

Best Practices for High School Line Judges

Line judges are essential for any volleyball match. Competent line judges are trained in their responsibilities and capable of discharging the various duties. A line judge must be alert and responsible to the leadership and direction of the referees. The following guidelines should govern line judge protocols during MHSAA volleyball matches; both regular-season and tournament play.

Warm-up & Prematch:

- Arrive no less than 20 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the match.
- Be dressed appropriately (all white, short-sleeved collared polo shirt, black slacks, solid black socks and athletic shoes).
- Red flags shall be used by line judges for signals.
- Report and introduce yourself to the first referee. Listen and asks questions to be able to respond to unusual situations. Review specific responsibilities with the first referee. First referee may assign positions.
- Perform duties in a confident, quiet, efficient manner. Prepare to perform by moving onto the court and watching lines during the prematch warm-up time.
 - This is an opportunity to observe court markings, speed of the ball, and to mentally prepare for the match. At the 11-minute mark (until 3 minutes left), **both** line judges take base positions at assigned corners, without flags. Make sure you are looking for touches, angles, antenna faults, etc.
- During the National Anthem and introductions, line judges stand beside first and second referee on respective sides of the court.
 - LJ1 should place ball and flag on stand, LJ2 leaves ball and flag on scorer's table. This is also a good time to make sure the antenna is straight and fastened tightly.
- At the end of introductions, line judges collect the ball and flag, and stand approximately 10 feet straight back from their base positions. When the second referee delivers the game ball to the server, the line judges roll their game ball to the ball shagger and take their base position.

During the match:

- Stand near the intersection of the sideline and the end line, and move as to have a clear view of both lines you are responsible for.
 - If the server serves from the left third of the service area, the Line Judge on the server's side shall move a few steps to the side in line with the extension of the end line until the ball is contacted for serve. Then the Line Judge quickly moves back into position at the intersection of the end line and left sideline.
- Hold the same positions relative to the court throughout the match.
 - Line judges **must move** to obtain a clear, unobstructed view by facing the entire sideline or end line involved when making an inbounds or out-of-bounds call.
- Determine at the moment of contact for the serve whether the server touches the end line or the floor outside the lines marking the width of the serving area.
- By using the antenna fault signal, indicate when the serve, or any played ball, crosses the net not entirely between the net antennas.
 - Line judges should consider that the net antennas extend up to the ceiling so the ball must cross the net entirely within the net antennas or within the net antennas extended. A ball contacting the antenna within the body of the net is out.

- By using the antenna fault signal, indicate when the ball touches the net, net antennas, and/or net supports not entirely between the net antennas.
 - A line judge may signal a fault on either antenna. If there is a possibility that the referee will be unsure about which team caused the antenna fault, a secondary signal should be used to convey that information, after signaling the antenna fault. It does not matter which hand the flag is in, nor do the signals change if the line judge is right-handed or left-handed:
 - To indicate the fault is by the team nearest the line judge, complete the antenna fault signal and then extend the right arm straight out along the end line.
 - To indicate that the fault is by the team on the opposite side of the net, complete the antenna fault signal, and then extend the left arm straight out along the sideline.
- Indicate whether a ball is inbounds or out of bounds when it lands on or near any line for which the line judge is responsible.
- Indicate when a player touches a ball that is going out of bounds on the player's side of the net.
- Communicate with the first referee, when asked, when the ball touches the ceiling or overhead obstruction, if out of the view of the referees.
- A line judge may signal a ball contacting the floor (missed pancake) on either court. Even if the ball simultaneously touches the player and the floor, give the in signal.
- Get your eyes to the line. Do not watch the ball!
- Don't flinch.
- Sell your call! (Snap your flag during the call. Do not snap after the call.)

Time-outs:

- LJ2 walks outside the court along the end line. (Both LJ's are rolling up the flag during this time.) Once LJ2 reaches the corner, both LJ's walk toward the first referee's stand, while looking at the R1, to the time out position.
- Hold the rolled-up flag in front of you, hands apart.
- Only converse with the first referee if they engage or if you have a crowd or safety issue.
- At 15 second whistle (or earlier if both teams returned to the court), glance at each other and leave at the same time to return to your base positions.

Between Sets:

- Collect all game balls. Take the timeout position at the attack line on first referee's side. After both teams have changed benches, both line judges walk across the court and place game balls at the scorer table.
- Have a designated neutral area to sit.
 - If there is not a designated place, find somewhere to stand out of the scorer's table area. Do not socialize with coaches, players, or spectators.
- At the 45 second mark, collect game balls, walk to respective sides and stand 10 feet away from corner. When R2 rolls ball to server, roll yours to ball shagger and take base position.

End Match protocol:

- Do not gather game balls.
- If you don't have a room outside of gym, gather together by your personal belongings.
- Have a post-match debrief.
 - Listen to the feedback from the first and second referee.
 - Be respectful and thank your fellow crew members.

Characteristics of a good Line Judge and general guidelines can be found in the NFHS Case Book on pages 124-127. In the Rule Book, Line Judge Responsibilities are found on pages 27-28 (Rule 5-9) and Signals (with flags) are on page 64. It is highly recommended that you review these before the season starts!

Line judges are an integral part of the officiating crew. Have fun but maintain professionalism!

Thank you for your dedication and cooperation in demonstrating the MHSAA line judge protocol and techniques and for promoting consistency.