



2026-27 Officials Guidebook and Policy Manual





2026-27 OFFICIALS GUIDEBOOK and POLICY MANUAL

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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 2026-27 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 and Policy Manual*, a vital resource, is your key to success in this role. It serves two key purposes: First, it equips prospective officials with the necessary information to determine their suitability for this role, a crucial ingredient to interscholastic athletics in Michigan. Second, it serves as a comprehensive reference for both new and veteran officials, providing reminders of policies and procedures that must be adhered to for good standing with the Michigan High School Athletic Association and its member 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 and Policy Manual*. All MHSAA member schools have online access to this *MHSAA Officials Guidebook and Policy Manual* to be reminded of officials' responsibilities to them and, just as importantly, their responsibilities to officials. All registered officials with the MHSAA are responsible for having knowledge of and adhering to the information contained in this document.

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 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 and Policy Manual* 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 make its own determination regarding the practice to follow regarding officials who serve its needs as independent contractors.



GENDER and ETHNICITY POSITION STATEMENT

The MHSAA believes equity is more than following 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 their safety 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 because of decisions made through the normal and reasonable execution of their officiating duties.
3. Make postseason tournament assignments based on the 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 an 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

1. Register with the MHSAA each year on a timely basis (by deadline) and attend all required meetings and training. 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 intoxicants (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 commenting 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 publicly criticize the decisions or actions of other officials, including disparaging other officials to school administrators or coaches.
9. Exercise self-control always 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 the suspension of an official's registration with the MHSAA.

1. Officials should always treat social media communications as public, even if they are created with private intentions. Electronic communications are 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 shall 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 shall not post or publicize critical comments about players, coaches, administrators, or schools for which they work.
6. Officials shall not engage in online communication that purports to be speaking on behalf of the MHSAA.
7. Officials shall not engage in online debate or discussion about specific plays, rulings, or controversies in which they were involved.
8. Officials shall avoid publicly posting specific details for their (or other's) game assignments prior to the conclusion of the contest.
9. Officials have unique access to privileged information and should not share other officials' personal details or assignment information without their expressed consent.
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 phones 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 public sites, private sites, and direct messages of any kind with high school or junior high/middle school students.
12. Officials shall not commit any acts or omissions that would be detrimental to the best interests of the MHSAA, officiating colleagues, the schools, or athletes involved in MHSAA activities.

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 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 their junior high/middle school. The following list is not exhaustive, and officials should use their best judgment in determining whether a conflict exists. Some potential conflicts include:

1. The 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 of officiating a participating team.
NOTE: This is not intended to discourage officials from participating in preseason sportsmanship programs, being invited to discuss rule changes or interpretations, or officiating preseason scrimmages.



4. The official has a close connection or relationship with the coach of a participating school.
5. The official is a recent graduate, i.e., within 4 years, or a closely connected alumni of a participating school.
6. The official is a varsity coach in the sport he/she officiates.

NOTE: Varsity coaches are limited to officiating only in the first round of the sport-specific postseason tournament. Potential school conflicts should be routinely updated in the MHSAA system.

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.

Registered officials should avoid physical contact with student-athletes whenever possible outside of a handshake when a sport's protocols allow (e.g. basketball introductions). Acceptable contact should occur only when necessary to stop a physical altercation, prevent injury or harm to the competitors or oneself, ensure player safety, or manage brief, incidental and unavoidable contact in the normal course of a situation or contest.

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 knowledge of rules and their practical application, have strong relationship and communication skills, understand that all 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 an 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 "Stay in the Game:" primarily focusing on recent high school graduates and college students who can remain a part of MHSAA athletics through officiating. 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 of officiating, including honesty, integrity, and fairness. Beyond that, it allows unregistered officials to get something for nothing and cheats the officials who 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) require the use of MHSAA registered officials in all interscholastic contests involving member schools. The use of registered officials is required for the following:

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

OFFICIATING UNREGISTERED/IMPROPERLY

Officials jeopardize their officiating future when they work sports for which they are not fully 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 unregistered shall be subject to suspension for at least one season. Incidental cases where an individual officiates unknowingly unregistered are 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 for paying 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 who officiate high school contests before completing the required sports-specific rules meeting in that sport will be responsible for paying the \$25 Improper Working penalty fee **for each date worked**. Repeated violations may subject the offender to a suspension of registration privileges.



PREVENTING UNREGISTERED OFFICIATING

Ensuring the use of **ONLY FULLY** registered officials for contests involving MHSAA member schools is a shared responsibility between officials, schools, and assigners. The MHSAA provides an electronic Officials Directory on MHSAA.com, 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 ensure 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 contests are subject to MHSAA action, including the revocation of their assigning privileges with MHSAA member schools.

SCHOOLS

It is the responsibility of host schools, 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 their registration requirements by the contest date. Schools may also be certain that officials are registered with the MHSAA for a current year by utilizing the official's directory at MHSAA.com or requesting to see the official's registration confirmation.

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

Schools that allow unregistered individuals to officiate their contests are subject 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 is, 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 2, 2026 to May 17, 2027, and officials' registrations during this period will expire on July 31, 2027. No person may be permitted to register for specific sports after these deadlines:

- October 26, 2026 – Field Hockey, Football
- March 15, 2027 – Competitive Cheer, Gymnastics, and Ice Hockey
- TMay 17, 2027 – 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 for renewing 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 for a sport after the following deadlines:

- August 17, 2026 – Field Hockey and Football
- November 16, 2026 – Basketball, Competitive Cheer, Gymnastics, Ice Hockey, Swimming & Diving and Wrestling
- March 24, 2027– Baseball, Boys Lacrosse, Girls Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball and Cross Country, Track & Field and Volleyball

Amending your registration with additional sports before the deadline outlined above after your initial registration has been processed only requires the payment of the sports 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.

MINIMUM REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To register as an official with the MHSAA, applicants must be 18 years old and have graduated from or no longer attend high school (See the MHSAA Student "Legacy" Officials Program on page 34 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's 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 who did not register the previous year) are required to complete the **Principles of Officiating online** course and quiz; as well as take an **MHSAA Officials Guidebook and Policy Manual Exam** with a minimum passing score of 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 Policy Manual* and Principles of Officiating PowerPoint can be found under under Resources on the I Am 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 will only be completed and confirmed after the successful completion of the mandatory exam(s).



CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS

All officials who 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 the 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 official 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).

All officials are to submit a **professional headshot photo on MHSAA.com in my contact information** for rating purposes. **The photo must be only of the official.** It may not include props, pets, or advertisements. The photo is for business purposes.

LATE FEES

Officials registered in any sport during the previous school year (e.g., 2025-26) will be assessed a registration late fee if they fail to submit a renewal application by the late fee deadlines outlined on page 7.

INSUFFICIENT FUNDS

If an individual issues a check to the MHSAA for any purpose that is returned by the bank, the individual's registration will not be completed until the returned check balance is satisfied and a \$30 NFS fee is paid. 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 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 Michigan residents. These out-of-state registrants will be tested and will receive rule books, and 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 who 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 of \$25 but reciprocal registration will not include NFHS books, manuals, or resources as those will be supplied by the official's state of residence. If all tournament requirements have been completed, Reciprocal officials are eligible to work MHSAA tournament contests at the first-level District or Regional (depending on the sport).

