

OFFICIALS REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

East Lansing, September 30, 2019

Members Present:

Michael Bakker, Linden
Michael Brya, DeWitt
Connor Thomas, Marlette
Dan Ulrich, Charlevoix
Don Gustafson, St. Ignace
Vic Michaels, St. Clair Shores
Ron Nagy, Hazel Park
William McCoy, Detroit
Matt Lehman, Concord
Eric Albright, Midland
O'Neal Ollie, Kalamazoo

Michael Roy, Vicksburg
Karen Leinaar, Frankfort

Members Not Present:

Kamaria Douglas

Staff Present:

Sam Davis
Faye Verellen-Brown
Tony Bihn
Brent Rice (Recorder)

The 2019-20 MHSAA Officials Review Committee met to review topics involving high school officiating. After introductions were completed, the committee reviewed the terms of appointment to the Officials Review Committee, as well as the charge and mission of the group relative to the MHSAA decision making process.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Representative Council Action Review: MHSAA staff provided the committee with information regarding Representative Council action from the May Council meeting which covered the expansion of the Student Legacy Officials Program to include freshman and sophomore students, the addition of the post-contest ejection to the *MHSAA Handbook* and the approval of an increase in postseason tournament officials' fees and mileage.

Discussion Items: A brief update was provided from the Midwest Officials Summit in September and the NASO Officials Summit in July. The primary focus continues to be the recruitment and retention of officials. Committee members were also apprised of the Assigners and Association Leadership meeting new format and the topics covered.

A potential change in Cheer and Gymnastics officials' uniforms was discussed. The suggested uniform top will consist of an all-black, long sleeve quarter zip pullover with the horizontal MHSAA logo included on the left chest pocket area. All other uniform requirements in these sports remains the same. An example of the style of the uniform top was provided to the committee to view.

A discussion was held regarding the non-act of God cancellation policy as it applies to officials' fees. Concern was expressed that schools were obligated to pay officials for contests that were cancelled at the fault of another school. It was explained that the host

school is responsible because the contract is between that school and the officials. It was then recommended that the *MHSAA Handbook* include language that will make the payment of officials' fees in these circumstances the responsibility of the school that caused the cancellation. One member also recommended that this language also be included in the MHSAA contract between schools.

Officials Recruitment and Retention: MHSAA staff presented registration demographics for MHSAA officials and trends for the past decade. Encouraging data was provided as to the slight increase in registrations in Competitive Cheer, Girls Lacrosse, Gymnastics, Ice Hockey and Wrestling. Potential solutions were discussed how to increase numbers for Baseball and Softball, in particular.

Sam Davis provided the committee details of the college campus recruitment campaign, including the response from Local Approved Associations and Recruiting and Mentorship Coordinators around the state. The focus will be recruiting on college campuses with student populations under 10,000.

Sportsmanship Initiatives: The committee discussed the Personal Attack Policy and how that applies to MHSAA sports for the 2019-20 season. Staff informed members that this is a point of emphasis with officials this year, and that it is being presented in AD in-service meetings and in both coaches' and officials' rules meeting presentations.

The proposed Game Day Ambassador Program was discussed as a possible solution to some sportsmanship issues. The program would consist of three areas, including providing ideas and materials to assist ADs in hosting game officials, offering a framework to schools for implementation of #officialthanks initiative and "Thank Officials" events and the administration of schools' sportsmanship feedback scores and awards.

Ways to improve officials' participation in the submission of quality feedback for schools was discussed. Committee members were provided some details regarding a new system through Arbiter that would allow officials to conveniently submit feedback scores, and to also allow schools access to scores so they may be able to determine areas for improvement.

Student and coach disqualifications were discussed, including the sports where the staff and committee members have particular concerns. Sam Davis presented to the committee a proposal to add the completion of NFHS sportsmanship courses as a requirement to return to competition. It was recommended that ejected students and coaches must complete the NFHS Sportsmanship course or the NFHS Teaching and Modeling Behavior course, respectively.

Ratings were a topic of discussion – specifically improving the number of ratings submitted and how officials can best use the ratings they receive. One member

mentioned concerns with the decline in the number of ratings submitted, and another made the point that multi-team wrestling and volleyball events are the most difficult to manage. Tony Bihn explained that was likely a combination of issues, but that it should be resolved with the new API launched through Arbiter. Another member recommended that coaches should receive notices as soon as they can rate a contest to encourage ratings to be submitted sooner than later.

A concern was presented that completion of a rules meeting is only required for postseason tournament consideration, and discussion occurred amongst the committee as to the possibility of requiring completion of the rules meeting for officiating regular season contests. Because junior high/middle school seasons do not always coordinate with their high school counterparts, it was suggested that these levels be exempted. The committee was provided data that showed the number of officials that currently complete the rules meeting and those that complete it before the first day of competition.

Recommendations to the Representative Council:

1. Create new uniform top requirements for officials in Competitive Cheer and Gymnastics beginning in the 2020-21 season. (13-0)
2. Adopt language that specifies that a host school shall be reimbursed for officials fees from a non-host school that is responsible for a cancellation due to a non-act of God. (13-0)
3. Add a requirement for the completion of an NFHS sportsmanship course as a stipulation for coaches and players to return to competition after having been ejected from a contest. (13-0)
4. Adjust the officials rating system to encourage more ratings from schools, provide more specificity to officials for areas of improvement and to get a better understanding of an official's overall body of work. (13-0)
5. Mandate the completion of the current year rules meeting for an MHSAA registered official to be eligible to officiate high school contests. (13-0)