

Officials Considerations for COVID-19 Basketball Guidelines

Included below are considerations for contest officials within the guidelines for returning to school sports. They have been developed in consultation with health professionals, government officials, the National Federation and officials from around the state of Michigan. They include general expectations for schools in relation to officials, provisions specific to officials in the sport, rules and mechanics modifications and protocols for when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified.

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

General Expectations for Schools

- School athletic directors and officials should communicate with one another well in advance of the contest so that there is a clear understanding as to what is expected from each. Failure to discuss the details may create greater conflicts at the date/time of the contest.
- Officials should be provided a designated parking area apart from the general public.
- An adult host should meet the officials at a single, designated location and time for arrival. They should be escorted all together to a *private open and/or ventilated locker room or meeting area* before the start of the contest, to and from the contest during any intermissions and to the parking areas following the conclusion of the contest.
- Officials should be provided cold beverages either (1) in a sealed, disposable bottle or (2) in a newly washed, reusable bottle. Each shall be designated for a single official and should be marked to indicate to which official the beverage is assigned.
- If offered, snacks or meals provided to officials should be individually packaged separately for each official.
- It is recommended that officials' fees are paid using an electronic payment method.

Protocols for Suspected and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Suspected Cases at Contest

- If an official becomes symptomatic at a contest, he or she should be moved to a designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they are transported from the facility. If the symptoms are severe, the official should be picked up by an emergency contact or by ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being transported to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

Confirmed Cases

- If an official has a laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19, he or she should immediately contact the local health department for further instructions, and inform the athletic director(s) of any host school he or she visited within the previous two days before displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Officials must inform any host school for which they are scheduled to officiate for (at least) 14 days following confirmation that they are unable to work those contests. They will remain ineligible to officiate any MHSAA contests until they are medically cleared by their personal healthcare provider.

- All officials considered close contacts (*i.e.*, someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) will be informed when a positive case of COVID-19 is identified from a contest they officiated within two days of when the infected individual first displayed symptoms. If identified as a close contact, an official should quarantine and must return assignments scheduled for the next 14 days.
- If an official was at the event, but not in close contact with a positive case, he or she should continue to be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, these individuals are not required to receive testing unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

Cancellations/Failure-to-Fulfills

- Games that are cancelled because of COVID-19 are considered cancelled as a result of an act of God and are not subject to a 10-day minimum advanced notice by the school.
- Officials are not subject to a failure-to-fulfill penalty if they break a contract for an assignment when (1) they have been diagnosed with, or display symptoms of, COVID-19 or (2) if a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified with a team or facility which/where he or she is scheduled to officiate.

Officials' Sport-Specific Provisions

It is incumbent of MHSAA officials to take necessary precautions to ensure a safe working/playing environment. This is especially important for those considered “vulnerable individuals” – people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Individual circumstances, proximity to others while officiating and overall risk level will determine for many the extent of precautions taken.

Provisions are listed in categories described below. As independent contractors, MHSAA officials have the ability to choose or decline assignments as they see fit. Likewise, because officials are hired by the schools, districts and their administrators may require additional precautions be taken by officials that work their contests beyond those mandated in this document. Officials should check with the schools as to any additional precautions or requirements before accepting an assignment and/or arriving to contest.

Provision Categories

- Permitted** – Precautions and safety measures which officials are allowed to take during MHSAA contests. This list is not exhaustive and officials should contact the host school for guidance if they wish to take further precautions not listed in this document.
- Suggested** – Best practices for MHSAA officials based on the recommendations of health professionals. Not required, but should be followed if possible.
- Mandated** – Required practice in order to officiate MHSAA contests. If an official is unwilling or unable to follow these requirements, he or she is not permitted to officiate the contest.

NOTE: “Physical distancing” refers to a separation of individuals of at least six feet, except for momentary interactions.

Permitted Provisions:

- Officials may use electronic whistles.

- Officials may wear gloves – including medical latex gloves, work gloves or gloves designed specifically for officiating.
- Officials may wear plastic face shields which connect to a hat, wrap around the forehead or that hang around the neck.
- An officiating crew has the option to utilize the following mechanics deviation regarding throw-ins and free throws. If utilized, the referee **must** discuss with the head coach of each team what will be required of their players for handling the ball. **NOTE: For the 2020-21 MHSAA Postseason Tournament, officials will be expected to utilize traditional ball-handling mechanics to provide consistency in the expectations from teams and officiating partners.**
 - Officials will not be responsible for handling basketballs during the course of the game. Teams will be required to bring the ball to the in-bound spot or free throw line, as the case may be. If possession of the ball is turned over, the player of the offending team should provide the ball to the opposing team to administer the throw-in or free throw at the official's direction.
 - For a throw-ins, the official administering the throw-in will indicate with his/her foot where the thrower should stand and instruct him/her that the count will begin as the official backs away. All officials will then take their normal throw-in positions.
 - For free throws, the official administering the free throw (lead) will stand under the basket at the end line and instruct the free thrower that the count will begin as the official backs away. All officials will then take their normal free throw positions.
 - See Rules Modifications below for jump ball mechanics deviations.