TRANSFER OFFICIALS

Officials who previously held or currently hold residence in another state and wish to apply for full-fledged registration in Michigan, which 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 the **Officials Registration** page of MHSAA.com

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 and Policy Manual*, 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," egregious mismanagement of contests, or 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 the 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. An official on probation can fulfill their officiating contract for the school year.
- **SUSPENSION:** A period of temporary inactivity as a registered MHSAA official.
- **PERMANENT SUSPENSION:** Expulsion, denial of MHSAA official's 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

To ensure that member schools are aware of individuals who are not in compliance with MHSAA procedures, the MHSAA Representative Council adopted a publication policy stating that certain actions taken regarding officials shall be reported on MHSAA.com



The reporting of action taken regarding officials have these goals: First, to support 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 officials 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-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 should 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 should 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 **"PAYMENT ISSUE"** 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. Beginning in 2026-27, a new standard MHSAA logo patch will become the official standard for all officials' uniforms across all sports.

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 shall wear matching or coordinated uniforms. In most cases, this means that all officials on the crew shall 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 if 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 shall 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 is 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) sleeves and collar stripes if 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 or navy blue.

Basketball – Officials shall wear a black and white (1") striped V-neck shirt and black pants, black socks, and predominately black shoes. Officials shall wear a black warmup jacket prior to the start of the game. The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA official emblem worn on the left chest pocket area. *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 a solid black skirt, suit, dress, or dress slacks. Any additional garments, such as a blazer, shall be black. Judges may wear a long-sleeved black MHSAA-designated quarter zip with the MHSAA horizontal logo in place of a jacket/blazer. Shoes worn shall be black (white or black soles). Judges must wear an MHSAA official's 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.

Cross Country – Officials shall wear a long-sleeved jacket, sweater, pullover, or shirt with a red body and collar. The uniform top shall have an MHSAA official 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*: The official may wear a red cap or visor.

Field Hockey – Officials shall wear a yellow or fuchsia shirt that contrasts with the color of both teams' uniform tops or black and white striped shirt with 1" width stripes (long or short sleeve). Both officials must wear the same color or striped shirt for any given game. Note that the default color is fuchsia. In cold weather, officials may wear a solid black undershirt or black outerwear. The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA horizontal logo worn on the left chest pocket area. Black skirt, shorts (recommended 4" above the knee) or slacks shall be worn. Black shoes and black knee-length socks are required. *OPTIONAL*: The official may wear a black visor or hat if needed.

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 should be black. Cards should be approximately 3 inches square in size and include a green triangle, yellow square and red circle. Officials must wear or carry a timing device.

Football – Officials shall wear a black and white striped shirt with 2" width stripes (long or short sleeves). The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA official emblem worn on the left chest pocket. Black football officiating pants with a contrasting white side stripe shall be worn. All officials shall wear black belts, predominately black shoes, and socks. The referee shall wear a solid white cap, while all other officials wear a 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 a solid black skirt, suit, dress, or dress slacks. Any additional garments, such as a blazer, shall be black. Judges may wear a long-sleeved black MHSAA-designated quarter zip with the MHSAA horizontal logo in place of a jacket/blazer. Shoes worn shall be solid black. Judges must wear an MHSAA official 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 official's 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. A 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), if the entire crew matches in wearing either the traditional (1") or new, wide striped (2") shirt. The uniform shirt shall have an MHSAA official 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 contrasting white side stripes 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 official's emblem worn on the left chest pocket. Black shorts (minimum 6" inseam), kilt or full-length black nylon wind pants shall be worn if 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 official's 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, if they are not similar to either team's jerseys or 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 charcoal 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 is 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) sleeves and collar stripes if 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, 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. Official 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 is white.

Accessories – Lanyards and whistles may be of any color.



Track and 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 official 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:** The official may wear a red cap or visor.

Volleyball – Officials shall wear a solid white, collared polo-style shirt, and black pants. Solid black shoes. 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 official shirt are prohibited. **OPTIONAL:** From the beginning of the fall season through September 15, and beginning May 15 of the spring season, in hot weather conditions, officials may wear black shorts that extend from mid-thigh to the knees, provided that all officials present agree and wear the same attire. If shorts are worn by the crew, socks shall not extend above the ankle. 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 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 official's emblem worn on the left chest pocket area. Officials' belts (if worn), and socks should all be solid black. Shoes are to be solid black. As an option, the shoes may have white or gray trim.

Officials may also wear a gray V-neck shirt or an event-provided shirt if all officials in attendance wear the same style/color. They 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 publish 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 competitions. In addition, member schools may request modifications of rules (deviation request) for subvarsity competitions 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 from 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 the 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 a recommendation to a specific sports committee may do so by writing to the appropriate MHSAA staff member. MHSAA sports committees meet annually.



Five sports – bowling, golf, tennis, competitive cheer, and skiing – observe rules and 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 this *Guidebook and Policy Manual*, the words “ejected” and “disqualified” are synonymous when referring to players, coaches, administrators, or spectators who are removed from contests or contest facilities by contest officials. Sports-specific NFHS and MHSAA rules apply when dealing with ejections.

PERSONAL ATTACKS

Personal attacks have no place in school sports. Coaches and players who direct personal attacks on contest officials before, during, or after a contest face 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 is 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 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 insinuate 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 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 comments would be considered a personal insult.

Officials shall refrain from personal attacks during heated conversations or situations of disagreement. When there is a dispute with an official's decision, the officials should focus on their judgment or ruling and avoid allowing the situation to become personal. Officials 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, but are not limited to:

- “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, the 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 officials 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 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 those 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 unsportsmanlike conduct that must be addressed. 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 and Policy Manual* 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 to be followed:

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 twenty feet away but should not require an official to be closer than six to ten feet of the individual.
2. Request the player to go immediately to the bench/head coach.
3. The game official will make eye contact with the head coach and announce that the player (identified by number or lane or some accepted method) has been ejected from this contest, stating 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), the bus, or another area. Ejected coaches must be out of sight of officials, players, and spectators. 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 SHALL NOT be emailed to the athletic director, assigner, or association leader. The report is the sole property of the MHSAA.
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 resulted from an unsportsmanlike act, conduct, or language, the official who 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 - although the narratives submitted may be the same for both reports.
11. The official shall not revoke an ejection of a coach, player, or team representative.
12. The MHSAA will await the 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 context in which the ejection occurred. The MHSAA and the 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 contests, 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. 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 handle any emergency that arises successfully. An official’s decision will be appropriate if the basis for the emergency decision is the adopted rules of the contest and the MHSAA regulations.

Decisions that are not supported by acknowledged and accepted policies 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 regarding 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, 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 healthcare 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 from 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 that must be canceled or terminated by the officials for reasons other than 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 participant or had the administration remove a spectator 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 schools involved conduct internal investigations and voluntarily take additional 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 Report** of coaches, players, administrators, spectators, or any other person or group affiliated or associated with a member school for demonstrating good sportsmanlike actions, providing exceptional accommodations, or for any other commendable action.
2. **Administrative Report** of conduct of unsportsmanlike behavior of spectators which goes unchecked by the administration of the school(s) involved. Playing conditions that fail to meet the minimum standards of the rule book and/or safe play. Uniform or playing equipment that fails to meet NFHS/MHSAA standards for safe/fair play.
3. **Injury Report**, injuries which remove an athlete from competition for the duration of play.
4. **School Report**: This allows an official to give feedback on the sportsmanship of student-athletes and coaches, the host school environment, and game management.



MISCELLANEOUS RESPONSIBILITIES and POLICIES

ELIGIBILITY OF ATHLETES

It is the responsibility of schools to enter the competition only for 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 into 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 from the host school, in accordance with the rules and guidelines set forth so as not to provide a distraction or interfere 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

Photographers 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 to fixed strobes.

MEDIA and PHOTOGRAPHER PLACEMENT

Photographers for other sports shall be placed in positions in accordance with the National Federation of State High School Associations National Rules. In the sport 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 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, genders 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 is intended to present the school and official with an agreement to govern the 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 contest 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 to 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 MHSAA sanctions up to and including the 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, the host administration may 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 scheduled 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 who 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 supersede the Regular-Season Contest Delays Policy, so coaches and officials should inquire with their league to see if any policy exists.

OFFICIALS WORKING SHORTHANDED

There is a minimum number of officials per varsity and subvarsity contests. At the varsity level, if a contest is worked with less than the published minimums, the working official(s) shall receive the remainder of the game fee.

If a league or conference has a subvarsity pay scale or policy for officials working short-handed, that policy shall prevail (e.g. an official working alone receives 1.5 of the full game fee). In the absence of such a policy at the subvarsity level, when these contests are worked with less than these minimums, the working official shall receive the remainder of the game fee. (see appendix).

OFFICIALS FAILURE TO FULFILL

Officials shall 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 must contact the athletic director or principal to advise him/her of the problem. The official should never expect or allow another person to make contact with him/her. They shall not send a substitute unless he/she has prior permission from the host school (or assigner).
2. If 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: Accepting or using the services of an unregistered official is never an option. See the Use of Unregistered Officials Policy.

3. Violations within five days of the contest date that do not include (a) family emergency, (b) personal injury or emergency medical condition or (c) unexpected employment obligations can generate 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 shorthanded 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 will still be reported as a failure to fulfill on the part of the official.

CANCELLED CONTESTS

ACT OF GOD POLICY(*unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to others*), such as weather, bomb threats, active shooters, fires, etc.

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 had been canceled due to an Act of God, the official is not entitled to any portion of the contracted fees.
2. If the school contest is canceled after the official arrives 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 canceled after it has begun, or if an official arrives on-site and the contest is canceled after it has been postponed more than one-and-one-half hours from the original start time, the official is entitled to full payment of the contracted fees.

NOTE: In the event that a contest is canceled 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 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 canceled 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. If the contest is outside of five days of the contest dates, there is no financial obligation on 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 act according to the sport's rule book, which is 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 that starts over from the beginning 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 as the official shall be paid the full, original game fee for the resumed portion of the contest on a subsequent day. Note that once a contest begins, the official shall be paid the full, original game fee even if that contest becomes suspended and is either terminated or resumed on another date. Under no circumstance is an official from the original contest obligated to officiate the remainder of the contest later.

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.
- II. When lightning has been observed or thunder is heard, the contest must be suspended. Officials and game management may consult weather applications to make suspension, resumption and continuation decisions using the following policies:
 - a. If lightning has not been observed and thunder has not been heard, the contest must be suspended if independently validated lightning-detection devices or mobile weather applications indicate a lightning strike within 10 miles of the event location.
 - b. At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event before the full 30-minute suspension has expired. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a further threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.
 - c. Severe weather with precipitation (rain or snow) may make the field unplayable.
- III. When a contest is suspended, the home school administration shall attempt to arrange for the security of all participants.
 - a. When a contest is suspended, the home school administration shall attempt to arrange for the security of all participants. Contestants and support personnel shall be moved to appropriate indoor facilities.
 - b. When the contest is 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 unless the resumption criteria in Item II-B above has been satisfied.
 - 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.)
 - d. The final decision shall consider liability and conditions of facilities as well as future schedules, the 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*, the MHSAA staff or Representative Council will not consider a dispute alleging failure to honor a contract 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 you don't receive a response from the initial communication, email the athletic director a reminder of the request and include Sam Davis (sam@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 Sam Davis directly (sam@mhsaa.com) with a request for the MHSAA to resolve the issue. All contract information, including the date, teams, contracted fee, or any other terms, must be included in the correspondence.

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

OFFICIALS' RATINGS

SCHOOLS' RATING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Representative Council adopted, in May of 1987, a *Handbook* regulation that 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 that 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 of 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 have 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 everyone 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, field hockey, football, ice hockey, boys and girls lacrosse, boys and girls soccer, softball, boys and girls 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.



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 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) – The official's performance exceeds the standard and is better than that of the average official in the category.

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

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

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

RATING CATEGORIES

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

For each contest rated, officials will receive a rating in each of the 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 the 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 applying 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 and proper body language and appears confident in mannerisms, movements, and interactions. The uniform worn is in a style mandated (or accepted) by the MHSAA; it 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 and decisions and enforces penalties solely based 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**
Communicates properly with administrative officials regarding schedule and contest details when appropriate. Arrives in time to properly prepare for the contest and is available to begin at the scheduled time.
- **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 escalating situations and weather concerns.
- **Clarity/Conciseness**
Skillfully communicates with administrators, coaching staff, 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 official's decisions, this should be referenced to the league/conference, Local Approved Associations, and/or the school's Registered Assigner.

If the concern results from perceived consistent rules misapplications or misconduct by the official, the athletic director should be consulted to decide 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.



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 who work the sport regularly, are familiar with the current rules, interpretations, and technical aspects of the position, and 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.
- b. Placement of the best available officials on the most challenging and highest profile contests.
- c. The 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

Staff and MHSAA selection committees make tournament officials' selections based on a collection of criteria, including rating 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 who reside in the state of Michigan are eligible for tournament consideration beyond the first level within that sport, and current MHSAA coaches in that sport are prohibited from receiving any postseason assignments beyond the first level.

NOTE: MHSAA sports administrators have the discretion to utilize out-of-state officials when necessary.

All postseason requirements for the 2026-27 school year must be submitted by officials in each sport by the deadlines indicated below:

CLICK HERE for a Postseason Eligibility Checklist

2026-27 DEADLINES

Fall Sports
September 8, 2026

Winter Sports
January 12, 2027

Spring Sports
April 13, 2027



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's 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, and have (at minimum) a 3.3 three-year average rating. You must be in Good Standing (MIGS) with a Local Approved Association in the sport and complete and pass the current year's rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

Postseason Limitations: An official who 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's rules meeting, and 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's 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's rules meeting, submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, and be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Cheer Association.

CROSS COUNTRY

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

FIELD HOCKEY

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year's rules meeting and have officiated a minimum of 5 contests during the current season. An official must submit a season schedule to the MHSAA for review, and be listed as a Member in Good Standing with a Local Approved Association in the sport.

Semifinal & Final Level: Complete and pass the current year rules exam ($\geq 80\%$).

FOOTBALL

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year's rules meeting, and 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 who 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 who 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's 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's 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 3.3 three-year average rating, and complete and pass the current year rules exam (≥80%).

BOYS LACROSSE

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year's 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 3.3 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's 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 have compiled at least 16 ratings over the previous three years and have (at minimum) a 3.3 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's 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 (≥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 completed and passed the current year rules exam (≥80%).

Postseason Limitations: An official who works a Final as a center referee 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's 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 3.3 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's rules exam (≥80%).

Postseason Limitations: An official who 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's 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

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

LP Final level: To be eligible for consideration for the LP Finals level at the Meet Referee or Starter position, an official must be a member in good standing of the Association of Track Officials in Michigan (ATOM).

VOLLEYBALL

General Requirements (all levels): To be eligible for tournament consideration, an official must have completed or attended the current year's 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 3.3 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 who 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's 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: Provisionally, an official must have (at minimum) a 3.2 three-year average rating.

Final Level: Provisionally, an official must have (at minimum) a 4.25 three-year average rating.

Postseason Limitations: An official who 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 assignments.
- c. The officials should accept or decline the invitation within 48 hours so arrangements can be confirmed or adjusted.
- d. If 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. If 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 with all requirements and conditions outlined within the current *MHSAA Officials Guidebook and Policy Manual*.

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 that 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 pages 3-4. 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 (e.g., maps, times, dates, and other appropriate details) to 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 contact 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 and Policy Manual*.

REGISTERED ASSIGNERS

MANDATED USE OF REGISTERED ASSIGNERS

High schools and junior high/middle schools that sponsor competition for member high school or junior high/middle school teams, and utilize and pay for services of a third-party, on-school assigner for high school or junior high/middle 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 contracts 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 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 must attend the annual in-person meeting with Association Leadership every other year. In alternate years, they may fulfill this requirement by attending the online 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 regulations, standards, policies, and practices applicable to the conduct, contracting, training, selection, and sanctions of officials.
6. Assigners are required to register annually on MHSAA.com. Assigners who were registered the previous school year for any sport will incur a \$30 late fee if their registration is received after July 31.

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 shall schedule only MHSAA Registered Officials for all contests involving MHSAA member schools.
2. Registered Assigners shall conduct business in a professional manner appropriate to their position and shall not demean or ridicule officials either publicly 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 conferences by disparaging words or actions.
4. Registered Assigners may require an official's membership in a Local Approved Association for that sport to be assigned games under the assigner's control, but they shall not require membership in a particular officials' association.
5. Registered Assigners shall 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 shall 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. Turnback fees paid to an assigner by an official do not violate this concept.
9. Registered Assigners shall 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 that appear on the published MHSAA contract shall be acknowledged and will apply 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. The MHSAA expects every official to be 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, Association Contacts, and rookie and sport-specific meeting details.
 - b. **Renewal Registrations** – 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 sports associations in all eight zones for the sports of competitive cheer, field hockey, 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 needs to be held if new officials who 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 sponsored sport 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, field hockey, 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 (every other year) at the annual in-person 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 training 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. Develop a continuity and succession plan for the association.
5. Responsible for the fulfillment of requirements for "rookie" meetings.

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

- 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 sponsors baseball, basketball, competitive cheer, field hockey, 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. 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. The official 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 the appointment of a Trainer through a Local Approved Association.
3. An official should have five years of 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. The official must be committed to the sport while supporting the MHSAA training philosophy. Dedication to study and teaching development are indications of commitment.
5. The official shall have demonstrated effective communication skills that identify him/her as an effective teacher and mentor.
6. The official is required to attend mandated Officiate Michigan Day training 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 meetings must take place prior to the start of the sports 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, field hockey, 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. The official 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. Officials who are selected as 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 with the above conditions, it is grounds for sanctions by the MHSAA. These can be made available to trainers upon request.

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 meeting calendars to correspond with these submission deadlines. Failure 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 status of officials and postseason assignment recommendations must be submitted by each association by the following deadlines:

- Fall Sports – September 8, 2026
- Winter Sports – January 12, 2026
- Spring Sports – April 13, 2027

ASSIGNER and ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP MEETING

In addition to applying for registration each year, Association Leaders are required to complete the annual meeting when posted to MHSAA.com.



MHSAA RECOGNIZED OFFICIALS CAMP/CLINICS

All camps and clinics, 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, Field Hockey, 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 hours 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 officially 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. 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)
7. Camp/Clinic administrators must accurately track enrollees' attendance to ensure that they are in attendance and submit a list of attendees who 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 subvarsity 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 contest officials are developed. They enjoy athletics, understand the games, and have a love of the competition. In addition, athletes have an understanding and appreciation 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 2025-26 school year, 220 high school students participated as MHSAA Legacy officials. That class brings the total to 2,661 students who have become registered and active officials through the Legacy program. Since the 2019-20 school year, high school freshmen 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 that surround the active official. Often, officials dismiss the need for insurance because there are few instances where they ever know of an official utilizing plan coverage. Annual registration as an official with the MHSAA provides individuals with catastrophic accident medical insurance that covers 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 officials because 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 speaks with his/her insurance counselor to determine whether he/she needs 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, 50, 55, and 60 years, respectively. All Service Awards are presented the year an official reaches the year milestone.

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 are confirmed to the MHSAA six months before the official becomes eligible for his/her first service award with the MHSAA.

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

VERN L. NORRIS AWARD

The Vern L. Norris Award is presented to an athletic official with 20 or more years of registration with the MHSAA who works at the high school level. He or she must also have been active in a local officials' association, mentored other officials, and have been involved in officials' education. It is named for Vern L. Norris, who was executive director of the MHSAA from 1978-86. Previous Norris Award Winners:

1992 - Herbert "Ted" Wilson, East Detroit	2003 - Ron Nagy, Hazel Park	2015 - Sam Davis, Lansing
1993 - Fred C. Briggs Sr., Burton	2004 - Carl Van Heck, Kentwood	2016 - Linda Hoover, Marshall
1994 - Joe Brodie, Flat Rock	2005 - Bruce Moss, Alma	2017 - Michael Gentry, Shelby Township
1995 - Jim Massar, Flint	2006 - Jeanne Skinner, Grand Rapids	2018 - Jill Baker-Cooley, Big Rapids
1996 - James Lamoreaux, St. Ignace	2007 - Terry Wakeley, Grayling	2019 - David Buck, St. Joseph
1997 - Ken Myllyla, Escanaba	2008 - Will Lynch, Honor	2020 - Hugh Matson, Saginaw
1998 - Blake Hagman, Kalamazoo	2009 - James Danhoff, Richland	2021 - Lew Clingman, Grand Rapids
1999 - Richard Kalahar, Jackson	2010 - John Juday Sr., Petoskey	2022 - Pat Hayes, Birmingham
2000 - Barbara Beckett, Traverse City; Karl Newingham, Bay City	2011 - Robert Williams, Redford	2023 - Chuck Walters, Jackson
2001 - Herb Lipschultz, Kalamazoo	2012 - Lyle Berry, Rockford	2024 - Candace Cox, Quincy
2002 - Robert Scholie Sr., Hancock	2013 - Thomas Minter, Okemos	2025 - Debby Karabeets-Betts, Livonia
	2014 - Hugh Jewell, West Bloomfield	2026 - Bob Czech - Royal Oak

RANDY PAULSON LEGACY OFFICIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The late Randy Paulson was a dedicated official and mentor for many aspiring young officials. In 2012, a scholarship was created and presented annually to the Legacy Student Official, who displays service and commitment to the MHSAA Officials Program through participation in the Legacy Student Officials Program. Previous Paulson Scholarship Winners:

2013 -Emily Braun, Grand Rapids CC	2024- Payton Miller, Frankfort
2014 -Megan Quaine, Rogers City	2025 - Avery Beach, Mason
2015 -Charles Dunton, Sault Ste Marie	2026 - Owen Rottier - Grand Ledge
2016- Robbie Grooms, Williamston	
2017- Nolan Lamb, Birmingham Seaholm	
2018 -Katelyn Brown, Jonesville	
2019- Jaclyn Jarvis, Fowlerville	
2020- Mariah McLouth, Bear Lake	
2021- Bayley Millerov, Williamston	
2022- Brenna Kosal, Peck	
2023- Madison Smith, Mackinaw City	

