

MHSAA OFFICIALS BULLETIN



In the last Bulletin, we talked about working with assigners. Let's spend a little time talking about working with the announcer of an event. If it's your first time officiating with this school, be sure to meet with the announcer and discuss what is covered in the pre-meet announcements. In particular, look for a prohibition against flash photography as it might interfere with a fair start.

The announcer can have a real effect on the tempo of the meet and often has a good feeling for the usual flow at the particular event. Things like when the swimmers and divers are announced during the competition, do they announce DQs and do the swimmers generally swim a cool down lap after each heat or event are all things that can affect the pace considerably.

Also, work with the announcer for any special requests you might have. For instance, maybe you would like them to ask for "quiet" when you make a special indication such as touching your ear. Other signals to the announcer may be beneficial—the signal for disqualification is one and when the official is ready to start the race is another.

Announcers frequently want to start immediately after the computer operator or scorer is ready; however, this may not be appropriate timing for the official. As mentioned, there may be instances when participants swim a cool down lap. Officials may also need to speak with other meet staff or give an explanation to a coach or disqualified swimmer. Maybe one way the announcer should be alerted that the official is ready is when he/she picks up the microphone on the starting device. You can come up with your

own way to indicate this, but the key is communication before the event so that everyone is on the same page.

Helpful Hint: It is important to be serious about your position while still finding appropriate times to keep things light. For instance, at last year's Girls Division 2 State Finals, the referee reminded spectators to turn off their flashes and followed it up with, "and if you don't know how, ask a teenager seated near you." It drew attention to a legitimate concern, but in a way that lightened the mood and created a good deal of laughter.

Something to Consider:

This week's rules question is about the Backstroke Flags. The dual meet is being held in a 6-lane pool without a diving well. The Diving Coach from the host school wants to pull the Backstroke Flags at the deep end of the pool after the 200 Individual Medley and before the 50 Freestyle. Do you grant his/her request?

Last Week's Consideration:

The question is what obligations to official have when markings are not present other than inform the host coach or manager. 2.4.5.A requires the referee to report the problem to the school's administration. You should also do the same with your assigner (if you have one) and the MHSAA if you recognize a pattern.

You Can't Officiate What You Can't See

As an official it is very difficult to see if a competitor is bleeding prior to a race, especially a relay in an 8-lane pool. We all know that we are tasked with not allowing a competitor who is bleeding to enter the water for a race. How do you improve your chances of detecting bleeding? During the Timer's Meeting, prior to the start of competition, it is appropriate for you to ask them to report to you immediately any observed blood. The Timers are much closer, and they have fewer swimmers to look over in their lane than you do with 6 or 8 lanes. Remember: "YOU CAN'T OFFICIATE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE."