



2024-2025
OFFICIALS
MANUAL

2024-2025 DATES TO REMEMBER

_____	Returning Fall Officials Registration Deadline	August 2
_____	Fall Rules Meeting Requirement (Either Online or In Person) Release Date	August 5
_____	Fall Part II Test Requirement Release Date	August 5
_____	Fall Rules Meeting Requirement (Either Online or In Person) Completion Date	August 23
_____	Fall Part II Test Requirement Completion Date	August 23
_____	New Fall Officials Registration Deadline	October 1
_____	Returning Winter Officials Registration Deadline	October 4
_____	Winter Rules Meeting Requirement (Either Online or In Person) Release Date	October 28
_____	Winter Part II Test Requirement Release Date	October 28
_____	Winter Rules Meeting Requirement (Either Online or In Person) Completion Date	November 15
_____	Winter Part II Test Requirement Completion Date	November 15
_____	Returning Spring Officials Registration Deadline	January 31
_____	New Winter Officials Registration Deadline	February 1
_____	Spring Rules Meeting Requirement (Either Online or In Person) Release Date	February 24
_____	Spring Part II Test Requirement Release Date	February 24
_____	Spring Rules Meeting Requirement (Either Online or In Person) Completion Date	March 14
_____	Spring Part II Test Requirement Completion Date	March 14
_____	New Spring Officials Registration Deadline	April 15

**** Post Season Application Dates can be found on the MSHSAA website on the officials sport specific pages. ****

MISSOURI STATE HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

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*****Revised July 2024*****

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
MAY BE FOUND ON MSHSAA WEBSITE (www.mshsaa.org)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The advisory committee members are appointed by the Board of Director member from their respective board district. Each individual is appointed to a four (4) year term. If an appointee is unable to fulfill their term, a replacement will be appointed to complete the remainder of the term. The purpose of the committee is to represent the schools and coaches/directors within their board district on matters concerning the administration of the sport. Their role is a key component is bringing sport/activity-specific needs, concerns, and recommendations to the Board of Directors. Please make sure to use them as your voice to the MSHSAA Staff and Board of Directors.

Southwest (2027) Mike Wilson coachwilliewilson@gmail.com	Southeast (2027) Jason Smith jsmithref55@gmail.com	Northwest (2028)
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Terms expire July 1 of the year noted

*serving out partial term, eligible for reappointment

PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY [\(TOC\)](#)

- A. **MISSION STATEMENT:** The MSHSAA promotes the value of participation, sportsmanship, team play and personal excellence to develop citizens who make positive contributions to their community and support the democratic principles of our state and nation.
- B. **PURPOSE OF MANUAL:** This manual has been prepared to provide a better understanding of the administration of MSHSAA sponsored events. It will serve as a guide to the participating schools and will provide for greater consistency. All information will be included in this manual except such supplementary or incidental information as may be included in the MSHSAA Journal. The regulations in this manual shall be considered official unless the schools are notified in a Special Bulletin of any changes.
- C. **PHILOSOPHY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES:** Interscholastic activities are intended to supplement the secondary curricular program. These activities can provide the student with educational experiences and learning outcomes that contribute toward the development of good citizenship. This can be accomplished only when the emphasis is placed upon teaching "through school activities." Interscholastic activities can be justified only when this is their primary philosophy and purpose.
- D. **PURPOSE OF DISTRICT AND STATE CONTESTS:** There are two primary purposes that justify and cause district and state events to be desirable. Those purposes are to provide opportunities to demonstrate before the public the best knowledge, skills, and emotional patterns taught through a particular sport; and to evaluate and compare the best of this teaching of knowledge, skills and emotional patterns among schools. Unless these purposes are primary, district and state athletic contests cannot be completely justified.

It is the desire of the MSHSAA Board of Directors that these events be both fun and educational. It is extremely important that competitors, coaches, and the school community make every effort to enhance, and keep in proper perspective, the educational values of these events. Competition merely for "competition's sake" cannot be justified. Only when competition contributes toward worthwhile educational goals can it be considered sufficiently important to be included in the school program.

- E. **SUPERVISION OF COMPETITORS AND FANS:** MSHSAA By-Laws hold a school responsible, both at home and away, for the conduct of its competitors, students, coaches, and fans. Coaches are required to supervise their competitors. A coaches' respect for others and school property is necessary in order to instill this respect in competitors. Students staying overnight in hotels or motels in conjunction with any interscholastic athletic contest should be well chaperoned. The good conduct of students will leave a good impression of the entire school.

A school also should inform its competitors, students, coaches and fans of the value contest officials play in education through athletics. When informing these people of this, the difference in the purpose of high school and professional sports should be emphasized. Lack of respect for officials should not be tolerated. Booing of officials leads to booing of coaches and competitors. This has no place in high school athletics. Athletic administrators are urged to develop a program through any and all communication techniques available to ensure that spectators understand that high school athletics are an educational endeavor as opposed to the games being an end in themselves.

SECTION 1: ESSENTIAL RESOURCES [\(TOC\)](#)

The information listed/linked in this section relates to MSHSAA By-Laws, Board Policies and information from the Sports Medicine Page (SMP). The information is not sport or activity specific but is necessary for the safe and proper conduct of your sport/activity.

Source Locations:

[MSHSAA Handbook \(HB\)](#)

[Sports Medicine Page \(SMP\)](#)

- A. ALCOHOL/TOBACCO USAGE AROUND INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES (HB-Board Policy)
- B. CHARITY/AWARENESS EVENTS (HB-Board Policy)
- C. CONCUSSIONS EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL ([SMP](#))
- D. CONDUCT – REMOVAL OF TEAMS & EJECTIONS (HB-By-Law 5.5)
- E. GUIDELINES FOR FAN SUPPORT ITEMS (HB-Board Policy)
- F. HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS/LIGHTNING GUIDELINES ([SMP](#))
- G. HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION (HB-By-Law 1.7 & [SMP](#))
- H. ON-SITE PROTEST PROCEDURES (HB-Board Policy)
- I. OXYGEN USE POSITION STATEMENT ([SMP](#))
- J. SANCTIONING (HB-By-Law 3.18)
- K. WET BULB GLOBE THERMOMETER USE ([SMP](#))

SECTION 2: REGISTRATION OF OFFICIALS [\(TOC\)](#)

A function of the Missouri State High School Activities Association is the registration of contest officials for interscholastic competition as provided in the MSHSAA By-Laws. MSHSAA member schools are required to use only registered officials as stipulated in MSHSAA By-Law 6.1.2 as follows:

MSHSAA Registered Officials shall be used for all interscholastic contests within the boundaries of Missouri and/or hosted by a member school.

1. The number of officials required by the applicable NFHS sport rule code shall be used for all high school (9-12) interscholastic contests within the boundaries of Missouri and/or hosted by a member school.