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

2025-26 Quick Reference Calendar

**Calendar subject to change. Always consult MHSAA.com for most updated version.*

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 10	Aug 19	15D	Oct 9			Oct 30 or 31			Nov 7
Cross Country: UP	Aug 10	Aug 19	15D	Oct 2						Oct 24
Field Hockey	Aug 10	Aug 19	18C	Oct 8	Dec 1		Oct 14-26		Oct 28	Oct 31
Football - 8 Player	Aug 10	Aug 27	9C	N/A	Dec 1		Oct 30 or 31 & Nov 6 or 7		Nov 14	Nov 20 or 2
Football - 11 Player	Aug 10	Aug 27	9C	N/A	Dec 1	Oct 30 or 31 & Nov 6 or 7	Nov 13 or 14		Nov 21	Nov 27 & 28
Golf: LP Girls	Aug 10	Aug 14	16D	Sep 18			Oct 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10			Oct 16-17
Soccer: Boys	Aug 10	Aug 19	18C	Sep 16	Dec 1	Oct 14-16, Oct 19-24	Oct 27-31		Nov 4	Nov 7
Swimming: LP Girls	Aug 10	Aug 19	17D	Nov 16 Dive: Nov 10			Dive: Nov 12			Nov 20-21
Tennis: LP Boys	Aug 10	Aug 14	16D	Oct 9			Oct 7, 8, 9 or 10			Oct 14-24
Tennis: UP Girls	Aug 10	Aug 14	16D	Sep 25						Sept 30-Oct 3
Girls Volleyball	Aug 10	Aug 19	18D	Oct 9	Dec 1	Nov 2-7	Nov 10 & 12	Nov 17	Nov 19-20	Nov 21
WINTER										
Basketball: Girls	Nov 18	Dec 7	22C	Feb 10	Apr 1	Mar 1 & 3 & 5	Mar 8 & 10	Mar 16	Mar 18-19	Mar 20
Basketball: Boys	Nov 11	Nov 30	22C	Feb 3	Apr 1	Feb 22 & 24 & 26	Mar 2 & 4	Mar 9	Mar 11-12	Mar 13
Bowling: Boys & Girls	Nov 9	Nov 28	24D	Jan 23			Feb 17-20			Feb 26-27
Competitive Cheer	Nov 9	Nov 23	12D	Jan 22	Apr 1	Feb 12-13	Feb 20			Feb 26-27
Gymnastics	Oct 26	Nov 14	15D	Feb 23			Feb 27			Mar 5-6
Ice Hockey	Oct 26	Nov 2	27C	Jan 23	Apr 1		Feb 15-24	Feb 27	Mar 4-5	Mar 6
Skiing: Boys & Girls	Nov 16	Dec 5	17C	Feb 10			Feb 8-12			Feb 22
Swimming: LP Boys	Nov 23	Dec 5	17D	Mar 8 Dive: Mar 2			Dive: Mar 4			Mar 12-13
Swimming: UP Boys & Girls	Nov 9	Nov 21	17D	Feb 8						Feb 20
Wrestling: Individual	Nov 16	Dec 2	16D	Jan 28	Apr 1	Boys: Feb 13 Girls: Feb 14	Boys: Feb 20 Girls: Feb 21	ALPHA WEIGH-IN		Mar 5-6
Wrestling: Team	Nov 16	Dec 2	16D	Jan 28	Apr 1	Feb 10 & 11	Feb 17	10/19/26 - 1/31/27		Feb 26-27
SPRING										
Baseball	Mar 15	Mar 24	38C	May 5	June 20	May 27-29 or June 1, 4-5	June 9 & 12	June 12	June 17-18	June 19
Golf: LP Boys	Mar 15	Mar 19	16D	May 5			June 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5			June 11-12
Golf: UP Boys & Girls	Mar 15	Mar 19	16D	May 14						June 2, 3, 4 or 5
Lacrosse: Boys	Mar 15	Mar 24	18C	Apr 21	June 20		May 14-June 2	June 4 or 5	June 8 or 9	June 11 or 12
Lacrosse: Girls	Mar 15	Mar 24	18C	Apr 21	June 20		May 20-June 5		June 8 or 9	June 11 or 12
Soccer: Girls	Mar 15	Mar 24	18C	Apr 28	June 20	May 26-28, May 31-June 5	June 8-12		June 15-16	June 18-19
Softball	Mar 15	Mar 24	38C	May 5	June 20	May 27-29, June 1, 3-5	June 12	June 15	June 17-18	June 19
Tennis: LP Girls	Mar 15	Mar 19	16D	May 5			May 19, 20, 21 or 22			June 2-12
Tennis: UP Boys	Mar 15	Mar 19	16D	May 21						June 2-5
Track & Field	Mar 15	Mar 24	18D	May 11			May 19, 20, 21 or 22			June 5
Boys Volleyball	Mar 15	Mar 24	18D	Apr 28	June 20		June 1-5	June 8	June 11	June 12

5/21/26



Compensation and Minimum Number of Officials - 2026-27

The following shall be the minimum number of officials per varsity and subvarsity contests. At the varsity level, if a contest is worked with less than these published minimums, the working official(s) shall receive the remainder of the game fee. For example, a baseball or softball umpire who works alone at the varsity level shall receive both game fees.

If a league or conference has a subvarsity pay scale or policy for officials working shorthanded, that policy shall prevail (e.g. an official working alone receives 1.5 of the full game fee). In the absence of such a local policy at the subvarsity level, when these contests are worked with less than these minimums, the working official(s) shall receive the remainder of the game fee.

Sport	Varsity	Subvarsity
Baseball	2 Umpires	2 Umpires
Basketball	2 Officials (3 preferred)	2 Officials
Competitive Cheer	5 Officials	5 Officials
Cross Country	1 Official	
Field Hockey	2 Umpires	2 Umpires
Football	5 Officials	4 Officials
Gymnastics	2 Officials	
Ice Hockey	3 Officials	3 Officials
Lacrosse	2 Officials (3 preferred)	2 Officials
Soccer	2 Officials (3 preferred)	2 Officials
Softball	2 Umpires	2 Umpires
Swimming & Diving	1 Official	
Track & Field	1 Official	1 Official
Volleyball	2 Officials	2 Officials
Wrestling	1 Official	1 Official



2026-27 MHSAA Postseason Tournament Fee Structure

Sport	District	Regional	Quarterfinal	Semifinal	Final
Baseball	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$125	\$125
Basketball	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$125	\$125
Competitive Cheer	\$125	\$135			\$150
Cross Country		\$100			\$125
Field Hockey		\$115		\$125	\$125
Football - 11 Player	\$110	\$110		\$125	\$125
Football - 8 Player		\$110		\$125	\$125
Gymnastics		\$125			\$400
Ice Hockey		\$115	\$115	\$125	\$125
Boys Lacrosse		\$115	\$115	\$125	\$125
Girls Lacrosse		\$115		\$125	\$125
Soccer	\$100	\$100		\$125	\$125
Softball	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$125	\$125
Swimming: Dive Judge		\$150			\$200
Swimming: Referee/Starter/AR					\$200
Swimming: Turn Judge					\$150
Track: Starter		\$125			\$150
Track: Assistant Starter		\$125			\$150
Track: Referee		\$125			\$150
Track: Clerk		\$125			\$150
Volleyball: R1 and R2	\$80	\$90	\$100	\$125	\$125
Volleyball: Linesman	\$45	\$50	\$50	\$70	\$70
Wrestling - Individual	\$250	\$250			\$400
Wrestling - Team	\$130	\$145			\$400



2026-27 MHSAA PLAYING RULE ADOPTIONS

(Including Point Differential Rules)

Regulation II, Section 8 (A) states that schools shall adhere to the playing rules adopted by the Michigan High School Athletic Association. The source for playing rules for competition involving one or more member schools include the National Federation of State High School Associations for most sports, the MHSAA for alpine skiing and girls competitive cheer, the U.S. Bowling Congress, the U.S. Golf Association and the U.S. Tennis Association. Currently there are no adoptions or modifications of playing rules listed for alpine skiing, golf, or bowling. Schools and officials should consult Regulations II, Sections 8-10, Representative Council Policies in the back of the Handbook, the sport specific rule book, Participating School Tournament Information and Tournament Managers Material for complete sports playing rule information.

BASEBALL and SOFTBALL

I. Regulation Game

- A. A regulation called game where a winner cannot be determined, shall be counted as 1/2 game won and 1/2 lost for each team. (MHSAA allowed – requires league adoption)

II. Game Shortening/Ending Procedures

- A. The four options listed are the only permitted game-shortening procedures allowed for baseball and softball games at the varsity and subvarsity levels. (Schools, leagues or invitational tournament management shall determine which are to be utilized with prior mutual written consent): Item '1' shall be observed for every game of the MHSAA Baseball and Girls Softball tournament series.
 - 1. Requires games to be terminated during, or following the completion of, the home team's at-bat when there is a 15-run difference any time after three innings (or two and a half innings if the home team is ahead) or a 10-run difference any time after five innings (or four and a half innings if the home team is ahead);
 - 2. Allow a team to discontinue play any time it trails by more than 15 runs;
 - 3. Establish shortened games of five or six innings in doubleheaders.
 - 4. Establish a time limit at the subvarsity level (1 hour, 45 minutes recommended if a time limit is used).
 - 5. **Suspended Games (Baseball and Softball):** By default, a game will be considered suspended any time the game is called before it reaches regulation, or if called any time when the score would be tied. If both schools agree, a game called prior to regulation or a tied game may be declared a "no game." Games resumed from the point of suspension do not count as an additional game, pitching limitations apply. Consult the Baseball and Softball Participating School Tournament Information on MHSAA.com for more details.
- B. For MHSAA softball tournament games the tiebreaker will be used with the beginning of the 11th inning. For regular-season games, the tiebreaker may be used by local league and conference adoption beginning with the 8th inning.

III. Equipment

- A. Middle School Bats: For games at the middle school level, member school teams may deviate from National Federation rules and use the bat standard currently allowed by Little League Baseball. This bat standard is the certification mark placed on the bat of USA Baseball.
- B. Double First Base: During MHSAA Tournament contests, the double first base will not be used and must be manually removed. For regular-season games, use of the double first base is optional by mutual consent of competing teams or by league adoption. If not used, the double first base is not required to be removed.

IV. Protests

- A. The MHSAA does NOT recognize protests of any playing rule, disqualification or ejection. See Baseball Pitching Limitations (page 113).

BASKETBALL

I. Point-Differential Rule

- A. At all levels of play and in MHSAA tournaments, when one team has a lead of 40 points or more in the first half, or 30 points or more in the second half, a running clock shall be established. Once the point differential rule is activated, it no longer reverts back to normal timing rules. During any running clock mode, the clock shall be stopped as normal for all timeouts and between quarters; and for free throws during the last two minutes of the game. By league or conference adoption the point differentials (both to establish a running clock and then resume normal timing) may be modified at the junior high middle school level only.

II. Coaching Box

- A. A 28-foot coaching box for regular-season and tournament games shall be used.



FIELD HOCKEY

I. Goal-Differential Rule

- A. The 8-goal differential rule is in effect for the MHSAA Tournament and regular-season varsity play. It is optional for leagues and schools to adopt for subvarsity regular-season competition. A game shall be terminated when a team is ahead by 8 goals or more anytime after the first half is completed. (Note: officials must be aware of this adoption by schools or leagues before the contest begins). This game counts toward one of the 18 allowed contests.
- B. When there is a six-goal differential:
 - The clock becomes a running clock at a six-goal differential (only stopping on injury or time out).
 - The game clock will revert to normal timekeeping if the goal differential becomes five.

II. Overtime Procedures

MHSAA Tournament Overtime Procedures – The required MHSAA tournament procedures are:

- A. Play a 10-minute sudden-victory overtime period with a team of six field players and one goalkeeper. Teams do NOT change goals at the end of the regulation game. The winner of the coin toss shall choose to be on offense or defense to begin the overtime period. On a penalty corner, there shall be three defensive players and a goalkeeper behind the end line.
- B. If the game remains tied after the 10-minute period is played, then it will go to the one-on-one overtime procedure. A series of five shots on goal shall be taken by individual players in a one-on-one situation (attacker vs. goalkeeper). To begin this procedure, the attacker stands on the 25-yard line, and the goalkeeper stands on the goal line. Play continues for 8 seconds (10 seconds on a grass field), with follow-up shots permitted.
NOTE: A foul or violation by the attacker ends the procedure. For an unintentional foul by the goalkeeper, the one-on-one shall be retaken. For an intentional foul by the goalkeeper, a penalty stroke shall be awarded. Any player on the approved roster may take the penalty stroke. The procedure also ends when: (1) the 8 (or 10) seconds have elapsed; (2) a goal is scored; (3) the ball goes out of play over the end line or sideline.

III. Overtime Procedures

Leagues and conferences may have an overtime option for end-of-season bracketed tournaments (see above overtime procedures). In this section, overtime is considered an extension of the fourth quarter.

A 10-minute sudden-victory overtime period with a team of six field players and one goalkeeper shall be used in the regular season. Regular-season games still tied at the end of the 10-minute overtime shall end in a tie, unless it is a bracketed tournament

IV. Complete Game - Inclement Weather Conditions

When a game cannot be completed due to inclement weather, a game is considered complete when one team has a three or more goal differential at any time following completion of the second quarter.

FOOTBALL

I. Pregame Coin Toss

- A. For regular-season games, the pregame coin toss may be held on the field 20 minutes prior to kickoff games rather than three minutes prior. For tournament games, it is required that the coin toss be held 20 minutes prior to kickoff.

II. Point-Differential Rule

- A. The running clock, 35-point margin rule shall be used for all football games, regular season and playoffs, varsity and subvarsity, high school and junior high/middle school. After the first half, any time the score differential reaches 35 points or more, the following changes, and only these changes, shall be made regarding rules determining when the clock will and will not be stopped. The clock shall run continuously except for the following situations when it will be stopped (**T I P S**):
 1. Timeouts (charged to a team)
 2. Intermission (between 3rd and 4th quarters, and after a score)
 3. Penalty enforcement (whistle to ready-to-play)
 4. Safety reasons (injuries, etc.)

Normal timing procedures shall resume if the point differential is reduced to less than 35 points. Additionally, should the point margin increase to a 50 point differential any time in the game, the clock will run continuously except for officials' timeouts for injured players.

Note: The use of this option does not preclude the use of Rule 3-1-3 which reads: "A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee any remaining periods may be shortened at any time or the game may be terminated."

- B. In 9th-grade and junior varsity contests, the clock shall start on the ready-for-play signal rather than the snap following a change of possession.

III. Overtime

- A. The 10-yard-line overtime rule outlined in the National Federation Football Rules Book will be in effect for all varsity regular-season games and MHSAA Playoff games which end with scores tied at the end of regulation.

IV. Competition Against Non-school Teams

- A. Only subvarsity football teams may schedule games with non-school teams as is currently allowed in all other sports. Regulation II, Section 9 (D) requires senior high school varsity teams compete only against teams composed exclusively of high school students and representing high schools.



V. Eight-Player Football

- A. Schools may support teams using the Eight Player Format. Recommended field size is 100 x 40 yards. National Federation published eight player rules will be used.

VI. Casts

- A. Authorization for players to compete while wearing a legally padded cast must be in writing from an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.

GYMNASTICS

I. Mechanics of Scoring

- A. Regular-season and MHSAA tournament gymnastics shall use open scoring.
- B. An inquiry of an official's score is permitted within 10 minutes after all scores for that team have been recorded for that individual event (rather than 5 minutes). The MHSAA allows unlimited inquiry.

See Requirements for regular-season Gymnastic Meets (page 115).

ICE HOCKEY

I. Goal-Differential Rule

- A. The 8-goal differential rule is in effect for both the regular season and MHSAA Tournament: A running clock shall be used when a team leads by 8 or more goals during the first and second periods. After two periods of play or anytime during the third period, the game will be terminated when a team leads by 8 goals. During the first or second period when the score differential drops beneath 8 goals, regular time shall be reinstated until an 8-goal margin is reached. The rule is not optional nor shall it be modified.

II. Length of Periods

- A. As allowed by National Federation Rule 9-12, leagues and conferences may, by prior mutual agreement, permit schools to play 17 minute periods during regular-season games. If there is no prior mutual agreement, periods shall be a maximum of 15 minutes in length. In MHSAA Tournament games, periods will be 17 minutes in length.

