



media information

1661 ramblewood drive east lansing, mi 48823 517.332.5046 fax-517.332.4071 www.mhsaa.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 28, 2003

Contact: John Johnson or Randy Allen

517.332.5046 or www.mhsaa.com

Coming Off Another Record-Setting Year, Officials Registration For 2003-04 Begins

EAST LANSING, Mich. – May 28 -- Individuals interested in becoming a high school athletic game official for the 2003-04 school year may now register with the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

From late May until July 1, Michigan's 12,000-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 printed MHSAA Official's Directory," said Bill Bupp, MHSAA Assistant Director. "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." Bupp added that in 2005-06, officials selected to work MHSAA post-season tournaments in basketball, football and wrestling will be required to be members of an approved association.

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 \$20. Officials registered in 2002-03 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 comes off another record-setting year in terms of officials registrations.

A new record was reached for registered officials in 2002-03, with the total of 12,116 registrations surpassing the old mark of 11,746 in 2001-02. Michigan's numbers buck a national trend in declining registrations, but Bupp indicates that the upward move must continue.

"Even though we've set records the past two years, we must continue to promote the need for more individuals to become involved in officiating," Bupp said. "We have said for several years that we face the retirement of a lot of officials in the not-to-distant future, and the recruitment, education and retention of new officials is a key to having younger folks ready when our veterans step down."

(more)

2-2-2 – Officials Registration Begins

The MHSAA will continue to emphasize its efforts that allow high school students to become officials. The Legacy program allows 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.

Twelfth graders, 17 years of age and older, are also allowed to officiate sub-varsity and junior high/middle school contests without a mentoring official. The changes made a couple of years ago 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 2003-04 school year will be the 12th for the Legacy program. Student officials will benefit from a waiver of the standard \$20 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 78 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.

-0-

RL03-097