A. PURPOSE

1. It is the purpose of this Association in its program of registering officials to advance the best interest of interscholastic competition by:
 - a. Aiding officials, coaches and players in acquiring a thorough knowledge of playing rules in all sports.
 - b. Promoting uniformity in mechanics of officiating.
 - c. Assisting men and women who are interested in athletics to become qualified officials.
 - d. Encouraging observance of the spirit and letter of playing rules and ethical codes on all occasions.
2. A thorough knowledge of playing rules and an ability to interpret these rules shall be regarded by the MSHSAA as a primary requirement of all officials. To implement this requirement, this Association conducts Rules meetings in a number of sports. It is mandatory for an official to attend rules meetings in sports in which they are conducted for the purpose of keeping abreast with rules changes and new interpretations as well as a general review of all rules and regulations.
3. A thorough knowledge on the part of officials of the mechanics of officiating shall be regarded by the MSHSAA as imperative for a properly officiated game. The mechanics of officiating are particularly important since officials in certain sports work as members of several different crews during a season, thus requiring mechanics to be standardized in the interest of smooth and efficient performance of duties.
4. Dedication to high professional standards as developed by tradition and through practice shall be regarded by the MSHSAA as highly desirable on the part of officials. A proper attitude toward the avocation of officiating will contribute immeasurably toward the total value of the interscholastic program.

B. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

1. Application for registration as a MSHSAA athletic game official shall be made online on the MSHSAA web site (www.mshsaa.org). The online registration for officials will open and be available for completion on June 1st of each year for the ensuing school year.
2. The registration year shall be from July 1 to June 30. The official's registration, regardless of the date registration is completed, expires June 30 and must be renewed for an individual to qualify as a registered official for the following school year.
3. Registration deadline:
 - a. The **2024-2025 deadlines for RENEWAL** of an official's registration shall be:
 - i. **August 2 for Fall sports, October 4 for Winter sports and January 31 for Spring sports.**
 - ii. Officials renewing their registration after the deadline date shall pay a late penalty as established by the Board of Directors.
 - b. A person applying for registration for the first time may do so without paying the late registration penalty. Except as is provided for in By-Law 6.1.3, officials shall not be registered for Fall sports after October 1, for Winter sports after February 1, and for Spring sports after April 15.

4. **The following fees will be charged: registration fee - \$35.00 and sport fee - \$30/sport.**
 - a. Officials registration **renewals** received after the designated deadline shall have a late registration penalty of \$20.00.
 5. **Check the following items before submitting your online registration:**
 - a. Personal Information is up to date. As part of the registration process you are required to provide your social security number; however, this number is not posted or accessible to the public. It is merely for legal identification purposes for the MSHSAA office.
 - b. Mark the sports you are registering to officiate.
 - c. Indicate if you need an additional MSHSAA official's patch/emblem at no charge.
 6. **New applicants:**
 - a. Persons not registered the previous year will need to register and make payment in order to receive the registration packet. The packet will be sent for Fall sports-July, Winter sports-September, and spring sports-January. Fees must be paid prior to the mailing of the registration packet. It will be to your benefit to be listed as a registered and certified official as early in the school year as possible. Upon receipt of the request and check or online payment, a registration packet will be sent which will include information regarding the online NFHS Part 1 test and rules books.
 - b. Applicants must complete the online NFHS Part 1 test (for each sport requested). **No new applicant is considered a registered official until they have completed and passed the sport specific NFHS Part 1 Test.** The NFHS Part 1 Test for new officials is an open book test over the game rules in the sport(s) in which they desire to become registered. The minimum passing score for the test is 75%.
 - c. If you are new to MSHSAA but have registered with another State High School Association last year or the current year and furnish verification, you will not be required to take the Part 1 test. For verification please have the state association of which you are registered email samantha@mshsaa.org with the sport you were/are registered in, the number of years you were registered in their state, and the last year you were registered in that state.
 - d. Persons who successfully complete a MSHSAA approved officiating course offered at one of the Missouri Colleges or Universities, and whose names are certified to the MSHSAA Office by the course instructor, will be registered upon receipt of a the fees and completion of the online registration without taking further tests, provided this is done within the school year of completion of the course. If you do not register with the MSHSAA Office until the following year, then you are required to pay the normal registration fee. Please give the name of the instructor under whom this course was taken and the date the course was completed. A college student who desires to register SHALL UNDERSTAND THAT OFFICIATING FOR PAY WILL NOT AFFECT HIS OR HER ELIGIBILITY FOR NCAA INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC COMPETITION.
 7. **Reciprocal agreements with other states:** The MSHSAA **does not** participate in reciprocal agreements with other states in relation to the registration of officials. All individuals who officiate contests in Missouri under the jurisdiction of MSHSAA must be a fully registered and certified MSHSAA official.
- C. OFFICIALS REGISTRATION NUMBER:** Upon completion of your registration, you will be assigned a registration number. THIS NUMBER SHALL BE USED BY THE MSHSAA OFFICE AND MEMBER SCHOOLS FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES.
1. School officials should request your name and registration number in order to confirm officials they employ are registered and certified with the MSHSAA Office as well as the requirement that is in place for schools to complete official's declaration for varsity contests. Officials are responsible for making certain that coaches receive their correct registration number.

D. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Your registration entitles you to a copy of rules publications for sports in which you register, coverage under the MSHSAA catastrophic accident insurance program, and full membership in the NFHS Officials Association which provide NFHS Officials Insurance plan.
2. **Any change of address, email address or telephone number must be promptly corrected via an official's "Official Account" located on the MSHSAA website to be assured of receiving all mailings and important telephone contacts.**
3. MSHSAA By-Law 6.2.5 provides for a fine or the suspension of an official.
4. Rule books and interpretations in all sports shall be those issued and published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, except when a rule change is adopted through the Board of Directors. **NOTE:** Regulations adopted by the Board of Directors and contained in sport manuals and rules meeting announcements are official.
5. High school students may register with the MSHSAA to officiate junior high school contests but may not officiate senior high school contests (MSHSAA By-Law 6.2.6).
6. **Minimum Standards for Renewing Official's Registrations are as follows:**
 - a. **Rules Meeting Requirement:** Football, volleyball, basketball, swimming, track, wrestling, soccer, baseball, and softball officials must complete the annual Rules Meeting Requirement. Officials have two options for completing the Rules Meeting requirement:
 - i. **Option 1-** Attend a face to face MSHSAA Rules Interpretation Meeting scheduled and approved by the MSHSAA. Each official is responsible for having his attendance verified to the MSHSAA by the State Activities Association which sponsored the meeting they attended.
 - ii. **Option 2** – complete the MSHSAA Online Rules Meeting that can be accessed by logging on to your Officials Account on the MSHSAA website. Attending a state sponsored rules meeting in another state will not meet this requirement. Officials requesting the MSHSAA to notify bordering states of their attendance at a Missouri meeting should make note on their attendance card. Any official wanting a non-bordering state notified should address a personal letter to the MSHSAA Office with their specific state request.
 - iii. **Release and Completion Dates for MSHSAA Rules Meeting Requirement**

<u>Season</u>	<u>Release Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Fall	August 5, 2024 _____	August 23, 2024
Winter	October 28, 2024_____	November 15, 2024
Spring	February 24, 2025_____	March 14, 2025
 - b. **NFHS Part II Test Requirement:** All football, basketball, baseball, soccer, softball, swimming/diving, volleyball, and wrestling officials must complete the online NFHS Part II Test, located on the MSHSAA website, annually as a review during the season.
 - i. **Release and Completion Dates for NFHS Part II Tests**

<u>Season</u>	<u>Release Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Fall	August 5, 2024 _____	August 23, 2024
Winter	October 28, 2024_____	November 15, 2024
Spring	February 24, 2025_____	March 14, 2025
 - c. **Mechanics Clinic Requirement:** All football, basketball, soccer, wrestling, baseball, softball and volleyball officials, during their first three years of registration with the MSHSAA, will be required to attend a MSHSAA Mechanics Clinic on an annual basis in addition to completing the Rules Meeting Requirement. Officials failing to attend a mechanics clinic each of their first three years of registration will be required to attend a mechanics clinic in subsequent years until a total of three have been attended.
 - d. **Special Report Submissions:** All officials are required to file all reports online as required by the Board of Directors. Registration cannot be renewed if not filed online. Officials will be notified in writing of the problem in this area and their renewal will be withheld until resolution of the problem.