Suggested Provisions:

- Each official should check his/her temperature on game days. Officials displaying COVID-19 symptoms (*e.g., fever, cough or shortness of breath*), or with temperatures of 100.3F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Officials should consider bringing their own marked beverage(s).
- Upon arrival at the site/facility and throughout the contest, officials should wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Officials should not share uniforms, towels apparel or equipment.
- Officials should sanitize their hands after inspecting basketballs and other player, team and playing equipment.

Mandated Provisions:

- Officials will arrange to arrive to the site/facility at a single location and time. Unless unavoidable, officials will enter the facility as a group, maintaining proper physical distancing.
- Officials' pregame meetings shall be conducted while practicing proper physical distancing.



Updated 2/24/21

- **Face masks which cover the mouth and nose are required to be worn by officials at all times as required by the MDHHS order, unless a medical exception applies to the individual. Under the current MDHHS order, officials must have documentation from a medical provider (MD, DO, PA, NP) and provide that to the host school administrator upon arrival.**
- Officials shall not engage in pregame/postgame handshakes or fist bumps with players, coaches or administrators.
- Officials shall not physically contact players during the contest, including players that appear to be injured or ill.
- Officials will maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling. In those cases, the officials should avoid speaking face-to-face.
- Only the referee and the head coach from each team will attend the pregame meeting. This will take place at the center circle, with each head coach standing opposite one another on each side of the division line and maintaining at least six feet of physical distance.
- Only the referee will conduct the pregame meeting with the scorer and timer.
- Officials will limit the handling of basketballs as much as possible. Players will retrieve balls that get away from the immediate court area. During timeouts, the player should be instructed to leave the basketball on the floor at the position of the next possession.

Rules Modifications (Basketball)

- **UNIFORMS and ACCESSORIES (Rules 4-1, 5-3, 5-3-1)**
 - Players are permitted to use cloth face coverings with no restrictions on color or logo.
 - Players may wear gloves.
 - Players may wear long-sleeved undershirts (not everyone on the team must wear the same) as long as they meet color requirements/restrictions.
- **OFFICIALS TABLE (Rule 2-1-3)**
 - Only essential personnel (*i.e., home scorer and timer*) are permitted at the officials table. Visiting team personnel are not deemed “essential” and will need to find an alternative location.
- **JUMP BALLS**
 - Jump balls will be eliminated for all MHSAA contests.
 - To start the game, the visiting team will be awarded the ball for a throw-in at the division line.
 - To start the third period, the home team will be awarded the ball for a throw-in at the division line, regardless of the alternating possession arrow at the end of the second period.
 - **OVERTIME:** A coin toss will take place during the intermission between the fourth period and first overtime period to determine the team that will be awarded the ball to begin the extra period. The coin toss will be called by the visiting team head coach. Teams will then alternate being awarded the ball for a throw-in at the division line for any additional overtime period. There will be no additional coin flips.
 - **ALTERNATING POSSESSION (A-P) ARROW:** The A-P arrow will be set at the beginning of the game, the start of the third period and any overtime period as in normal course of the game based on a team establishing control when the ball is placed at the disposal of the thrower, including after free throws for a technical foul. Additionally, the A-P arrow may be lost if the throw-in team violates under rule 6-4-5.
- **TIMING and INTERVALS**
 - There will be no 30-second timeouts. Each team will be provided up to five (5) 60-second charged timeouts during regulation. Overtime timeout provisions remain the same.
 - Intermissions after the first and third quarters, and before any overtime period, may be extended up to two minutes if mutually agreed upon by both coaches before the start of the game. Otherwise, they will remain one minute.
- **SPECTATOR SEATING**
 - **Schools should restrict spectators on both sides of the gym from sitting in the first two rows of bleachers closest to the gymnasium floor** to allow for adequate spacing between the spectators and contest participants, permit a scorer’s table and benches to be moved back or use the first row of bleachers for team bench seating if needed.