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information**



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### **MHSAA Testing Officials Observation Program**

**EAST LANSING, Mich. – Jan. 25 –** In an effort to help improve the training and education of registered officials, the Michigan High School Athletic Association is testing an observation and evaluation program this year. The program is dependent upon local Approved Associations investing the time and personnel to observe contest officials as they work.

“We are excited about the program, because traditionally speaking officials have always received feedback from our schools, from coaches and athletic directors through a ratings process,” said MHSAA Assistant Director Mark Uyl. “The downfall of this system historically is that officials haven’t been getting much meaningful feedback.”

While the current rating system can be influenced by wins and losses, and what may be considered favorable calls and unfavorable calls, officials stand to benefit more from peer critiques which would include categories such as positioning, mechanics and game management. To that end, the MHSAA Representative Council last spring approved an observers program for eight sports, categorizing standards for observation.

“We are now working with some local Approved Associations which are sending observers to contests to watch officials,” Uyl said. “They then meet with the officials afterward to go over the things they did well, areas that might need improvement, and following up with correspondence a week to 10 days after the contest.”

A pilot program this fall involved more than 20 football crews in western Michigan, affording over 70 officials the opportunity for peer evaluations.

“Our football program this fall was outstanding,” Uyl said. “The response we’ve received from both the officials who were observed, and the observers themselves, was extremely positive.”

Currently, a pilot program in basketball is underway, while baseball, softball and soccer are targeted for spring observation programs.

As the program moves forward, the MHSAA envisions that observers will be identified and nominated through local Approved Associations, and in turn will attend training sessions at the annual MHSAA Summer Meeting.

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## **2-2-2 – Officials Observation Program**

“The involvement of local associations is the key component in the observation program. We really look forward to next summer, when we will be training our first group of observers through Approved Associations on a statewide basis,” Uyl added. “The circle of education is completed with those observers going out to assist their fellow officials and provide feedback.”

Officials can get a glimpse of the standards and report forms for observers on the Officials page of mhsaa.com. Observation and evaluation forms for six sports appear under Approved Associations and Assignors.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,800 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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