- e. **Probationary Status:** Officials who fail to maintain standards a, b, c and d (if appropriate) above will automatically go on probation for one year and will not be eligible for post season assignments while on probation. The probation will go into effect immediately after the posted completion date for the NFHS Part 2 test and MSHSAA Rules Meeting Requirement.
 - f. **Suspension Status:** Officials who fail to maintain the above standards while on probation will be subject to suspension and refused registration.
7. **In accord with MSHSAA By-Law 6.2.8 the Board of Directors shall have the authority to suspend or bar an official who has violated any standard of the MSHSAA.** In accord with By-Law 6.2.8, if reports are received by the MSHSAA Office that an official or prospective official who is applying for registration has violated one of these standards, he or she will be informed of this in writing by the MSHSAA Office. The official will be given the opportunity to present facts to the Executive Director in writing in response to the charges or will be granted a hearing if requested. Based upon the information received, the Executive Director may then give an opinion whether or not the official shall be permitted to register or continue as a registered official. The official may appeal the Executive Director's opinion to the Board of Directors at a hearing and review of his or her case at the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors. Eligibility to register as an athletic official with the MSHSAA and to officiate interscholastic athletic contests is a privilege to be attained by meeting the standards cooperatively set by member schools through the MSHSAA and the policies adopted by the Board of Directors. An official shall be a credible citizen. All officials will be required to submit to a background check and every five years thereafter (each official will grant permission for a background check every year in the event MSHSAA has knowledge that a background check should be conducted more often than every five years).

SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION[\(TOC\)](#)

A. PROPER OFFICIATING MECHANICS

1. The use of proper officiating mechanics cannot be overemphasized. The MSHSAA strongly urges all officials to study the officiating procedures and mechanics contained in the Officials manuals for each sport published by the NFHS. These manuals contain the positions, duties and proper mechanics and procedures for all sports.
2. It is especially important for all new officials to study closely the information contained in the manual for their respective sport(s).
3. NFHS mechanics are not to be altered.

B. ALL STAR CONTESTS

1. MSHSAA registered officials may officiate all-star contests providing such events occur after the completion of the school sport season for the sport concerned and involves only seniors/high school graduates.

C. SPECIAL REPORTS - REPORTING UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. It shall be the duty of all officials to report to the MSHSAA Office and the school administrators within 48 hours any unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of coaches, players, and fans.
2. Special Reports will be filed on-line. The reporting official should be sure to place his/her registration number on the form.
3. Officials not meeting this requirement may have their future registration status with the MSHSAA affected.
4. All instances involving unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of coaches, players, or fans shall be reported for all interscholastic contests for grades 6-12.
5. Inform the coach verbally at the time of the unsportsmanlike act what exactly is being called so he/she may take immediate action if necessary. Many situations become

major problems after the fact because officials did not personally and verbally inform the coach of player ejections and did not have the official scorekeeper record the information in the official scorebook. Coaches deserve a complete explanation when extraordinary situations occur regarding the penalizing of unsportsmanlike conduct.

6. **Prompt** reporting of problems by officials helps to prevent more serious incidents in the future and will result in a better program for our high school youth.
 7. The special report form should also be used to report outstanding sportsmanship and game administration. In addition, complimentary reports may be submitted to the MSHSAA Office using the web-based online MSHSAA website.
 8. **In completing the special report form, officials shall state the facts and leave emotions out of it. Strong opinionated language has no place in such a report because it only compounds the problem and tends to divert attention away from the situation that is being reported.**
 9. Remember, you are doing the schools a service by submitting a special report when such is warranted. Only through the submission of this report can you expect a situation to improve. Officials who fail to follow this procedure are abdicating their responsibility and are doing a disservice to the high school youth for whom they are working. Schools need the reports submitted to appropriately deal with the situations at the local school and MSHSAA level. Failure to file required reports in a timely manner will exclude officials from working state tournament series contests and may affect the future registration status of those officials.
- D.** All officials are urged to refrain from placing their hands-on players during an athletic contest. The rule is to be observed unless the official is attempting to avoid contact during the normal progress of the game.
- E.** Officials must refrain from making remarks that could be interpreted as "scouting information" or any other statements that could be interpreted as sexual harassment or otherwise inappropriate by the listener.
- F. OFFICIALS FOR EACH CONTEST**
1. All officials are reminded of their obligation to print and sign their names in the official scorebook or provide a printed list of the officials' name by position, along with registration numbers, to each coach in sports where there is no official scorer either before or after the contest.
- G. CONTRACTS**
1. MSHSAA Athletic By-Law 6.1.1 requires that officials shall be agreed upon by both schools at least 30 days before each contest. The home school shall engage the officials by contract offered by the principal, superintendent, or athletic director delegated such authority by the principal. Such contracts shall be binding upon both parties and in any case of a broken contract, the amount of the guarantee shall be paid by the offending party to the offended party, except when a contract is broken because of reasons beyond the control of either party or by mutual consent of both parties. Officials assigned through an official's association shall not be permitted to officiate unless approved by both schools in accord with this By-Law. All officials are required to have contracts for the games they are to work.
 2. The Board of Directors will not hear a case involving a broken agreement between an official and a school or between schools if no signed contract is involved. A contract may be on the form provided by the MSHSAA Office or in the form of a letter. Contracts shall be with the individual official and not between the school and an official's organization/association.
 3. Officials shall not alter the terms of contracts. The official is not allowed to scratch out the fee or mileage and substitute another amount on his contract. If the fee or mileage is not agreeable with the official, he should return the contract to the school with a note explaining the situation. Under no circumstance should the official alter the terms of the contract and then return it to the school signed.
 4. Failure to fulfill the terms of a signed contract could result in the official being required to

appear before the Board of Directors and his/her future registration status with the MSHSAA may be affected.

5. It is the responsibility of each registered official to contract his/her own games with member schools. The MSHSAA Office assigns officials for state tournament games only and does not serve as a booking agent for regularly scheduled games or tournaments. For tips on developing a schedule, refer to the comments entitled "WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN OFFICIAL" on the back pages of this publication.

H. BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY STATEMENT ON USE OF TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL PRODUCTS BY COACHES AND OFFICIALS

1. It is important that all adults involved in the interscholastic activities program set the proper example for all participants with regards to the use of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages. We cannot let actions teach a philosophy of double-standards. Therefore, the Board of Directors has adopted the following policy statement to apply to all interscholastic athletic, music and speech events.
2. Coaches, directors, sponsors and contest officials are prohibited from using tobacco products or alcoholic beverages while directly involved in inter-scholastic activities. Involvement is defined in this policy as being in public view and when students are actually participating under the jurisdiction of the coach, director, and official. Proper enforcement is expected. Violations shall be reported to the school's administration and the MSHSAA Office.

I. SIMPLIFIED AND ILLUSTRATED RULE BOOKS

1. "Simplified and Illustrated" books published by the National Federation are available in football, baseball and basketball. However, these books are NOT provided free of charge to registered officials. Copies may be purchased from the MSHSAA Office for \$10 plus shipping and handling.

J. OFFICIALS ASSOCIATIONS

1. Although the MSHSAA does not require member officials to belong to local official associations, it is strongly suggested they join one whenever possible. Many important ideas and officiating methods can be learned from a membership in a local official's association. Any group desiring information concerning the forming of an official's association may contact the MSHSAA Office. All official's associations registered with the MSHSAA are listed in the back of this handbook.

K. HEALTH AND WELFARE OF OFFICIALS

1. **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS:** Physical examinations for officials are not required, but are strongly suggested. Several deaths of officials have occurred on playing fields and in dressing rooms in past years across the country. A program of personal fitness and conditioning at least four weeks prior to the season to be officiated is recommended for all officials.
2. **INSURANCE:** It is strongly recommended that officials have adequate accident and hospitalization insurance coverage before officiating an athletic contest. This type of insurance is not provided with your NFHS Officials Association membership through the National Federation.

L. As a registered MSHSAA official, you are entitled to receive the following complimentary materials, services or publications:

1. National rulebooks, casebooks and officials manuals
2. MSHSAA Official uniform emblem
3. Subscription to the MSHSAA Journal
4. MSHSAA Officials Handbook (on MSHSAA website)
5. List of local officials associations
6. List of sport rules meetings
7. Mechanics clinics listings
8. Membership in NFHS Officials Association
9. Subscription to NFHS Officials Quarterly
10. NFHS Officials Association liability insurance

11. Access to MSHSAA video library
12. Service awards for 5, 15 and 25 years (MSHSAA Officials Awards program)
13. Hours of camaraderie and the opportunity to shape the lives of young people!

SECTION 4: UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS [\(TOC\)](#)

A. OFFICIALS UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

1. The required uniform for all officials in all sports is listed below and can be found on the Officials Page of the MSHSAA website under the “Miscellaneous” section, titled “MSHSAA Officials Uniform Requirements”. All officials shall conform to these uniform requirements as written.
2. All officials are expected to maintain a neat and creditable appearance before, during and after an athletic contest and to act in such a way as to be a worthy example to those with whom they may come in contact.

B. MSHSAA Officials Uniform Requirements by Sport

1. BASEBALL

- a. Shirt – Black (can have a hint of gray accent)
- b. Jacket – Black, prefer solid but may include white, red or gray trim
- c. Pants – Gray slacks
- d. Hat – Black (shall be unadorned)
- e. Shoes, Socks & Belt - Black

2. BASKETBALL

- a. Shirt – MSHSAA black/white vertically striped sublimated jersey w/ black V-neck collar and black sleeve trim
- b. Pants – Black
- c. Shoes – Black shoes
- d. Socks – Black
- e. Optional:
 - i. Warm-up jacket – Solid black
- f. The shirt is available and may be purchased through the vendors listed below:
 - i. Purchase Officials Supplies – www.purchaseofficials.com
 - ii. Officially Dalco – www.officiallydalco.com
 - iii. Ump-Attire – www.ump-attire.com
 - iv. Officials Only – www.officialsonly.com
 - v. Honigs – www.honigs.com
 - vi. Head to Toe Officials – www.head2toeofficials.com
 - vii. Fifth Region Officials – www.fifthregionofficials.com
 - viii. True Officials – www.trueofficials.com

3. FOOTBALL

- a. Shirt – 2¼” black and white striped, long or short-sleeve with black knit cuff and Byron collar
- b. Pants – Full length, lined, black with a single 1¼” white stripe down each leg
- c. Shoes – Black (can have a hint of white accent)
- d. Socks – Black
- e. Optional:
 - i. Warm-up jacket – Solid black (can have a hint of white or gray accent), or the vertically striped black and white jacket
 - ii. Caps – Black baseball-style with white piping
 - iii. Referee Cap – Solid white baseball-style

4. SOCCER

- a. Shirt – MSHSAA Safety green/black vertically striped front with solid safety green back jersey
- b. Pants – Black shorts or slacks

- c. Shoes – Black shoes and black knee socks with horizontal stripes
 - d. This shirt is available and may be purchased through the vendors listed below:
 - i. Officials Only – www.officialsonly.com
 - ii. Purchase Officials Supplies – www.purchaseofficials.com
 - iii. Ump-Attire – www.umpattire.com
 - iv. Iowa Officials Supplies – www.iowaofficialssupplies.com
 - v. Fifth Region Officials Supplies – www.fifthregionofficials.com
 - vi. Gerry Davis Sports – www.gerrydavis.com
5. **SOFTBALL**
- a. Shirt – Powder blue shirt (pullover or button style). May be light blue “Pro Knit Mesh” pullover
 - b. Undershirt – IF worn, shall be white
 - c. Jacket – Navy, may include white, red or gray trim
 - d. Pants – Heather gray slacks ONLY (NFHS Rule 10-4-2)
 - e. Hat & Ball Bag – Navy blue (shall be unadorned)
 - f. Shoes, Socks & Belt - Black
6. **SWIMMING**
- a. Shirt – All white, short sleeve, collared polo-style with white or clear buttons
 - b. Pants – All white shorts or slacks
 - c. Shoes – White
 - d. Socks – White
7. **TRACK AND FIELD/CROSS COUNTRY**
- a. Shirt – All white officiating shirt (with white or clear buttons)
 - b. Pants – Black/khaki slacks or black/khaki shorts
8. **VOLLEYBALL**
- a. Shirt – Blue-Cyan collared polo-style shirt, short or long-sleeved
 - b. Pants – Black slacks
 - c. Shoes – Solid black athletic shoes and black socks
9. **WRESTLING**
- a. Shirt – Short sleeve knit with alternating black and white 1” stripes or gray and black pinstripes
 - b. Pants – Full length black pants, black belt is worn **IF** pants have belt loops
 - c. Shoes – Black wrestling/gym shoes without colored highlights
 - d. Socks – Black socks
 - e. Whistle – Black whistle with black lanyard
 - f. Arm Bands – Green armband (right wrist) and red armband (left wrist)
 - g. Disk – Green/Red flip disc
- C. Cancer Awareness Contests**
- 1. Per MSHSAA Board Policy 5, Contest Officials may use the appropriate colored whistle and lanyard used to represent the cancer event being held if all officials working the contest have this same colored whistle and lanyard, otherwise all officials must follow the sport specific NFHS rules regarding officials uniform and equipment.
- D.** Regardless of sport, it is mandatory the entire officiating crew wear identical uniforms.
- E.** Officials shall not wear jewelry, fitness bands or other items that are not necessary for performing their duties. Religious and medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible. Wedding rings are permitted.
- F. NOTE:** MSHSAA registered officials have approval to wear **sublimated uniforms**.
- G. OFFICIALS EMBLEM AND UNIFORM ADORNMENTS**
- 1. **The MSHSAA official's emblem is to be worn on the left sleeve of your shirt 1 inch below the shoulder seam.** Schools have been instructed not to accept the emblem as verification of registration.
 - 2. Policy regarding official's uniform adornment for all sports:
 - a. Mandatory - MSHSAA emblem shall be worn 1 inch below the shoulder seam on the

