 16 or more varsity ratings whose averages are greater than 3.0. General officials include those officials with 5 or less varsity ratings or those officials with 6-15 varsity ratings whose averages are greater than 3.0.

RATING SCORES

Throughout the season, each member school is required to submit to the MHSAA the ratings of all officials observed. Each rating will be included in the official's record in order to compute an average rating. An official's average rating is a composite of three years of ratings. Every year the ratings from three years ago are dropped and the current year is added. Each official shall be rated considering each of the four categories – (a) Attitude and Effort; (b) Presence and Demeanor; (c) Administration and Communication; (d) Judgment – using the following rating values:

Superior (5) – Performance demonstrates an exceptionally high degree of competence and knowledge of the category.

Above Standard (4) – Performance exceeds the standard and performance better than the average official in the category.

Meets Standard (3) – Performance is standard and expected, and official is functional and competent in the category.

Marginal (2) – Performance acceptable, but corrective action and remedial training is suggested in the category.

Below Standard (1) – Performance unacceptable and corrective action is clearly necessary.

RATING CATEGORIES

For each category rating, coaches should determine the skills and abilities of the individual official as they compare to the expectations at the specific level (*i.e., varsity or subvarsity*).

For each contest rated, officials will receive a rating in each of main categories, which will be averaged together to create a contest rating. These contest ratings are the scores used to determine an official's 3-year average. When calculating an official's 3-year average, the top and bottom 5% of ratings will be trimmed.

When an official receives a rating value of Marginal (2) or Below Standard (1) in a category, the school is also required to indicate a specific area of improvement suggested for the official. Each rated category and included areas of improvement are listed below. MHSAA expectations of those subcategories are included within, and selection of an area for improvement by a school indicates perceived diversion from the definition and a need for improvement.

Each rating category consists of multiple areas of assessment. The following list provides a description of each of the expectations in those areas:

Judgment

- **Consistency**
Maintains a uniform philosophy in application of calls, decisions, penalties and technical aspects of the position in accordance with the standards mandated by the MHSAA.
- **Accuracy**
Correctly makes decisions in judgment for rulings, calls and decisions in a completely objective manner.

Presence & Demeanor

- **Appearance in Uniform**
Displays adequate physical condition, proper body language and appears confident in mannerisms, movements and interactions. Uniform worn is style mandated (or accepted) by the MHSAA; includes proper emblems, patches, or logos; and is kept in a clean, neat condition.
- **Composure/Approachability**
Demonstrates proper self-control and poise while handling unusual or high-pressure situations. Actively listens and effectively communicates using appropriate volume, tone and assertiveness based on the situation.
- **Mobility (if applicable)**
Possesses adequate physical ability, athleticism, coordination and agility to carry out required duties during the contest.

Attitude & Effort

- **Professionalism**
Represents the MHSAA and the avocation in a proper and positive manner by exhibiting honesty, integrity, dependability, and responsibility. Makes all calls, decisions and enforcements of penalties solely on the present circumstances and not in regard to any previous history or incident(s).
- **Focus**
Displays a consistent level of concentration and alertness throughout the contest without regard to the score, standings, weather conditions or other circumstances.
- **Fraternization**
Avoids unnecessary or excessive casual conversations with players, coaches or spectators during the contest.
- **Hustle (if applicable)**
Moves with a purpose and in an energetic manner.

Administration & Communication

- **Dependability/Punctuality**
Provides proper communication with administrative officials regarding schedule and contest details when appropriate. Arrives in time to properly prepare for the contest and is available to start at the scheduled time to begin.
- **Contest Management**
Displays the ability to control the contest with an appropriate level of authority. Does not intentionally and unduly draw attention to oneself, but also does not hesitate to make difficult and/or unpopular decisions regardless of the expected response. Makes a best effort to maintain a proper flow throughout the contest and pays attention to the details associated with handling of escalating situations and weather concerns.
- **Clarity/Conciseness**
Skillfully communicates with administrators, coaching staffs and players before and during the contest. Provides clear and reliable answers to questions when appropriate.
- **Rule Knowledge/Application**
Properly enforces rules, interpretations and regulations without regard to personal preferences or biases.

PROCEDURE FOR COMMENT

FEEDBACK ON OFFICIALS

Coaches who wish to comment on specific officials should work through their athletic directors. If the concern is primarily regarding the skills, abilities or judgment of an officials decisions, this should be referenced to the league/conference, Local Approved Associations and/or the school's Registered Assigner.

If the concern is a result of perceived consistent rules misapplications or misconduct by the official, the athletic director should be consulted to make a determination as to whether the MHSAA should be contacted. If it is determined that this concern warrants further investigation by the MHSAA, the athletic director should contact the MHSAA by email or phone call.

MHSAA POSTSEASON TOURNAMENT OPPORTUNITIES

TERMS and CONDITIONS FOR TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS

1. **TOURNAMENT FEES:** Officials will receive remuneration according to the detailed information published in the Officials Tournament Fees chart in the Appendix on page A-2.
 - a. Mileage is paid to all officials traveling at distances over 50 miles (round trip). For each mile traveled over 50 miles (round trip), an official will receive \$.40 per mile.
 - b. Per diem and/or housing may be provided to officials for assignments as determined appropriate by the MHSAA staff.

NOTE: Officials who attend as spectators are not afforded free admission to regular-season contests or MHSAA Tournament events.

2. MHSAA OFFICIALS TOURNAMENT ASSIGNMENT PHILOSOPHY

It is the goal of the MHSAA to ensure that postseason tournament contests are officiated by the most competent and qualified officials available. To that aim, the MHSAA has instituted minimum requirements and preferences for all sports, and other requirements and preferences for individual sports, to qualify for postseason consideration. This philosophy of the assignment process is to put in place officials that work the sport regularly; are familiar with the current rules, interpretations and technical aspects of the position; and who have the dedication and commitment to the MHSAA and educational athletics. The following are the MHSAA considerations when assigning postseason officials:

- a. Minimum Requirements Completed

NOTE: Beyond the first level of the tournament, preference will be given to those officials that complete and pass the annual Rules Exam in that sport; and, in some sports, this may be a requirement for selection at some levels.
- b. Placement of the best available officials on the most challenging and highest profile contests
- c. Pairing of officials with contests in which they're familiar with the level of competition
- d. Consideration of geography and distance of travel
- e. Promoting the advancement of qualified officials to the next level(s) of the tournament
- f. Assigning veteran officials with up-and-coming officials

3. TOURNAMENT SELECTION CRITERIA AND DEADLINES FOR ALL SPORTS

Tournament officials' selections are made by staff and MHSAA selection committees based on a collection of criteria including ratings data; experience in the sport; recommendations by Local Approved Associations, Registered Assigners and leagues/conferences; previous tournament history; observations and the requirements and preferences included in the MHSAA Officials' Tournament Assignment Philosophy.