III. Regular-Season Overtime Procedures

- A. For a regular-season single game, one sudden victory overtime period of a maximum 8 minutes in length. Teams shall change ends after regulation. If no goals are scored in the OT period the game ends in a tie. By prior mutual agreement, a league or conference may elect to not play OT. If there is no prior league/conference agreement to not play OT, a game tied at the end of regulation shall have one sudden victory OT period, maximum 8 minutes in length. This is the MHSAA default rule for all regular-season single games – one 8-minute OT period. If there is no league or conference agreement (or in non-conference games a prior agreement) to not play OT, then one 8-minute OT period shall be played.
- B. Regular-season tournaments involving four or more teams played on days not followed by a school day (weekend tournament/holiday tournament), may use any number of overtime periods up to 8 minutes in length to determine a winner. Teams shall change ends after regulation, as well as each subsequent overtime period. MHSAA Tournament games will use 8 minute sudden victory overtime periods to determine a winner in all games.
- C. A shootout may be conducted at the end of the regulation time in conference games by prior league/conference adoption or by pregame mutual consent of both teams in non-conference games as follows:
 - At the end of regulation, the head official will instruct the timekeeper to put two minutes on the clock and immediately start the clock.
 - The other two officials will request a list of three shooters from each coach.
 - The head official will meet at center ice with the captains to explain the protocol during the two-minute period.
 - The goalkeepers remain at the same ends as the third period.
 - The home team has the option of shooting first or defending first in Round 1, with the order reversed in Round 2. Teams will have their three shooters alternate shots in each round. The shootout ends if a team scores more times in its round than the opponent does in its round (1-0, 2-1, 3-2). Each team has an equal number of chances to shoot before a winner is declared.
 - If the shootout remains tied at the end of two rounds, each coach will select a different shooter, this time in a sudden death situation. Neither team may use a repeat shooter until each skater on the smallest team's roster has shot. For example, if Team A has 17 skaters but Team B has only 12 skaters, both may use repeat shooters on the 13th penalty shot but not before.
- D. By prior written MHSAA approval, MHSAA shootout procedures can be used to break a tie at the end of a two-game series if the total goals are tied after two regulation games.
- E. By prior league or conference adoption or by pregame mutual consent in non-conference games, after one scoreless overtime period of a maximum 8 minutes in length, the MHSAA Tournament OT procedure of 4 on 4 periods may be used to break a tie. Teams shall change ends after regulation and each subsequent overtime period.

Only the above options are allowed for regular-season contests that end tied in regulation.

IV. MHSAA Tournament Overtime Procedures

- A. During MHSAA Tournament contests, four sudden-victory overtime periods not to exceed eight minutes in length followed by unlimited 4-on-4 periods will be used to determine a winner. Procedures for resurfacing are stated in the MHSAA ice hockey Participating School Tournament Information and Tournament Managers Manual.



V. Tournament Netting Requirements

- A. All MHSAA ice hockey tournament facilities shall have protective netting behind the goal area, or restrict seating behind the goals.

VI. Neck Guards

- A. The MHSAA has approved mandatory use of neck guards for all MHSAA member school players, including goalies in both MHSAA regular-season games and MHSAA tournament games. Neck guards are to be worn properly during the game and also during pregame and between period warm-up time.

VII. Sportsmanship - Next Game Disqualifications

- A. The MHSAA penalty for player or coach game disqualifications in the same season is as follows: first game disqualification – two-game suspension; second game disqualification – four-game suspension and may not coach in the MHSAA tournament; third game disqualification – the coach or player is suspended for the remainder of the season.

VIII. Players in Uniform

- A. The number of players in uniform may be increased from its current 22 active players to include a 23rd player to be dressed in uniform if that player is a goaltender.

IX. Helmets - Players, Coaches and Officials

- A. Helmets must be worn at all times by players and officials while on the ice, except while standing for the National Anthem or during post game awards ceremonies.
- B. All members of a high school ice hockey coaching staff shall wear HECC Certified helmets while on the ice for practice.

LACROSSE (Boys and Girls)

I. Casts

- A. Authorization for players to compete while wearing a legally padded cast must be in writing from an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.

II. Girls Lacrosse Overtime Procedures

- A. Previous overtime procedures have been retained. (Alternative possession shall continue from regulation and alternate possession is continuous through any overtime period.) The rule is:
 - When the score is tied at the end of regular playing time, both teams will have a 5-minute rest and toss a coin (visiting captain calls) for choice of ends. Six minutes (two 3-minute halves) of overtime will be played. The clock stops on official timeouts or fouls in the critical scoring area. The clock will be stopped after 3 minutes of play in order for teams to change ends with no delay for coaching. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team which is ahead at the end of six minutes wins the game.
 - If the teams are still tied after six minutes have elapsed, the teams will have a 3-minute rest and change ends. The winner will then be decided on a "sudden victory" overtime of no more than six minutes in length with the teams changing ends after 3 minutes. The game will be restarted by a center draw. The team scoring the first goal wins the game.
 - Play will continue with "sudden victory" overtime periods of six minutes in length (two minute halves) with 3 minutes in between and change of ends until a winning goal is scored.
 - Overtime is considered an extension of the fourth quarter insofar as this section is concerned.

III. Misconduct/Disqualification

- A. In girls lacrosse, the actions of a spectator does not necessitate the head coach be assessed a card.

IV. Suspended Games

- A. A regular-season or tournament game is legal and complete after three quarters for boys.

V. MHSAA Boys Lacrosse Tournament Game Termination

- A. An MHSAA tournament game in boys lacrosse will end when an 18-goal margin is reached any time after the third quarter is completed. The 12-point goal point differential running clock in the second half continues. NFHS Rule 3.5 also states: By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches, and approval of the referee, any period may be shortened or the game terminated.

SOCCER

I. Goal-Differential Rule

- A. The 8-goal differential rule is in effect for the MHSAA Tournament and regular-season varsity play. It is optional for leagues and schools to adopt for subvarsity regular-season competition. A game shall be terminated when a team is ahead by 8 goals or more anytime after the first half is completed. (Note: officials must be aware of this adoption by schools or leagues before the contest begins).
- B. If the goal differential reaches eight (8) during the first half, institute a running clock for the remainder of the half. The clock will not stop for goals, cards, injuries, or any other reason.

II. Overtime Procedures

- A. MHSAA Tournament: The required MHSAA tournament procedures are two full ten-minute overtimes with no golden goal conclusion (play full time regardless of score). Teams shall change ends of the field at the conclusion of the first overtime. If still tied at the end of the second full 10-minute overtime, the shootout (penalty kick) process is used.
- B. Regular Season: There will be no overtime periods or shootouts in the regular season. Leagues and conferences may have an



overtime option for end-of-season bracketed tournaments (overtime not to exceed two 10-minute periods plus shootout). When considering the three-half rule, overtime is considered an extension of the second half. A multi-team tournament may use a shootout to determine a winner.

III. Uniforms (Caps)

- A. Players may wear soft and yielding ski caps during inclement weather. Caps must be alike in color.
- B. A team not complying with the playing rules for colors of jerseys would be responsible for wearing whatever options are used to attain different jersey colors.

IV. Casts

- A. Authorization for players to compete while wearing a legally padded cast must be in writing from an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.

V. Tournament Procedures

- A. The minimum requirement for an official game in an MHSAA tournament game is 60 minutes if the difference in score is one goal or less at the time the game is suspended and cannot be resumed.
- B. Vuvuzela horns are banned at all MHSAA Soccer Tournament matches.

SOFTBALL See Baseball and Softball

SWIMMING & DIVING

I. Water Depth

- A. DEQ Regulation states a pool must have 79 inches of water in order to use starting platforms. (Pools with at least 60 inches of water have been grandfathered by the DEQ).