- left sleeve of the uniform shirt at all times.
 - b. Optional – NFHS emblem, if worn, shall be placed on the back center of the shirt, 1 inch below the back collar.
 - c. Optional - Local association patch on left chest only.
 - d. Optional - American Flag, 2 inches by 3 inches may be worn on the right sleeve only.
 - i. Facing Flag with Stars to the Front.
 - 3. Numbers are not permitted on uniform shirts.
 - 4. All hats shall be unadorned.
 - 5. For state tournament series contest, only the MSHSAA emblem, optional NFHS emblem and optional American Flag may be worn.
- H. NOTE: OFFICIALS SHALL ONLY WEAR THE MSHSAA EMBLEM WHEN OFFICIATING MSHSAA CONTEST. DO NOT WEAR THE MSHSAA EMBLEM FOR GAMES OUTSIDE OF MSHSAA CONTESTS.**
- I. If you desire additional emblems, they can be purchased through the MSHSAA Office at \$1.50 each. The red, white and blue MSHSAA official's emblem is the presently required emblem to be worn by all MSHSAA registered/certified officials only during contests under the jurisdiction of the MSHSAA.
 - J. An optional designed memorial patch shall be allowed on the official's shirt to honor a deceased official under the following conditions:
 - 1. Must be requested in writing to the MSHSAA Office for approval with the design of the patch included.
 - 2. The request shall list the sports to be included.
 - 3. The patch shall be placed on the right sleeve of the shirt below any other optional patches (American Flag/NFHS OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION patch) worn there.
 - 4. The patch shall be sewn or attached by Velcro to the sleeve.
 - 5. The patch may be worn for one school year during the regular season only in the sports approved.
 - 6. The size of the patch shall not exceed one and one-half inches in any dimension (diameter, width or length).

SECTION 5: POSTSEASON CRITERIA [\(TOC\)](#)

APPOINTMENT TO MSHSAA TOURNAMENTS

Frequently, officials ask, "How does one get selected to work MSHSAA postseason games or meets;" or "Why didn't I get a postseason tournament assignment this year?" Check the online rules review, rules meeting announcements and MSHSAA E-Blasts for complete information about the post-season application process and deadlines.

- A. Officials are considered for appointment only if they meet the criteria appropriate to their particular sport. The following criteria have been established as the basis for appointing officials to MSHSAA-sponsored postseason games, meets and tournaments.
 - 1. Completion of MSHSAA rules interpretation meeting the current year.
 - 2. Attendance at a mechanics clinic when required.
 - 3. Successful completion of the current year part II rules examination in the sports they are offered.
 - 4. Number of varsity contests worked the current year and the previous year.
 - 5. Previous tournament experience.
 - 6. Current recommendations from local official associations.
 - 7. Current recommendations from official observers.
 - 8. Current recommendations from schools.
 - 9. Geographical location of tournaments.

10. Maturity – minimum number of years officiating.
 11. Submit appropriate application form (if required).
- B.** Those officials registered who are on probation or suspension are not eligible to work post-season tournament games or matches assigned by the MSHSAA Office during that school year.
 - C.** With the elimination of the rating system, more emphasis will be placed on the following when assigning post season contests:
 1. Coaches Recommendations and Non-Recommendations
 2. Observers Evaluations and Recommendations
 3. Association Recommendations
 4. Officials Reports
 5. Number of Contests Worked in Current and Previous Season
 - D.** Host team schools or tournament hosts will be required to enter all regular season game officials within 24 hours. This allows district managers and MSHSAA to have an accurate numbers of contests officials have worked.

APPENDIX A [\(TOC\)](#)

PROTEST PROCEDURES

A. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IN CASE A GAME IS PROTESTED

1. Game officials, like players and coaches, are subject to error. Thus, it is important that officials and coaches alike be aware of the proper procedures to be followed should a game be protested.
2. Any protest shall be based on an error in applying a game rule.
3. No protest shall be heard on the judgment of an official.

B. BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY ON SITE PROTESTS OF ATHLETIC CONTESTS

1. PROPER PROCEDURES FOR EVERY SPORT

- a. Within the guidelines of each individual sport rule code, the head coach must request a review of an official's application of a rule through appropriate channels.

2. VERBAL PROTEST

- a. If after the review is complete and the coach still believes there has been a misapplication of a rule by a contest official(s), the coach shall then file a formal, verbal protest with the game officials who will then notify the opposing coach immediately.
- b. A coach may not protest a decision of judgment.

3. TEN MINUTE PROCEDURE

- a. After this notification, the head coach will then be allowed ten minutes to use his/her National Federation Sport Rules Book, National Federation Case Book, MSHSAA Rules Meeting Announcement and/or MSHSAA Sport Manual to locate and show the game official(s) the appropriate rule reference and misapplication of the game rule.
- b. If the head coach does not have his/her personal copies of the above mentioned materials at the game site or the specific rule reference(s) or case book play(s) cannot be located within the maximum allowable ten minutes, the protest shall automatically be disallowed and the game shall continue from the point of interruption.
- c. If a rule reference(s), case book play(s), or other information from the MSHSAA Rules Meeting Announcement and/or MSHSAA Sport Manual is found that indicates a misapplication of a rule has occurred; the official's decision shall be corrected at that time before any further action occurs, and the game shall be resumed from the point of interruption after the correction.
- d. When appropriate, the game officials may assist the head coach in locating appropriate rule and case book references.

4. RESOLVED ON SITE

- a. All Protests shall be resolved at the contest site before any further game action occurs.

5. PROTEST MUST BE TIMELY

- a. Protests that are not filed in a timely manner by that sport rule code shall be automatically disallowed.

6. NO MSHSAA REVIEW

- a. The MSHSAA Board of Directors and/or staff shall not review contest protests.

C. OFFICIAL'S RESPONSIBILITY

1. Official's that fail to allow a protest of a rules application or fail to make the appropriate changes when shown the rule are subject to the suspension of their officiating privileges.