Only officials that reside with the state of Michigan are eligible for tournament consideration beyond the first level within that sport, and current MHSAA coaches in the particular sport are prohibited from receiving any postseason assignments beyond the first level.

All postseason requirements for the 2023-24 school year must be submitted by officials in each sport by the deadlines indicated below:

CLICK HERE for a Postseason Eligibility Checklist

2023-24 DEADLINES

Fall Sports

9/13/23 – Boys Soccer, Cross County and Volleyball
9/20/23 – Football
10/4/23 – Girls Swim (LP)

Winter Sports

12/6/23 – Wrestling
1/3/24 – Basketball
1/10/24 – Girls Swim (UP) & Ice Hockey
1/17/24 – Competitive Cheer and Gymnastics
1/24/24 – Boys Swim

Spring Sports

4/10/24 – Girls Soccer, Softball and Track
4/17/24 – Baseball and Boys Lacrosse



SPORT-SPECIFIC TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS/RESTRICTIONS

BASEBALL

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting and officiated a minimum of 12 contests during the current season.

Regional or Semifinal/Final Level(s): An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years, have (at minimum) a 2.3 three-year average rating, be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport and complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Postseason Limitations: An official that works a Semifinal/Final is ineligible for another Semifinal/Final consideration for the next three seasons.

BASKETBALL

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting, officiated a minimum of 10 contests during the current season (with at least six contests in the gender of the tournament the official seeks consideration), submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years and be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport.

District or Regional Level(s): An official must have (at minimum) a 2.7 three-year average rating.

Quarterfinal or Semifinal Level(s): An official must have (at minimum) a 3.0 three-year average rating and shall complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Final Level: An official must have (at minimum) a 3.5 three-year average rating and shall complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Postseason Limitations: An official that works a Final in either gender tournament is ineligible for another Final consideration in that gender for the next three seasons.

COMPETITIVE CHEER

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting, submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review and be listed as a member in good standing with a LCA in the sport.

CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK AND FIELD

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting.

FOOTBALL

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting, have officiated a minimum of five contests during the current season (four at the same position*), submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years and be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport.

Pre-District, District or Regional Level(s): An official must have (at minimum) a 3.0 three-year average rating.

Semifinal or Final level(s): An official must have (at minimum) a 3.5 three-year average rating and shall complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Postseason Limitations: An official that works a Final in any position is ineligible for another Final consideration for the next three seasons.

** Individuals who officiated at either the Side Judge position or Field Judge position during the season may count those games to qualify on a crew as a Head Linesman, Line Judge or Back Judge. Officials selected for the Side Judge or Field Judge positions for the Semifinal and Final levels will be considered from a list of eligible officials that have worked a minimum of four games during the current season at the Side Judge, Field Judge, Back Judge, Head Linesman or Line Judge position(s).*

GYMNASTICS

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting and submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review.

ICE HOCKEY

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting and have officiated a minimum of 12 contests during the current season.

Quarterfinal, Semifinal or Final level(s): An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years, have (at minimum) a 2.3 three-year average rating and complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

BOYS LACROSSE

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting, have officiated a minimum of 10 contests during the current season and be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport.

Semifinal or Final level(s): An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years and have (at minimum) a 2.3 three-year average rating.

GIRLS LACROSSE

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting, have officiated a minimum of 5 contests during the current season and must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review.

Semifinal or Final level(s): An official must have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years and have (at minimum) a 2.3 three-year average rating.

SOCCER

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting and have officiated a minimum of 5 contests during the current season.

Regional level: An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years, have (at minimum) a 3.0 three-year average rating and be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport.

Semifinal Level: An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years, have (at minimum) a 3.0 three-year average rating, be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport and complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Final Level: An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years, have (at minimum) a 3.5 three-year average rating, be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport and complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Postseason Limitations: An official that works a Final in any position for either gender tournament is ineligible for another Final consideration in that gender for the next three seasons.

SOFTBALL

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting and officiated a minimum of 12 contests during the current season.

Regional, Quarterfinal or Semifinal/Final Level(s): An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years, have (at minimum) a 2.3 three-year average rating, be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport and complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Postseason Limitations: An official that works a Semifinal/Final is ineligible for another Semifinal/Final consideration for the next three seasons.

SWIMMING & DIVING

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting.

Final level: Selections based on the recommendations each official receives, letters of praise/concern and in consultation with Regional and/or Final Meet managers.

TRACK AND FIELD & CROSS COUNTRY

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting.

VOLLEYBALL

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting and officiated a minimum of 10 contests during the current season.

Regional, Quarterfinal or Semifinal/Final Level(s): An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years, must have (at minimum) a 2.3 three-year average rating, be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport and complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Postseason Limitations: An official that works a Semifinal/Final is ineligible for another Semifinal/Final consideration for the next three seasons.

WRESTLING

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year rules meeting, have officiated a minimum of 10 contests during the current season, submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, have compiled at least 75 ratings over the previous three years, be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport and shall complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

District Level: An official must have (at minimum) a 3.0 three-year average rating.

Regional Level: An official must have (at minimum) a 3.2 three-year average rating.

Final Level: An official must have (at minimum) a 3.5 three-year average rating.

Postseason Limitations: An official that works three consecutive Finals is ineligible for Final consideration for one season.

4. TOURNAMENT INVITATIONS

- a. Officials shall indicate their availability for tournament dates in the sport prior to the mandated deadline.
- b. Officials will be notified via email or Arbiter that they have received an assignment in the postseason tournament. It is critical that the email address used for access to the MHSAA.com website and the Arbiter website are the same. Failure to have consistent emails for both sites may result in officials not being considered for tournament officiating positions.
- c. The officials should accept or decline the assignment invitation as soon as possible so that arrangements can be confirmed or adjusted.
- d. If it develops that the services of any official invited are not needed for any or all dates involved, the official may be reassigned or the invitation withdrawn.
- e. In the event that the official requires a substitute, the official shall notify the appropriate MHSAA staff and/or the tournament manager immediately.
- f. Officials may not provide their own substitute for any tournament assignment.
- g. Officials for which substitutes are arranged may be removed from any remaining tournament opportunities for that tournament.
- h. By accepting any tournament invitation, the official acknowledges compliance of all requirements and conditions outlined within the current *MHSAA Officials Guidebook*.

5. COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING

- a. Neutrality and avoidance of even the appearance of impropriety are important concepts to which officials should adhere. It is expected that officials will notify the MHSAA when any condition or relationship exists with a school, player or team which may suggest a conflict of interest. Potential conflicts of interest should be declared through the MHSAA website under the Officials Services menu. The Conflicts of Interest Policy can be found on page 3. If there is any question, contact the appropriate MHSAA staff who will determine if action is necessary. When possible, the MHSAA will reassign an official rather than deny him/her an opportunity to officiate.
- b. Tournament managers will provide local information (i.e., maps, times, dates and other appropriate details) which will assist the official in fulfilling the tournament opportunity. If an official is assigned to a contest late, or does not hear from the tournament manager within a reasonable time before the contest date, he/she should reach out to the tournament manager to request these details and confirm his/her assignment.
- c. Officials agree to comply with all uniform requirements outlined in the current *MHSAA Officials Guidebook*.

REGISTERED ASSIGNERS

MANDATED USE OF REGISTERED ASSIGNERS

High schools and junior high/middle schools which sponsor competition for member high school or junior high/middle school teams, and utilize and pay for services of a third-party, non-school assigner for high school officiating contests, shall use only those assigners who are Registered with the MHSAA for the current year (*MHSAA Handbook* Regulation II, Section 7(C)).

Even when a league, conference or school utilizes the services of a Registered Assigner to arrange or contract officials for their contests (including the assigner issuing electronic agreements or school contest contract on their behalf), the ultimate responsibility for the contracting of officials is retained by the leagues, conferences or schools.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Assigners who are not full time employees of leagues, conferences or schools, but are endorsed or appointed by a league, conference or school are required to become an MHSAA Registered Assigner in order to perform assigning services.
2. Assigners will annually apply for registration with the MHSAA as a Registered Assigner, including payment of the registration fee.
3. Assigners will be obligated to attend and complete the annual Assigners and Association Leadership Meeting.
4. Assigners are required to comply with all applicable state, federal and local laws and ordinances.
5. Assigners will be subject to all MHSAA applicable regulations, standards, policies and practices which apply to the conduct, contracting, training, selection and sanctions of officials.

STANDARDS FOR REGISTERED ASSIGNERS

It is expected that MHSAA Registered Assigners follow all published professional conduct requirements outlined in the Standards listed below. Any violation of these standards will place the Registered Assigner at risk of losing his or her registered status after review by MHSAA staff, as outlined in the Adverse Action Procedures for MHSAA Officials and Registered Assigners.

1. Registered Assigners may schedule only MHSAA Registered Officials for all contests involving MHSAA member schools.
2. Registered Assigners shall conduct their assigning business in a professional manner becoming of their position, and shall not demean or ridicule officials either publically or privately.
3. Registered Assigners shall not attempt to interfere, undermine or sabotage the relationships between other assigners and officials or other assigners and schools, leagues or conference by disparaging word or action.
4. Registered Assigners may require membership by an official in a Local Approved Association for that sport in order to be assigned games under control of the assigner, but shall not require membership in any particular officials association.
5. Registered Assigners may not discourage the communication between officials and leagues, conferences or schools; or discourage or intimidate officials from accepting games directly from schools at any time, either along with or in combination with games received from an assigner; nor shall Registered Assigners discourage, intimidate or threaten officials from accepting games or assignments from other assigners at any time.
6. Registered Assigners may not withdraw school contest contracts extended to officials or reassign them to another official, except in cases of personal emergency which will not permit an official to officiate on the contest day once that sport season has begun except under the direction of the hiring school.
7. Registered Assigners shall not require an official to pay a fee to participate in a specific camp, clinic or training activity to be trained, evaluated and/or considered for assignments under the control of the assigner; however, requirements for officials' involvement in free events, for the same reasons, are permitted.
8. Registered Assigners shall be paid by either (a) a league, conference or school, or (b) the members of an approved association who elect or hire an individual to assign for them, but shall not collect fees for service from any combination of the two. Assigners may not collect fees for assignments with MHSAA member schools from officials directly. Turn-back fees paid to an assigner by an official do not violate this concept.

9. Registered Assigners may not accept funds earmarked for officials' game fees from a league, conference, school or facility and then pay officials directly for games officiated. Payment to officials for contests officiated shall come directly from the school or through the school via a third-party electronic payment service.
10. In the event a Registered Assigner, league, conference or school does not utilize the MHSAA contract (hard copy or electronic agreement) for officials, all comments, actual and implied, and all terms and conditions which appear on the published MHSAA contract, shall be acknowledged and will be applicable to any MHSAA Registered official.

LOCAL APPROVED ASSOCIATIONS

The Michigan High School Athletic Association's program for recruiting, retaining and training officials depends heavily on the involvement of Local Approved Associations. Therefore, it is the goal of the MHSAA to have every official a member of, and active in, one or more Local Approved Associations and to engage the assistance of these associations in a variety of supportive roles, including:

1. Recruiting, encouraging and mentoring new officials;
2. Administering local training sessions and hosting camps/clinics;
3. Ensuring member compliance with registration, testing and Member in Good Standing status; and
4. Assist with the observation and recommendation of officials for postseason tournament consideration

ANNUAL APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

Local Approved Association status will be granted annually to all local associations that qualify by meeting the following requirements:

General Requirements

1. Groups seeking recognition from the MHSAA as a Local Approved Association must submit a Local Approved Association Resolution, along with the annual registration fee and required attachments including:
 - a. **New Registrations** – Association Constitution, membership roster, Trainer Nomination Forms, Registered Observer Nomination Forms and rookie and sport-specific meeting details.
 - b. **Renewal Registrations** – Trainer Nomination Forms, Registered Observer Nomination Forms and rookie and sport-specific meeting details.
2. Maintain a minimum roster of 30 members in each Local Approved Association
 - a. Local Approved Associations in Zones 7 and 8 (Northern Michigan and Upper Peninsula areas) are only required to have 15 members.
 - b. Single sport associations in all eight zones for the sports of competitive cheer, gymnastics, boys and girls lacrosse, ice hockey, soccer and swimming are only required to have 15 members.
3. Host the minimum number of "rookie" and sport-specific in-person meetings as outlined below.
 - a. A minimum of three "rookie" meetings must be tentatively scheduled - one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. However, a "rookie" meeting only need to be held if new officials that have not previously attended a "rookie" training are part of the association. Required "rookie" meetings are not designed for sport-specific rules and technical content; rather, these meetings are intended to provide information on administrative, contest management and handling situations duties.
 - b. A minimum of three meetings in each sport sponsored must be held during the year, covering rules, interpretations, theory and philosophy. (These are the meetings referenced in the Members in Good Standing section which require minimum attendance requirements. General membership meetings are not calculated in the MHSAA minimum attendance requirements.)
 - c. In the sports of baseball, basketball, football, ice hockey, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, soccer, softball, volleyball and wrestling, associations must host at least three hours (accumulative) of mechanics and techniques training per year.
4. Associations may require higher membership standards than the MHSAA minimums. It is suggested that associations base their membership standards (e.g., meeting attendance, dues, etc.) on the current season.
5. Maintain and report the Members in Good Standing in each sport by the required submission dates.
6. Report sport-specific member recommendations by required submission dates.
7. Ensure attendance by a leadership representative at the annual MHSAA Assigners and Association Leadership Meeting.
8. Ensure attendance by the Recruiting and Mentorship Coordinator, Registered Trainers and Registered Observers at Officiate Michigan Day trainings.

RECRUITING and MENTORSHIP COORDINATOR

The Recruiting and Mentorship Coordinator is a required association position.

1. Must be elected or appointed by or to the Local Approved Association's board.
2. Shall attend mandated Officiate Michigan Day trainings when offered by the MHSAA.
3. Serves as the point person for communication with the MHSAA on all things recruiting and retention at the association level. Distributes state-level messaging to local members and manages local recruiting efforts.
4. Develops a continuity and succession plan for association
5. Responsible for the fulfillment of requirements for "rookie" meetings.

NOTE: Three "rookie" trainings shall be tentatively scheduled each year – one per season – lasting a minimum of two hours (only if new officials that have not previously attended a "rookie" training are part of the association). Content areas for "rookie" meetings include:

- Local Approved Association contacts
- Becoming familiar with the scheduling system
- How to get assignments
- Pay scales
- Mentorship Program and Legacy Program
- Conduct and deportment
- Handling situations

ASSOCIATION TRAINERS

At least one Trainer is required for each sport sponsored by a Local Approved Association that sponsor baseball, basketball, competitive cheer, football, ice hockey, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming & diving, volleyball and wrestling.

Individuals selected to earn the title "Trainer" must (re)qualify by meeting specific minimum standards.

1. A Trainer shall be currently registered and complete the annual rules test in the sport for which he/she is endorsed.
NOTE: It is preferred that a Trainer only serve in that capacity in one sport annually.
2. A Trainer must be endorsed and appointed by the Local Approved Association of which the official is a Member in Good Standing. A league or conference may request appointment of Trainer through a Local Approved Association.
3. A Trainer should have five years varsity experience in the sport for which he/she is endorsed by the Local Approved Association or extensive experience at the college or professional level in the sport.
4. A Trainer must be committed to the sport. Working with other Trainers, supporting the MHSAA training philosophy and dedication to study and teaching development are indications of commitment.
5. A Trainer shall have demonstrated communication skills which identifies him/her as an empathetic teacher and sensitive mentor.
6. A Trainer is required to attend mandated Officiate Michigan Day trainings when offered by the MHSAA.
7. Trainers in each sport shall conduct at least three sport-specific educational meetings per year, or one meeting per month during the specific sport season, covering rules, interpretations, theory and philosophy.
NOTE: One of these meeting must take place prior to the start of the sport season.
8. Trainers shall conduct mechanics and techniques training of at least three hours (minimum hours do not have to be completed in one event or setting).
NOTE: Only required in baseball, basketball, football, ice hockey, boys and girls lacrosse, soccer, softball, and wrestling – though it is recommended that any Trainer take advantage of technical training opportunities.
9. Trainers will accept that their candidacy status is subject to review by the MHSAA and may be denied or revoked if it is determined to be in the best interest of the MHSAA.
10. Trainers will be provided "T" patches that can be worn on the left sleeve of their uniform shirts to indicate their status with the MHSAA. These patches shall only be worn on uniforms for the sports, and only during the season, which they are a Trainer. If an official is discovered to be wearing a "T" patch without authorization, or in conflict to the above conditions, it is grounds for sanctions by the MHSAA.

MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING (MIGS)

Associations should regularly update their lists of Members in Good Standing (MIGS) to ensure their rosters are accurate and up-to-date by the season deadlines listed below. It is suggested that associations adjust their dues deadlines and meetings calendars to correspond with these submission deadlines. Failure for associations to maintain updated MIGS, or to have schedules that would not allow members to complete their mandatory requirements to maintain MIGS status, may limit officials from postseason tournament consideration.

Each local association may determine for itself the standards required for members to maintain “good standing” status; however, an official must, at minimum:

1. Be current on required association dues; and
2. Have attended 50% or more sport-specific association meetings; and
3. Not be subject to association discipline beyond censure (or equivalent)

ASSOCIATION REQUIREMENT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Members in Good Standing statuses of officials and postseason assignment recommendations must be submitted by associations by each of the following deadlines:

- Fall Sports – September 13, 2023
- Winter Sports – December 6, 2023
- Spring Sports – April 11, 2024

ASSIGNER and ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP MEETING

In addition to applying for registration each year, assigners and association leaders are required to attend the annual Assigners and Association Leadership Meeting scheduled for July 15, 2023 at DeWitt High School. Topics to be covered at the Assigner and Association Leadership Meeting includes an MHSAA update, rules information, initiatives and campaigns for the upcoming year and other discussion items and concerns from MHSAA staff and attendees.

