



Lacrosse Coaches and Officials:

March 21, 2017

After statewide communication with several coaches and official's leadership earlier this month we offer the following to supplement the MHSAA rule meeting for boys lacrosse. Please share this with assistant, subvarsity and middle school coaches.

**Faceoff Reminder:** Players must attempt to play the ball as their first move - faceoff players are not allowed to make a body check on an opposing player as their first move. This rule does not prohibit a "boxing-out" maneuver while playing the ball. No contact can be made with any part of the body on either stick during the faceoff. Also, players cannot go to the ground in the neutral zone to stop the sticks from being pushed forward on the faceoff. Any body contact with the sticks will be an immediate whistle. Remember that all potential faceoff players must have 6" of color on their cross contrasting to the gloves and head of the stick.

**Mouth guards:** Expect strict enforcement by officials and no live ball warnings of this safety change. Colored visible mouth guards must be fully in the mouth – no fish hooks. It's a technical foul if they are not in – a lesser penalty than before so we expect this safety regulation to be called often and early and enforced. We suggest coaches practice under similar conditions: every player has a mouth guard in during all live ball situations. A completely clear or white mouthguard is not a mouthguard even if it is from a dentist and made just for that player.

**Coach on Field:** It is an NFHS point of emphasis that coaches may not be on the field except to attend to an injured player, which is not an opportunity to yell at officials. Have your team back up off the sideline as this gives coaches and officials room on the sideline. This too is a safety item to prevent collisions near the sideline.

**Defensemen in Crease:** Remind your players that because they are not equipped as a goalie they are not to enter the crease to block shots or cover for the goalie. Coach players to prevent this safety penalty from happening. Anything outside the crease remains fair game.

**Blindside Hits, Contact:** Coaches must teach what is proper and prohibit any unsafe hits by their players. Expect strict enforcement and zero tolerance from officials as the rules and points of emphasis are aimed at safer play and reduction of concussion. Remember these phrases: Keep the head and neck out of lacrosse and when in doubt, officials are to throw the flag out.

**Officials:** In some cases the verbal abuse that coaches and adult spectators (parents) subject officials to is enough to drive good people away from officiating. This has to stop or we will both lose officials and be unable to attract new officials. Not to mention that this is not at all what sports is intended to teach. It is the responsibility of coaches to inform their teams and parents that they expect respect for officials and opponents. Coaches must set an example and we must see change with the start of this season. This is a tough sport to officiate and it is growing faster than the rate of available officials – so give them a break as we have several newer officials coming into the ranks each year. Newer players and newer officials often meet at the middle school and sub varsity levels so help spread the word. Please address this at preseason meetings: **Coach Sportsmanship.**

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