



media information

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Following Record-Setting Year, Officials Registration For 2002-03 Begins

EAST LANSING, Mich. – May 30 -- Individuals interested in becoming a high school athletic game official for the 2002-03 school year may now register with the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

From now until July 1, Michigan's 11,000-plus game officials in 14 sports are urged to submit their applications. The July date is an important one, as it is the deadline for officials who wish to be listed in the MHSAA's annual printed Officials Directory.

“We always encourage officials to register before July 1, so they can be listed in the MHSAA Official’s Directory,” said Bill Bupp, MHSAA supervisor of officials. “That is very beneficial for officials looking for work and schools looking for officials. Officials listed in the directory are also more visible candidates for approved association membership. Approved association benefits are numerous, so we encourage officials to either seek membership or be asked to join a local group well before the new school year begins.”

While early registration is heavily encouraged, Bupp added that new officials are free to register with the MHSAA any time during the year. MHSAA registration fees are among the lowest in the nation. A \$10 fee is charged for each sport an official wishes to work, and the processing fee is \$18. Officials registered in 2001-02 will be assessed a late fee of \$20 for registration after July 1. The processing fee includes liability insurance coverage of up to \$1 million for officials while working contests involving MHSAA schools.

Registration for the upcoming school year begins as the Association finishes compiling its statistics for the 2001-02 campaign, which saw a marked increase in registrations.

As of April 15, a total of 11,746 registrations had taken place, the highest number ever (the previous record was 11,454 in 1980-81); and an increase of 469 registrations over the previous year, the highest one-year jump in history. The sports showing the largest increases were basketball, up by 234 to 5,058; football, up by 126 to 2,704; girls volleyball, up by 117 to 2,198; baseball, up by 100 to 2,698; and soccer, up by 93 to 1,214. The only sport in which a decrease occurred was girls gymnastics, down six from 2000-01 to 103 registrants.

“We’re excited about the increase in registered officials, and feel that it is the cumulative effort of many different parties to promote the need for more individuals to become involved in officiating,” Bupp said. “We plan to do some analysis of the numbers so that we can find out what contributed to this increase, because it’s a trend that needs to continue.”

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2-2-2 – Officials Registration Begins

The MHSAA will continue to emphasize its efforts that allow high school students to become officials. Last year, the Legacy program was changed to allow 11th graders, 16 years of age and older, to officiate sub-varsity and junior high/middle school games with an approved official. Previously, the Legacy program was available only to 12th graders.

A second change will allow 12th graders, 17 years of age and older, to officiate sub-varsity and junior high/middle school contests without a mentoring official. The changes made in response to the concern that not enough high school students are being recruited into the officiating field through the Legacy Program, and that those who enter at that age tend to leave officiating shortly after graduating. The 2002-03 school year will be the 11th for the Legacy program. Last year, 46 high school juniors took part.

Student officials will benefit from a waiver of the standard \$18 processing fee. Registration of \$10 per sport will be the only requirement.

“We hope that more young people will look into officiating as a way to stay active in sports beyond the high school playing days, and that more officials and school administrators will take it upon themselves to recruit a young person they know to become involved,” Bupp said. “The other important thing we have to remember is that once we’ve recruited these people into the officiating ranks, everything that can be done must be done to retain them, and that includes coaches and spectators treating these young officials – in fact, all officials – with respect.”

There is an officials' registration test, which is for first-time officials and officials not registered in the past year. The test consists of 75 questions derived from the MHSAA **Officials Guidebook**, which may be used during the open book test.

"The guidebook is a good reference that can answer many questions about the way the MHSAA operates," Bupp said. "We implemented this test as a way of insuring familiarity with the guidebook and to assure that new registrants are aware of the policies, practices and protocols expected of MHSAA officials."

More information about officials registration may be obtained by contacting the MHSAA at 1661 Ramblewood Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823. Telephone: 517/332-5046. E-Mail: register@mhsaa.com

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,300 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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