MHSAA RECOGNIZED OFFICIALS CAMP/CLINICS

All camps and clinics, in order to be recognized by the MHSAA shall consist of the following:

1. Must be limited to one MHSAA sponsored sport
2. Mandated requirements and minimum time frames
 - a. **Applies to Baseball, Basketball, Football, Ice Hockey, Boys and Girls Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball and Wrestling** - Shall be a minimum of three hours in length, not including breaks or meals (unless a working lunch). The camp/clinic shall also include, at minimum, one and one half hour of active technical or mechanics training (e.g., techniques, footwork, signals, rotations or movements) and a minimum of one and one half hours of classroom training, of which a minimum of 45 minutes must be dedicated to the study of rules and interpretations used by the MHSAA sponsored sport and a minimum of 45 minutes must be dedicated to theory and philosophy of officiating in the sport. The remaining time may cover any area, or review any material, for the sport. All camp/clinic training must take place during a single day or over consecutive days.
 - b. **Applies to Competitive Cheer and Swimming & Diving** - Shall be a minimum of two hours in length, not including breaks or meals (unless a working lunch).
3. At least one clinician must be an official registered with the MHSAA in the sport.
4. Must have the sponsorship and active support of a Local Approved Association.
5. Must submit an MHSAA Recognized Camp/Clinic Application Form, including an agenda or schedule of events to the MHSAA detailing the material and/or topics to be covered.
6. Must submit proof of general liability insurance coverage for attendees and facilities during the date(s) of the clinic (only required for clinic with charged fees for attendance).
7. May charge fees for attendance; however, all fees (excluding the optional costs of rooms and meals) shall not exceed, on average, \$75 per day (e.g., a Friday, Saturday Sunday clinic shall not exceed \$225)
8. Camp/Clinic administrators must accurately track attendance of enrollees to ensure that they are in attendance and submit a list of attendees that successfully met these requirements in a timely fashion following the conclusion of the camp/clinic.

The MHSAA encourages Local Approved Associations to host free and/or low cost camps/clinics that meet the minimum requirements set out above. An association that offers MHSAA Recognized Camps/Clinics may substitute for attendance at required sport-specific meetings of Local Approved Associations (if approved by the Local Approved Association).

Camps/Clinics may begin registering attendees prior to becoming "Recognized" but may not advertise MHSAA recognition unless the application is submitted and approved by the MHSAA. Application as an MHSAA Recognized Camp/Clinic only applies to one event, and to be recognized for future events requires a new and separate application. A list of MHSAA Recognized Camps/Clinics will be posted on the MHSAA website as they are approved, and they will be removed at the conclusion date of the event.

MHSAA OFFICIALS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of the MHSAA Officials Mentorship Program is to provide a formal, structured system to develop new and inexperienced MHSAA officials through mentorship by veteran MHSAA officials. The program is designed to create additional incentives for officials taking on mentor roles within their associations, sets minimum standards for mentor/mentee activities and promotes the recruitment and retention of officials within the Local Approved Association.

The objectives of the MHSAA Officials Mentorship Program are:

- To offer officials guidance and direction early in their officiating careers
- To promote individual development through the transfer of skills, knowledge and insight
- To assist Local Approved Associations in the development of a qualified talent pool
- To provide an additional resource for officials' feedback
- To contribute to official satisfaction and retention
- To develop an internal pipeline for succession planning
- To create a mechanism for the development of future leaders in officiating

You can find further details of the program by viewing the [MHSAA OFFICIALS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINE](#).

MHSAA “LEGACY” STUDENT OFFICIALS PROGRAM

The MHSAA “Legacy” Student Officials Program is a program conceived by officials, teachers of officiating classes and staff members of the MHSAA and was first implemented in 1992. Basic to the program is the belief that properly and adequately coached from the outset, young people with an interest in officiating can develop as capable officials so that in the future they will be prepared to follow in the footsteps of their adult mentors.

It is a goal of the program that student officials learn the correct way to perform as an official. Each student official (enrolled high school student) must be prepared to dedicate time to study, practice and learn officiating skills, as well as officiate sub-varsity contests. Student officials must understand the need for time commitment before they embark on this experience. The student's guide is a veteran official who will chart the course, help arrange contests and introduce the student to the practices and procedures of officiating.

Assistance with tests and clinic experience is part of this responsibility. The teaching guide accompanies the student official to MHSAA rules meetings. Former athletes remain one of the basic populations from which MHSAA contests officials are developed. They enjoy athletics, have an understanding of the games and a love of the competition. In addition, athletes have an understanding and appreciate of the sportsmanship that is important to competition. Becoming a member of the officiating “team” through the Legacy program allows students to remain connected to the sports they enjoy.

During the 2022-23 school year, 180 high school students participated as MHSAA Legacy officials. That class brings the total to 2,410 students who have become registered and active officials through the Legacy program. Since the 2019-20 school year, high school freshman and sophomores have been allowed to participate in the “Legacy” Student Officials Program by serving as officials for middle school/junior varsity contests only.

OFFICIALS' INSURANCE COVERAGE

Annually, because of their independent contractor status, officials should review the insurance issues and needs which surround the active official. Often officials dismiss the need for insurance because there are few instances where they ever known of an official utilizing plan coverage. Annual registration as an official with the MHSAA provides individuals with catastrophic accident medical insurance that cover them while on the premises of and officiating at any event involving one or more MHSAA member schools in sports under MHSAA jurisdiction and while officiating at all MHSAA tournaments. MHSAA registration also provides officials with a membership with the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) which provides additional liability coverages for officials. A listing of coverages provided to official as a result of registration with the MHSAA can be found in the Appendices of this *MHSAA Officials Guidebook* on page A-10.

Each official may be covered under other primary or supplemental insurance coverages through other independent organizations and insurers, or some through their homeowner's insurance coverage. It is suggested that the active official speak with his/her insurance counselor to determine whether he/she has need for additional insurance and to what limits and types those needs might be.

OFFICIALS AWARDS

Annually, awards are presented to MHSAA officials to recognize service, dedication and reliability to the avocation of school sports officiating. MHSAA athletic competitions would not be possible but for the hard work of our officials. Officials maintain the integrity of school sports by ensuring that they are played fairly and safely. Each year the MHSAA seeks to recognize those officials who demonstrate their commitment to school sports through their longevity, mentorship and devotion to the mission and values of the MHSAA.

SERVICE AWARDS

Beginning annually in 1979, the MHSAA has provided its veteran officials plaques to represent their achievements of longevity and endurance officiating of MHSAA sports. Service awards are presented at the Annual Officials Awards and Alumni Banquet to each official who has been registered as an official with the MHSAA in one or more sports for a collective period of 20, 30, 40, 45 and 50 years, respectively.

Officials who have been registered with other state associations may qualify for MHSAA service award honors when their years of registration with another state association is confirmed to the MHSAA six months prior to the time the official becomes eligible for his/her first service award with the MHSAA.