APPENDIX B [\(TOC\)](#)

SAFETY PROCEDURES

A. HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS

1. In case of inclement weather, the host school manager shall determine whether a game will start and so notify the referees and opposing school.
2. The district will not adopt a provision that if one game is postponed, all games in that district are postponed on that date.
3. Make arrangements with referees to pay only travel expenses if they drive to the site and the game is not started.
4. If the game is started, the referees working the game will be paid for that contest but will not receive a second payment for completing the game at a later date other than travel expenses. In situations where a referee has a conflict on the day in which the game is rescheduled and another official works the game he will be paid a game fee and travel expenses.
5. The host school principal or his designated representative and the head official have mutual authority to delay the start of a game any time weather conditions are considered to be hazardous to life or limb. Likewise, the head official, once a game has started, has the authority, by rule, to suspend a game anytime weather conditions are considered to be hazardous to life or limb.
6. If severe weather develops while a game is in progress, where the administration feels safety is questionable and the game officials have not acted, the host principal or his/her designated representative will intervene by informing the head official who shall suspend the contest.
7. Develop criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
 - b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
 - d. If there are extenuating circumstances such as extreme travel distances, rescheduling problems, etc. which make it desirable to try to complete the game and the principals of both schools or their designated representatives choose to ask for an additional 30 minutes of waiting time, the head official may grant that request.
 - e. If the principals of both schools or their designated representatives and the head official cannot mutually agree that the weather conditions are safe, the game shall be postponed.
 - f. The game may either be considered a completed game at that point or rescheduled at a later time according to game rules. (See the sport specific manual for what constitutes a completed game.)
 - g. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the safety of the players and spectators but also to relieve the pressure from the officials before declaring a game suspended.
 - h. The host principal should, when severe weather is pending, keep a constant check with nearby radio stations which would have information concerning the path of the storm. This constant check, available to the administration, is not available to the game officials.
8. School district emergency plans should include procedures for evacuating players and spectators to protected areas when severe weather occurs.

B. LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. The MSHSAA Board of Directors has adopted the position statement of the National Athletic Trainers' Association regarding lightning safety (Journal of Athletic Training 2000; 35(4):471-477).
2. The procedures are listed below:
 - a. Formalize and implement a comprehensive, proactive lightning-safety policy or emergency action plan specific to lightning safety. The components of this policy should include the following:
 - b. An established chain of command that identifies who is to make the call to remove individuals from the field or an activity.
 - c. A designated weather watcher (i.e., a person who actively looks for the signs of threatening weather and notifies the chain of command if severe weather becomes dangerous).
 - d. A means of monitoring local weather forecasts and warnings.
 - e. A listing of specific safe locations (for each field or site) from the lightning hazard.
 - f. The use of specific criteria for suspension and resumption of activities (refer to recommendations 4, 5 and 6).
 - g. The use of the recommended lightning-safety strategies (refer to recommendations 7, 8, and 9).
 - h. The primary choice for a safe location from the lightning hazard is any substantial, frequently inhabited building. The electric and telephone wiring and plumbing pathways aid in grounding a building, which is why buildings are safer than remaining outdoors during thunderstorms. It is important not to be connected to these pathways while inside the structure during ongoing thunderstorms
 - i. The secondary choice for a safer location from the lightning hazard is a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and the windows closed. Convertible cars and golf carts do not provide protection from lightning danger. It is important not to touch any part of the metal framework of the vehicle while inside it during ongoing thunderstorms.
 - j. Seeking a safe structure or location at the first sign of lightning (**cloud-to-ground**) or thunder activity is highly recommended. By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds (or is less than 30 seconds), all individuals should already be inside or should immediately seek a safe structure or location. To use the flash-to-bang method, the observer begins counting when a lightning flash is sighted. Counting is stopped when the associated bang (thunder) is heard. Divide this count by 5 to determine the distance to the lightning flash (in miles). For example, a flash-to-bang count of 30 seconds equates to a distance of 6 miles (9.66 km).
 - k. Postpone or suspend activity if a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during an activity or contest (regardless of whether **cloud-to-ground** lightning is seen or thunder heard) until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkening clouds, high winds, and thunder or lightning activity.
 - l. Once activities have been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or lightning flash before resuming an activity or returning outdoors. A message should be read over the public address system and lightning-safety tips should be placed in game programs alerting spectators and competitors about what to do and where to go to find a safer location during thunderstorm activity.
 - m. Extremely large athletic events are of particular concern with regard to lightning safety. Consider using a multidisciplinary approach to lessen lightning danger, such as integrating weather forecasts, real-time thunderstorm data, a weather watcher, and the flash-to-bang count to aid in decision making.
 - n. Avoid being in contact with, or in proximity to, the highest point of an open field or on the open water. Do not take shelter under or near trees, flag poles, or light poles.
 - o. Avoid taking showers and using plumbing facilities (including indoor and outdoor

- pools) and land-line telephones during thunderstorm activity. Cordless or cellular telephones are safer to use when emergency help is needed.
- p. Individuals who feel their hair stand on end or skin tingle or hear crackling noises should assume the lightning-safe position (i.e., crouched on the ground, weight on the balls of the feet, feet together, head lowered, and ears covered). Do not lie flat on the ground.
3. Observe the following basic first-aid procedures, in order, to manage victims of lightning strike:
 - a. Survey the scene for safety. Ongoing thunderstorms may still pose a threat to emergency personnel responding to the situation.
 - b. Activate the local emergency management system.
 - c. Move the victim carefully to a safer location, if needed.
 - d. Evaluate and treat for apnea and a systole.
 - e. Evaluate and treat for hypothermia and shock.
 - f. Evaluate and treat for fractures.
 - g. Evaluate and treat for burns.
 4. All persons should maintain current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first-aid certification.
 5. All individuals should have the right to leave an athletic site or activity, without fear of repercussion or penalty, in order to seek a safe structure or location if they feel they are in danger from impending lightning activity.
- C.** The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a default policy for those responsible for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of contests based on the presence of lightning.

APPENDIX C [\(TOC\)](#)

GAME OFFICIAL OBSERVERS BY SPORT

BASEBALL		SOFTBALL	
Jason Blackburn (SW)	ump24@outlook.com	Terry Beas (C)	terry_beas@yahoo.com
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Tom Swoboda (STL)	tswoboda7@gmail.com	Thomas Drummond (SE)	drummondtm1972@gmail.com
Keith Huether (C)	keith.huether@yahoo.com	Darcell Fleeman (STL)	darcell_umps@live.com
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Chuck Snow (C)	chucksnow724@gmail.com		
Chris Stanfield (SE)	semoumpires36@gmail.com	SOCCER	
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George Wriedt (NE)	gwriedt@hotmail.com	WRESTLING	
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Mike Wood (STL)	mike@mwoodassoc.com		

APPENDIX D [\(TOC\)](#)

CODE OF CONDUCT/TIPS FOR OFFICIALS

A CODE OF ETHICS FOR MSHSAA ATHLETIC OFFICIALS

Believing that mine is an important part in the nationwide school athletic program, I pledge myself to act in accordance with these principles:

1. I will honor contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss and will avoid all potential conflicts of interest.
2. I will study the rules of the game, observe the work of other officials, and will at all times, attempt to improve myself.
3. I will remember that while my work as an official is important, I must conduct myself in such a way that attention is drawn, not to me, but to the contestants playing the game.
4. I will dress and maintain my appearance in a manner befitting the dignity and importance of the game.
5. I will shape my character and conduct so as to be a worthy example to the youth who play under my jurisdiction and will at no time use profanity in any verbal interaction with players, coaches, fans, school administrators and/or fellow officials during my contracted assignment.
6. I will be fair and unbiased in my decisions, rendering these without regard to the score or next year's contract.
7. I will give my complete cooperation to the schools which I serve and to the State Association which I represent.
8. I will cooperate and be professional in my association with my fellow officials and will do nothing to cause them public embarrassment.
9. I will, in my actions on the field, be firm but not overbearing; courteous but not ingratiating; positive but never rude; dignified but never arrogant; friendly but not companionable; calm but always alert.
10. I will keep in mind that the game is more important than the wishes of any individual player or coach or the ambitions of any individual official.
11. I will be prepared both physically and mentally to administer the game.
12. I will not use any tobacco product on or in the vicinity of the athletic event, nor drink any alcoholic beverages on the day of the game until my assignment is complete.
13. I will not give any information which might be used by a team's future opponent nor will I visit with any player during a time-out.
14. At no time will I engage in any action verbal or physical that might be interpreted as sexual harassment with any contest participant, cheerleader, coach, school administrator, fan and/or fellow official.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Recently we have had to deal with issues relating to officials making comments on Social Networks that have raised concerns of school administrators, coaches, officials, and the general public. As independent contractors, we won't recommend a comprehensive mandate to you at this time. But please realize, if inappropriate use or abuse is brought to our attention, we will have to deal with each of these as individual disciplinary reviews.

AVOID POST PERILS

Social networking sites can be wonderful communications tools. But there can be unintended consequences if they are used improperly. Because of their unique standing, officials need to be particularly careful when using those sites. Here are some reminders and guidelines:

DO be aware that posts on social media are visible to the general public. Even if you limit access to your page to friends, it is likely that your post will be viewed by someone beyond the circle of people you intended to see it.

DO find out your association or league expectations regarding social media. Your association may not have hard and fast rules, but find out if it has an unofficial policy.

DO think twice before you post. If there is anything in your post that could be construed as a criticism of officials, of officials' decisions, or of schools, coaches or athletes...it's better left unsent.

DO assume that your post will be seen by the two teams you will see in your next game and the teams you worked in your previous game as well as your partner(s) in those games.

DON'T post anything relating to the schools you have worked or will work. It calls your objectivity into question.

DON'T include anything in a post that makes reference to an upcoming assignment. If teams want to find out who is going to be working their game, they should do so through official channels, not your tweet.

DON'T post details about other people's assignments, to playoff games for instance, until that information has been officially released. Don't use your page as a news service.

DON'T use social media to criticize state or local association policies, assigning practices, etc.

DON'T make posts regarding calls made by officials in other games, whatever the level. You and your buddies might debate the call you saw on TV, but debating the call on Facebook or Twitter is a no-no.

Remember, accountability and integrity should always be our guiding principles. Jeopardizing your impartiality or professionalism should never be a part of your actions or posts. It is my hope this information will help you with your decisions and involvement with social media.

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN OFFICIAL

Many things go into the making of a good official. Knowledge of the rules and officiating techniques are very important. However, there are other details that may determine whether a man or woman becomes a good official or just someone registered to officiate.

The need is great for new officials. Many times new officials register with the MSHSAA and then fail to renew their registration for the next season.

Perhaps there are several reasons why new officials fall from the ranks. In some cases, they could have moved from the state and may continue their career elsewhere. Others failed to renew their registrations because they were unable to work any games or only a few in their rookie season. Many realized that the officiating business was not for them. However, there were some who were influenced in their decision by coaches, fans, and even fellow officials.

Too often a coach is critical of young officials who, because of lack of experience, have not learned to cope with the situations that arise in the course of an athletic contest. Many times a veteran official is critical of his/her young partner or even worse the "older and more experienced man" refuses to work with the younger official who is trying to become established.

The life of an official is not an easy one. Perhaps the first year or two are the toughest, but like the formative period in anyone's life these first years are all important. The most important requirement is that you must gain experience. That means you have to work all the games you can find. Be ready and willing to work YMCA games, church and industrial league games and scrimmages. Somehow, you have to get the feel of it, and the only way to do that is to officiate. The key is to be patient, and when you get your first interscholastic game, make sure you are prepared to properly handle the assignment.

A. Seven steps designed to help an official.

1. **THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR STUDY.** Textbooks are made available through your state association, such as rule books, case books, interpretation meeting folders or handbooks, the Officials Manual and the MSHSAA Journal, which contains many items of importance to officials. Game rules are generally complex and you don't learn them without extensive study. Many experienced officials still average several hours each week of solid study of the rules publications. There is no sadder spectacle than an official who doesn't know the rules. You learn the rules by means of thorough intensive study.
2. **ATTEND ALL RULES INTERPRETATION MEETINGS WITHIN YOUR REACH.** They are arranged for the purpose of reviewing old rules, explaining new ones and giving positive interpretations on the more tricky ones. It is also a good place to get acquainted with fellow officials, coaches, and athletic directors.
3. **ATTEND MECHANICS CLINICS WHEN AVAILABLE.** Knowing and understanding proper positioning will enable you to make the right call.
4. **JOIN A LOCAL OFFICIALS GROUP.** There may be one in your area or not too far away. Many of these local groups meet regularly for rules discussion and for discussing common problems. The state sponsored meetings are important but local groups must take over in a follow-up program of rules study and interpretations.
5. **TAKE THE RULES EXAMINATIONS PROVIDED BY THE MSHSAA AND BY YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION.** The National Federation examinations provide an excellent review and a thorough test. There is no finer review of the rules than the challenge presented in actually writing a good rules examination.
6. **SEE ALL THE GAMES YOU CAN,** especially games worked by capable officials. It is one of the best ways to learn about the technique and mechanics of officiating.
7. **ALWAYS STRIVE TO IMPROVE.** The game of officiating has no place for an official who doesn't want to improve himself. Here, you either get some place or drop out; you can't stand still. Give attention to such factors as rules examination grades, ratings received from schools and assistance from rules meetings.

B. Other items that make a good official.

1. When you start out for a game, plan to be there early. It is better for you to help the janitor open the front door than it is to rush in breathless at the opening whistle. The time preceding the game can be used to confer with fellow officials. Go over some pertinent phases of the rules. Talk over the general plan of administering free throws, position of touch down plays, etc. Many of these items may be found in the NFHS Game Official's Manual for each sport. A good pre-game conference is very necessary and a must.
2. Out on the floor or field do your share of running.
3. In your attitude toward players and coaches, be kind and polite but firm. It is a big order and few ever fill it completely. But this is what it takes! Be firm but not over-bearing. Be courteous and never rude. Be dignified but never cocky. Be friendly to players but avoid

- "kidding" on the floor or field.
4. With the game at an end, your duties are over. It isn't your job to congratulate the winner, console the defeated, or offer advice to the losers. It is business-like for officials to leave the floor or field together, neither seeking out nor deliberately avoiding the two coaches and this is a good thing to remember as the game is completed. Make no statements and offer no comments concerning the game to members of the press or radio. Your best bet is to shower, dress, collect your gear and head for home; not because you are afraid or ashamed to talk to anyone, but the game is over and your job has been completed. There is no need to hang around.