II. Step-Up starts will be used

III. Final Meet Qualifying

- A. At the MHSAA Finals, the qualifying criteria has been modified so as to qualify approximately 32 individuals or relay teams per event, per division.

IV. Events

- A. Schools may request approval from the MHSAA to modify events for invitationals.

V. Swim Caps

- A. Swimmers may wear caps that read "State Team" for both regular season and postseason competition provided all other NFHS regulations with regard to caps are followed.

TENNIS - U.S. Tennis Association USTA

I. Scoring

- A. Schools may use no-ad scoring, play pro sets, or short sets or shorten the rest period between the second and third set.

II. Misconduct, Sportsmanship

- A. Cumulative Point Penalty System applies for all levels of the MHSAA Tournament.
- B. The penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct after or during a match by a player or non-player (Regional or Final) shall be: individual is defaulted for the rest of the tournament (Regional and Final) and one point is subtracted from the team total.
- C. MHSAA Point Penalty System is: warning, point, default.

III. Rest Periods

- A. The continuous play rule has been modified; breaks occur at each odd game (including the first game) and a set break of a maximum of two minutes is allowed.
- B. The rest period between second and third set is a maximum of five minutes. Coaching is allowed during every change over, set break and five-minute break between the second and third sets.

IV. Seeding

- A. At the Finals, up to six (6) players per flight may be seeded in all flights except #1 singles. Should there be 21 to 23 #1 singles players in the draw, up to seven players may be seeded. If there are 24 or more, up to eight players may be seeded in #1 singles.
- B. Seeds at the Regional and Final will be placed, therefore no coin flip is needed.
- C. No appeals or protests regarding a seed or the placement of seeds determined by the Seed Committees for the Regional and Final levels of the MHSAA Tournament are allowed or may be considered by those Committees, MHSAA Staff or MHSAA Executive Committee after the Seed Committee adjourns.
This does not preclude the MHSAA from removing students from the tournament for violations of MHSAA Regulations.

V. Regular-Season Results Reporting

- A. Schools must enter all regular-season match data online via tennisreporting.com on a timely basis. [Tennisreporting.com](https://tennisreporting.com) and more specifically the "Player Season Reports" (PSR) generated by tennisreporting.com will be used by tournament administration to seed the Regional and Final tournaments.

VI. Uniforms

- A. The minimum uniform requirement is an unaltered shirt with sleeves, preferably in school colors or with school identification.



(Exception: females may wear a sleeveless dress/shirt, including a racer-back top) All uniforms must be approved by the school. Team shorts/skirts are required and shall be the same color. Penalty: Match will not start unless the individual/team has uniform on. Point penalty system for lateness will be used.

TRACK & FIELD and CROSS COUNTRY

I. Uniforms, Attire, Adornments

- A. Should the uniform jersey hang below the waistband of the shorts, jerseys must be tucked in.
- B. Throwing Events: The event landing areas must be clearly identified and marked with flags or ropes.
- C. Sunglasses may be worn in competition.

II. Events

- A. A student shall participate in no more than four events per meet (National Federation listed events only but not javelin in any form).
- B. Schools may request approval from the MHSAA to modify events for invitationals.
- C. The 1600-meter run, 3200-meter relay and 3200-meter run at all Lower Peninsula Regional and Final meets will use waterfall and a one-turn stagger. The upper waterfall cut-in will be at the start of the front straightaway; the lower waterfall cut-in immediately.

VOLLEYBALL

I. Match Format

- A. The fourth or fifth set of a match may be played even after one team has won its third set. See Int. 290 b. regarding officials.
- B. Modification of match format is permitted for competition other than varsity dual matches. All varsity dual matches must be played as best three-of-five sets. In varsity tri and quad matches that use a best two-of-three format, all sets must be played to 25 points, including a deciding set, if necessary.

II. Warm-Up Time in MHSAA Tournament

- A. During the MHSAA Tournament, the pre-match warm-up is 20 minutes. The first four minutes is shared time; the second four minutes is home team; the next four minutes is visitor; next four minutes is home team; last four minutes is visitor.

III. Ball

- A. The gray, white and royal blue ball will be required for regular season and all MHSAA Tournament Rounds.

WRESTLING

I. Home Weigh-ins

- A. Home weigh-ins are permitted by mutual consent for all regular-season contests.

II. Wrestling – Result Reporting for Individual Tournament

- A. Schools must enter all regular-season match data online via TrackWrestling on a timely basis. This data must be submitted to TrackWrestling prior to the Individual District submission deadline. TrackWrestling will be used by tournament administration to automatically seed each level of the Individual District, Regional and Final tournament rounds.

III. Ineligible Participation Penalty – Dual Meet

The following steps will be followed if a student participates in a weight class for which they are ineligible during a wrestling dual meet competition.

- If this fact is discovered during the involved match, the match is stopped and forfeited by the opponent.
- Six (6) team points are awarded to the offended team, plus an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty is assessed to the offending team's head coach, which requires the deduction of one additional team point (7-point penalty).
- If this is discovered after the involved match but before the completion of the dual meet, the dual continues with the team score being adjusted so that any team points earned during the match in question are removed.
 - o 6 team points are then awarded to the offended team, plus an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty is assessed to the head coach of the offending team, which requires the deduction of one additional team point (7-point penalty).
- In both cases, neither wrestler who competed in the "illegal" match may compete again during that dual meet.
- If this is discovered after the dual meet when the scorebook has been signed by the official and both teams have left the mat area, the results of the dual meet will stand.

IV. Participation – Dual Meets

When there is an odd number of teams at a wrestling tournament (dual meet format), eligible student-athletes from participating teams may assemble as a group to compete against other teams in the event.



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)

Maximum Number of Pitches in One Day = 105

Rest Period per No. of Pitches

76-105 Pitches 3 Days of Rest

51-75 Pitches 2 Days of Rest

26-50 Pitches 1 Day of Rest

25 Pitches or Less No Required Days of Rest

Junior High/Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Maximum Number of Pitches in One Day = 75

Rest Period per No. of Pitches

51-75 3 Days of Rest

26-50 2 Days of Rest

25 Pitches or Less 1 Day 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.

NOTE: Head coaches may track and record pitches using either a Pitching Record Form (PRF) or through a GameChanger Plus account provided free of charge by the MHSAA*, or a combination of both. If using the GameChanger account, **it must allow public access to the box score portion so that opposing coaches may review the pitching statistics.** Pitching records from the previous three calendar days must be made available (through either method) to the opposing coach at the plate meeting. The MHSAA has access to the dates and times when pitching statistics are added to GameChanger. For more information, visit the AD/Coaches Baseball page of MHSAA.com.

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.



Officials Accident Medical Insurance (Updated June 2026)

(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 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.

Coverage is provided for MHSAA registered officials accidentally injured while working contests in interscholastic athletic activities under the jurisdiction of the Michigan High School Athletic Association; namely: baseball, basketball (boys and girls), cross country (boys and girls), football, gymnastics (girls), competitive cheer (girls), ice hockey, lacrosse (boys and girls), soccer (boys and girls), softball (girls), swimming and diving (boys and girls), track and field (boys and girls), volleyball (girls and boys), and wrestling.

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

This coverage is provided at no cost 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 \$1,000** in paid medical expenses per claim has been met. The MHSAA arranged program will then pay medical expenses above the \$1,000 deductible left unpaid by the official's 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 email 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: bryan_cronen@ajg.com



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 and practices 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. If a student is removed during practice by a coach or other staff member, he or she shall not return to practice that day unless it is confirmed by the designated health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion.
4. 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.
5. 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.**
6. **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.
7. **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.**
8. 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 2027*

***Term Expires December 2026*