NOTE: Only half of the years of service with other state associations will be accepted as credit towards an MHSAA service award.

RANDY PAULSON LEGACY OFFICIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The late Randy Paulson served as a long-time official and mentor, and the award that bears his namesake is presented annually to the Legacy Student Official that displays service and commitment to the MHSAA Officials Program through participation in the Legacy Student Officials Program.

VERN L. NORRIS AWARD

The recipient is chosen because of the contributions to officiating made throughout his/her career. Special consideration is given to those who have who have recruited, mentored, trained and served local association members as well as the MHSAA. Previous Norris Award Winners:

1992 - Herbert "Ted" Wilson, East Detroit
1993 - Fred C. Briggs Sr., Burton
1994 - Joe Brodie, Flat Rock
1995 - Jim Massar, Flint
1996 - James Lamoreaux, St. Ignace
1997 - Ken Myllyla, Escanaba
1998 - Blake Hagman, Kalamazoo
1999 - Richard Kalahar, Jackson
2000 - Barbara Beckett, Traverse City; Karl Newingham, Bay City
2001 - Herb Lipschultz, Kalamazoo

2002 - Robert Scholie Sr., Hancock
2003 - Ron Nagy, Hazel Park
2004 - Carl Van Heck, Kentwood
2005 - Bruce Moss, Alma
2006 - Jeanne Skinner, Grand Rapids
2007 - Terry Wakeley, Grayling
2008 - Will Lynch, Honor
2009 - James Danhoff, Richland
2010 - John Juday Sr., Petoskey
2011 - Robert Williams, Redford
2012 - Lyle Berry, Rockford

2013 - Thomas Minter, Okemos
2014 - Hugh Jewell, West Bloomfield
2015 - Sam Davis, Lansing
2016 - Linda Hoover, Marshall
2017 - Michael Gentry, Shelby Township
2018 - Jill Baker-Cooley, Big Rapids
2019 - David Buck, St. Joseph
2020 - Hugh Matson, Saginaw
2021 - Lew Clingman, Grand Rapids
2022 - Pat Hayes, Birmingham
2023 - Chuck Walters, Jackson

MHSAA FINALS CERTIFICATES

Each registered official selected and assigned to officiate the final event in any varsity sport postseason tournament will be presented a Certificate of Recognition signifying the event, date and the acknowledgement and appreciation of the MHSAA.

APPENDICES

2023-24 Quick Reference Calendar

SPORT	FIRST PRACTICE DATE	FIRST CONTEST DATE	DAYS OR CONTESTS	OPT OUT DUE DATE	DUE DATE OF RATINGS	MHSAA TOURNAMENT DATES				
						DISTRICTS	REGIONALS	QTR FINALS	SEMI FINALS	FINALS
FALL ●										
Cross Country: LP	Aug 7	Aug 16	15D	Oct 13			Oct 27 or 28			Nov 4
Cross Country: UP	Aug 7	Aug 16	15D	Oct 6						Oct 21
Football - 8 Player	Aug 7	Aug 24	9C	N/A	Dec 1		Oct 27 or 28 & Nov 3 or 4		Nov 11	Nov 17 or 18
Football - 11 Player	Aug 7	Aug 24	9C	N/A	Dec 1	Oct 27 or 28 & Nov 3 or 4	Nov 10 or 11		Nov 18	Nov 24 & 25
Golf: LP Girls	Aug 7	Aug 14	16D	Sep 22			Oct 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 or 14			Oct 20-21
Soccer: LP Boys	Aug 7	Aug 16	18C	Sep 20	Dec 1	Oct 11-13, Oct 16-21	Oct 24-28		Nov 1	Nov 4
Swimming: LP Girls	Aug 7	Aug 16	17D	Nov 13 Dive: Nov 7			Dive: Nov 9			Nov 17-18
Tennis: LP Boys	Aug 7	Aug 14	16D	Oct 4			Oct 11, 12, 13 or 14			Oct 20-21■
Tennis: UP Girls	Aug 7	Aug 14	16D	Sep 30						Oct 4-7
Volleyball	Aug 7	Aug 16	18D	Oct 4	Dec 1	Oct 30-31, Nov 1, 2, 3 or 4	Nov 7 & 9	Nov 14	Nov 16-17	Nov 18
WINTER										
Basketball: Girls	Nov 20	Dec 4	22C	Feb 14	Apr 1	Mar 4 & 6 & 8	Mar 11 & 13	Mar 19	Mar 21-22	Mar 23
Basketball: Boys	Nov 13	Nov 27	22C	Feb 7	Apr 1	Feb 26 & 28 & Mar 1	Mar 5 & 7	Mar 12	Mar 14-15	Mar 16
Bowling: Boys & Girls	Nov 9	Nov 25	24D	Feb 2			Feb 23-24			Mar 1-2
Competitive Cheer	Nov 6	Nov 20	12D	Feb 2	Apr 1	Feb 16-17	Feb 24			Mar 1-2
Gymnastics	Oct 30	Nov 18	15D	Feb 23			Mar 2			Mar 8-9
Ice Hockey	Oct 30	Nov 13	25C	Feb 2	Apr 1		Feb 19-28	Mar 2	Mar 7-8	Mar 9
Skiing: Boys & Girls	Nov 13	Dec 9	17C	Feb 5			Feb 12-16			Feb 26
Swimming: LP Boys	Nov 20	Dec 2	17D	Mar 4 Dive: Feb 27			Dive: Feb 29			Mar 8-9
Swimming: UP Boys & Girls	Nov 6	Nov 18	17D	Feb 12						Feb 17
Wrestling: Individual	Nov 13	Dec 6	14D	Jan 25	Apr 1	Feb 10	Boys: Feb 17 Girls: Feb 18	ALPHA WEIGH-IN		Mar 1-2
Wrestling: Team	Nov 13	Dec 6	14D	Jan 25	Apr 1	Feb 7 & 8	Feb 14	10/23/23 - 1/31/24		Feb 23-24
SPRING										
Baseball	Mar 11	Mar 20	38C	May 8	June 20	May 23, 24, 25 or 28, May 31 or June 1	June 5 & 8	June 8	June 13-14	June 15
Golf: LP Boys	Mar 11	Mar 18	16D	May 8			May 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 or June 1			June 7-8
Golf: UP Boys & Girls	Mar 11	Mar 18	16D	May 17						May 29, 30, 31 or June 1
Lacrosse: Boys	Mar 11	Mar 20	18C	Apr 24	June 20		May 16-29	May 31 or June 1	June 5	June 8
Lacrosse: Girls	Mar 11	Mar 20	18C	Apr 24	June 20		May 16-June 1		June 5	June 8
Soccer: LP Girls	Mar 11	Mar 20	18C	May 8	June 20	May 22-24, May 28-June 1	June 4-8		June 11-12	June 14-15
Softball	Mar 11	Mar 20	38C	May 8	June 20	May 23, 24 or 28, May 31 or June 1	June 8	June 11	June 13-14	June 15
Tennis: LP Girls	Mar 11	Mar 18	16D	May 8			May 15, 16, 17 or 18			May 31-June 1■
Tennis: UP Boys	Mar 11	Mar 18	16D	May 24						May 29-June 1
Track & Field	Mar 11	Mar 20	18D	May 14			May 16, 17 or 18			June 1

- Junior high/middle school fall sports practices may begin on Monday, Aug. 21, 2023 (14th Monday before Thanksgiving).
- May play Thursday in the event of a facility conflict.



2023-24 MHSAA Postseason Tournament Fee Structure

Sport	District	Regional	Quarterfinal	Semifinal	Final
Baseball	\$68	\$68	\$70	\$80	\$90
Basketball	\$70	\$70	\$75	\$80	\$90
Competitive Cheer	\$85	\$ 110			\$125
Cross Country		\$75			\$85
Football - 11 Player	\$70	\$70		\$80	\$90
Football - 8 Player		\$70		\$80	\$90
Gymnastics		\$ 110			\$200/\$150
Ice Hockey		\$70	\$75	\$80	\$90
Boys Lacrosse		\$70		\$80	\$90
Girls Lacrosse		\$70		\$80	\$90
Soccer	\$68	\$68		\$80	\$90
Softball	\$68	\$68	\$70	\$80	\$90
Swimming: Dive Judge		\$ 100			\$150
Swimming: Referee/Starter/AR					\$150
Swimming: Turn Judge					\$130
Track: Starter		\$ 100			\$125
Track: Assistant Starter		\$90			\$125
Track: Referee		\$90			\$125
Track: Clerk		\$90			\$125
Volleyball: R1 and R2	\$68	\$68	\$70	\$80	\$90
Volleyball: Linesman	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$40	\$50
Wrestling - Individual	\$ 175	\$ 160			\$400
Wrestling - Team	\$ 120	\$ 135			\$400

* +\$7 for each team over eight

Representative Council Policies

BASEBALL PITCHING LIMITATIONS

The following pitch count limitations are in place for all MHSAA schools sponsoring baseball at the senior high school and junior high/middle school level.

Senior High School (Grades 9-12)		Junior High/Middle School (Grades 6-8)	
Maxium Number of Pitches in One Day = 105		Maxium Number of Pitches in One Day = 75	
Rest Period per No. of Pitches		Rest Period per No. of Pitches	
76-105 Pitches	3 Days of Rest	51-75	3 Days of Rest
51-75 Pitches	2 Days of Rest	26-50	2 Days of Rest
26-50 Pitches	1 Day of Rest	25 Pitches or Less	1 Day of Rest
25 Pitches or Less	No Required Days of Rest		

Definitions and Key Terms

- **Day of Rest:** A calendar day in which a student does not participate in any game on that day as a pitcher (starter or relief pitcher).
- **Counted Pitch:** All regulation pitches that are thrown to a batter that result in a ball, strike (called or swinging), foul ball or fair batted ball put into play are considered a "counted pitch" for purposes of this rule. An illegal pitch, a pitch that follows a balk or timeout being called, warm-up pitches, throws when playing a batted or thrown ball and pick-off throws to a base are NOT counted under this rule.
- **Daily Pitches:** These are all the **counted pitches** that are thrown on any given calendar day. If a pitcher participates in multiple games of a doubleheader or tournament on a given calendar day, those counted pitches must be added together in establishing that pitcher's daily number of pitches.

Umpires have no role in enforcing MHSAA pitch count regulations.

GIRLS GYMNASTICS

May 1992

Many high school coaches of gymnastics work with gymnasts who also take lessons and participate in Club Gymnastics. Therefore, high school coaches and the school administration must make decisions regarding the amount of time a club gymnast spends in high school practice during the high school season.

The MHSAA Gymnastics Committee developed, and the Representative Council approved, the following guideline regarding this concern: "The school administration should determine the amount of practice time each gymnast must participate with the high school team. In addition, the school administration should determine a reasonable date in the season when no more athletes may become part of the team. This suggestion is based on the philosophy that steps should be taken to keep the team concept intact."

Requirements for Regular-Season Meets

Dual Meets

- (1) Exhibition performances are prohibited.
- (2) There can be no more than 6 competitors per team event when 2 judges are contracted to judge the events.
- (3) There can be no more than 7 competitors per team per event when 4 judges are contracted and 2 events are conducted simultaneously.

Double Dual Meets or Quad Meets

- (1) Exhibition performances are prohibited.
- (2) No more than 6 competitors per team can compete in each event when 2 judges are contracted to judge the events.
- (3) There can be no more than 28 competitors in a Double Dual or Quad Meet, with a total of 7 gymnasts per team per event allowed when 4 judges are contracted to judge the events.

Tri Meets

- (1) Exhibition performances are prohibited.
- (2) There can be no more than five competitors per team per event when two judges are contracted to judge each event.
- (3) There can be no more than seven competitors per team per event when four judges are contracted and two events are conducted simultaneously.



Athletes and Officials Accident Medical Insurance

*(This is **not** intended to be a complete description of coverage and exclusions)*

Since the 1970-71 school year, the Michigan High School Athletic Association has provided participants at each member school and all registered officials with insurance that is intended to help pay excess accident medical bills to administer to injuries sustained in athletic activities under MHSAA jurisdiction. Here are the traditional features:

Coverage is provided for grades 6-12 for all students accidentally injured while students are engaged in interscholastic athletic activities under the jurisdiction of the Michigan High School Athletic Association; namely: baseball, basketball (boys and girls), bowling (boys and girls), cross country (boys and girls), football, golf (boys and girls), gymnastics (girls), competitive cheer (girls), ice hockey, lacrosse (boys and girls), soccer (boys and girls), softball (girls), alpine skiing (boys and girls), swimming and diving (boys and girls), tennis (boys and girls), track and field (boys and girls), volleyball (girls), and wrestling.

All eligible students who participate in interscholastic athletic activities at an MHSAA member school in sports which end with an MHSAA tournament are covered provided their school principal attests in writing and the MHSAA agrees that they were eligible under all MHSAA regulations at the time of the injury. **Eligible** student athletes are covered while traveling directly to and from a scheduled event as a representative of the school while traveling in transportation sponsored by the school, and while participating in season in an allowed activity under the direct supervision of a full-time school employee or coach designated by the school acting within the scope of his/her coaching duties in those sports for which the MHSAA provides a tournament series.

Student-athletes ineligible under MHSAA Regulations are not covered.

- Students who are ineligible under local school rules but would be eligible under MHSAA rules would be covered if they were allowed to practice with their school team.
- Students who are otherwise eligible but are suspended from contests under Regulation V, Section 3 (contest disqualifications) would be covered if they were to continue practicing with the school team.

Officials must be on the premises of the contest to be covered under the policy.

Sideline cheerleaders are covered while traveling directly to and from interscholastic athletic events as a representative of the school while traveling in transportation sponsored by the school, and while cheering at interscholastic athletic events under the direct supervision of a school employee designated by the school. To be covered by MHSAA-purchased insurance, the activity of sideline cheerleaders at interscholastic athletic events must not exceed the safety norms of MHSAA Girls Competitive Cheer (i.e., the height of mounts, flips, stunts, etc.).

MHSAA Accident Medical Insurance does NOT cover ANY out-of-season activities or any activities occurring beyond the mileage limits of Regulation II, Section 6, Interpretation 193, even if those activities are not expressly prohibited by the MHSAA.

This coverage is provided at no cost to the eligible athletes of MHSAA member schools and to registered officials. The MHSAA is the policyholder and pays the premium for this layer of accident medical coverage. It will pay up to \$1,000,000 in medical expenses **after a deductible of \$25,000 in paid medical expenses per claim has been met.** The MHSAA arranged program will then pay medical expenses above the \$25,000 deductible left unpaid by the parents' or official's insurance or any other sources such as school purchased insurance.

A payment of a cash benefit payment of up to \$50,000 will be made if a covered person is paralyzed or in a coma within 180 days after the accident. Payment will not be made until a physician certifies that, after a 16-month waiting period, the injury is permanent and irreversible. This payment is in addition to those payments already covered for medical expenses and must result in disability. This payment is in addition to those payments already covered for medical expenses.

The first medical expense must be incurred within 90 days after the date of the accident. An accidental death or dismemberment benefit of \$10,000 is paid if either event occurs within 365 days of the date.

The Claims Administrators' name, telephone number and e-mail address is:

Mr. Bryan Cronen, FIRST AGENCY, INC., 5071 West H Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49009-8501
Phone: 269.381.6630 Fax: 269.381.3055
Email: bcronen@1stagency.com

MAKE SURE ALL HIGH SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN YOUR DISTRICT ARE DESIGNATED BY YOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION AS MHSAA MEMBER SCHOOLS SO ATHLETES ON BOTH LEVELS ARE COVERED BY THIS MHSAA-PURCHASED PLAN

MHSAA PROTOCOL FOR CONCUSSIONS

“Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.”

The language above, which appears in all National Federation sports rule books, reflects a strengthening of rules regarding the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion. This language reflects an increasing focus on safety and acknowledges that the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness.

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion.

1. The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious one where a player is either unconscious or apparently unconscious. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise that the player should be examined by a health care professional for an exact determination of the extent of injury.
2. If it is confirmed by the school’s designated health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may reenter competition pursuant to the contest rules.
3. Otherwise, if competition continues while the athlete is withheld for an apparent concussion, that athlete may not be returned to competition that day but is subject to the return to play protocol.
 - a. The clearance may not be on the same date on which the athlete was removed from play.
 - b. Only an M.D., D.O., Physician’s Assistant or Nurse Practitioner may clear the individual to return to activity.
 - c. The clearance must be in writing **and must be unconditional. It is not sufficient that the M.D., D.O., Physician’s Assistant or Nurse Practitioner has approved the student to begin a return-to-play progression. The medical examiner must approve the student’s return to unrestricted activity.**
 - d. Individual school, districts and leagues may have more stringent requirements and protocols including but not limited to mandatory periods of inactivity, screening and post-concussion testing prior or after to the written clearance for return to activity.
4. Following the contest, an Officials Report shall be filed with a removed player’s school and the MHSAA **if the situation was brought to the officials’ attention.**
5. **ONLINE REPORTING: Member schools are required to complete and submit an online report designated by the MHSAA to record and track head injury events when they occur in all levels of all sports during the season in practices and competitions. Schools with no concussions for a season (fall, winter and spring) are required to report this at the conclusion of that season.**
6. **POST-CONCUSSION CONSENT FORM:** Prior to returning to physical activity (practice or competition) the student and parent (if a minor student) must complete the Post-Concussion Consent Form which accompanies the written unconditional clearance of an M.D., D.O., P.A or N.P. **This form should be kept on file at the school for seven years after the student’s graduation and emailed to concussion@mhsaa.com or faxed to 517-332-4071.**
7. In cases where an assigned MHSAA tournament physician (MD/DO/PA/NP) is present, his or her decision to not allow an athlete to return to activity may not be overruled.

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Following are the consequences for not complying with National Federation and MHSAA rules when players are removed from play because of a concussion:

- A concussed student is ineligible to return to any athletic meet or contest on the *same day* the concussion is sustained.
- A concussed student is ineligible to enter a meet or contest on a *subsequent day* without the written authorization of an M.D., D.O., Physician’s Assistant or Nurse Practitioner and the MHSAA-designated “Post-Concussion Return to Activity Consent Form” also signed by the student and parent.

These students are considered ineligible players and any meet or contest which they enter is forfeited.

In addition, that program is placed on probation through that sport season of the following school year.

For a second offense in that sport during the probationary period – that program is continued on probation through that sport season of the following school year and not permitted to participate in the MHSAA tournament in that sport during the original and extended probationary period. A school which fails to submit required online concussion reports will be subject to the penalties of Regulation V, Section 4 A. This includes reporting zero if no concussions occurred in a season.

Game officials shall have no role in diagnosing concussions during a contest.

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*Term Expires December 2023
 **Term Expires December 2024