AVOIDING PROBLEMS

The single most effective way to avoid problems is to know the rules. As was indicated in the section on what it takes to be an official, if you have not studied all of the printed materials mailed to you as well as any other efforts to improve upon your knowledge, mechanics, etc., you have not done everything possible to avoid problems.

Additional ways to eliminate potential problems:

1. Never run down another official. They, just like you, will receive enough criticism without getting it from their colleagues. This includes officials you may see as a spectator. Don't offer or give if requested, anything but positive criticism. You may very well be considered an expert, especially by someone trying to find fault in the officials.
2. Establish a firm but polite relationship with coaches. Trying to be overly friendly will get you in just as much trouble as being too gruff.
3. Be on time! The official who arrives late, or even at the very last minute, is probably not mentally prepared and has in addition no doubt raised questions in the minds of the coaches about his or her sincerity and dedication. Be certain you have enough time to talk to your timers, scorer, chain crew, etc.
4. Either by yourself or with your partner(s) (if you are working with other officials) prepare yourself psychologically. You must "get up" for the contest. Review basic rules, mechanics and procedures.
5. Don't talk to the fans. This only encourages them to talk to you and you may very well wish you had not encouraged them. Try not to have "rabbit ears"! Even if you do hear comments made by fans, you must learn to ignore them and not let them influence you.
6. Inspect the field, court, mat, or whatever the facility is that is being used. If you can detect problems with the facilities before the contest begins, you can adjust and notify coaches and players of them.
7. Review procedures with your captains. Be certain to ask them if they have any questions.
8. Support the decisions made by your fellow officials. To disagree or overrule the decision made, can only indicate to the athletes, coaches and fans that one of you made a mistake. If, however, an error is made by you or your partner in rule application, you should admit it and make the necessary correction. The only thing worse than making a mistake, is not correcting the mistake if possible.
9. Maintain your poise or emotional control. You may be the only one around who is remaining "cool". If you get emotional, the situation can only get worse.
10. Be clear and concise with your signals. If players, fans and coaches don't understand what is going on and why the penalty was called or what the penalty was, you raise doubts in their minds as to whether or not you were right.
11. Use common sense. Any number of situations may occur during any contest where the officials must use common sense. Under certain circumstances, you may be asking for more trouble than it is worth to enforce a very technical and almost insignificant rule.

REFEREE COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST

Below are some points to keep in mind when officiating sports at any level. All officials must have a good working knowledge of the rules and mechanics. In addition to this, very successful officials have an understanding of the human relations aspect of their jobs.

***BE COMPETITIVE** - The players give maximum effort, so should you. Tell yourself, "I'm not going to let this game get away from me. I am better than that." You are hired to make the calls that control the game—Make Them!

***DON'T BE A TOUGH GUY** - If a coach is on your back but not enough to warrant a penalty, then stay away from him (or her). This is especially true during time-outs. Standing near an unhappy coach, just to "show him", will only lead to further tensions. Some officials develop irritating characteristics. Don't be one of them.

***GET INTO THE FLOW OF THE GAME** - Each game is different. Good officials can feel this difference. Concentrate on the reactions of the players. Take note if the tempo of the game changes. A ragged game calls for a different style of officiating from a smooth one.

***DON'T BARK** - If you don't like to be shouted at, don't shout at someone else. Be firm but with a normal relaxed voice. This technique will do wonders in helping you to reduce the pressure. Shouting indicates a loss of control—not only of one's self, but also of the game.

***SHOW CONFIDENCE** - Cockiness has absolutely no place in officiating. You want to exude confidence. Your presence should command respect from the participants. As in any walk of life; appearance, manner and voice determine how you are accepted. Try to present the proper image.

***FORGET THE FANS** - As a group, fans usually exhibit three characteristics: ignorance of the rules, highly emotional partisanship and delight in antagonizing the officials. Accepting this fact will help you ignore the fans, unless they interrupt the game or stand in the way of you doing your job.

***ANSWER REASONABLE QUESTIONS** - Treat coaches and players in a courteous way. If they ask you a question reasonably, answer them in a polite way. If they get your ear by saying "Hey ref, I want to ask you something", and then start telling you, interrupt and remind them of the reason for the discussion. Be firm, but relaxed.

***CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY** - Don't obviously threaten a coach or player. This will only put them on the defensive. More importantly, you will have placed yourself on the spot. If you feel a situation is serious enough to warrant a threat, then it is serious enough to penalize, without invoking a threat. Obviously some things you say may be in the form of a threat, but using the proper words can make it subtle.

***STAY COOL** - Your purpose is to establish a calm environment for the game. Nervous or edgy officials are easily spotted by fans, coaches and players alike. Avidly chewing gum, pacing around, or displaying a wide range of emotions prior to or during a game will serve to make you seem vulnerable to the pressure.

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The ability to "handle" players and coaches is crucial to becoming a complete official. To "handle" players and coaches is in reality being able to effectively communicate with them in a situation of natural conflict. Good officials are game managers and good officiating facilitates the event, ensuring that the outcome is dependent upon the skills and tactics of the players. Managers deal with people and the key to their success is the ability to effectively communicate with others. This communication comes in both verbal and nonverbal forms. Verbal

communications include the spoken word and the volume. What you say as an official is vitally important by the choice of words you use or do not use. Your choice of words may inflame a situation or be a settling influence. Likewise, the volume of your words, whether loud or soft, often indicates how much you are in control of your own emotions. Sometimes just as important as verbal communication is the nonverbal communication. This nonverbal communication would include body language (posture, physical appearance, gestures, facial expressions), spatial relationships (space between officials and players/coaches) and paralanguage (how you say things). Good communicators in any walk of life are ones that manage themselves and those they are communicating with. They demonstrate mutual respect from a professional relationship while understanding each other's responsibilities. Being a "Buddy" or "Enemy" personalizes a relationship that is unhealthy in this arena of natural conflict. You are a "Buddy" to the coach or player until a call goes against him or her and then you become their enemy. Communication is the key to "handling" players and coaches. Be a good listener. Let coaches have their say. Acknowledge the coach's or player's concern. Do not raise your voice and avoid the use of threatening hand or arm gestures. To get respect from players and coaches show them respect. Try to understand their motivation. If you make a mistake, admit it. Do not always insist on having the last word in a discussion or disagreement. You as an official must be under control when everything around you may be chaotic. Above all else be professional and approachable.

CONCLUSION

There is personal satisfaction in being a good official. This is what you must search for. An interest in athletics has brought you this far, let it carry you through a long career as a MSHSAA official. It is up to you and all officials to help maintain and improve on the quality of athletic programs in Missouri.

APPENDIX E [\(TOC\)](#)

LOCAL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATIONS

Local Association Information will be added at a later date. If you need information for a specific association, please contact the MSHSAA Office at email@mshsaa.org ATTN: Officials Association.



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