



media information



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

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Contact: John Johnson or Andy Frushour

517.332.5046 or www.mhsaa.com

MHSAA Steps Up Recruitment Of Game Officials For Basketball & Volleyball

EAST LANSING, Mich. – April 23 – The recruitment of officials for high school sports has long been a priority for the Michigan High School Athletic Association, and for several years running, registrations have reached record levels of approximately 12,000 annually.

But there can never be too many officials, especially for the 2007-08 school year when the anticipated need in sports like basketball and girls volleyball will also hit all-time highs.

The MHSAA is embarking on one of its most aggressive recruiting efforts ever for registrations for 2007-08, targeting graduating high school senior student-athletes and returning officials who have never worked basketball or volleyball.

In early May, every MHSAA member senior high school will receive a package of promotional cards for athletic administrators to distribute to their graduating seniors who played sports. The cards encourage the Class of 2007 to become involved in officiating with a theme of how they can still stay in the game.

“So many times, someone doesn’t even consider becoming involved as a high school game official until they’re anywhere from five to ten years beyond their high school playing days,” says Mark Uyl, an MHSAA Assistant Director who works directly with officiating matters. “In that process, we’ve lost some of their best years physically before they work their way into becoming accomplished officials. More than ever this year, we’re encouraging graduating seniors to stay in the game and give back to the games that they benefitted from as a way of developing our future pool of officials.”

With registration under way online for the 2007-08 school year, the Association has also e-mailed every official registered for the current year to add basketball or volleyball to the sports they are already working. Those officials who add basketball or volleyball for the very first time for the coming year will have their sport registration fee of \$10 waived.

“This is something that proved to be successful a couple of years ago when we were seeking individuals to officiate lacrosse,” Uyl said. In the renewals for 2007-08 which have come in since the program was launched, ten percent of those individuals have added either basketball or volleyball or both.

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In addition, the MHSAA will soon release a new series of Public Service Announcements for radio and television stations, encouraging official registration.

The recruitment of new officials will also require a focus on sportsmanship.

“One of the reasons young people shy away from getting into officiating is that they don’t want to take the abuse that parents and coaches dish out,” Uyl said. “While that is never acceptable, sportsmanship is especially important as we bring new officials in to our ranks. We want to make this a positive experience so they’ll continue to serve our young people for many years to come. But it’s going to require that everyone exercise the highest levels of sportsmanship possible as new officials and new coaches become involved in high school sports at this critical time in our history.”

Online registration for renewing officials and first-time individuals is already underway for the 2007-08 school year at mhsaa.com. Discounted fees are available to online registrants. Registration by mail will begin in June.

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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MEDIA ADVISORY – You can view a copy of the cards being provided to graduating senior student-athletes on the Media page of the MHSAA Web site. The audio PSA’s will soon be available for downloading from the Media page of the site, and radio stations will be alerted when those spots become available. The video PSA’s will be sent to TV and Cable outlets on DVD, and tape formats are available upon request. The video PSA’s will also be available for Internet downloading via FTP in a broadcast-quality format. Contact John Johnson at the MHSAA at media@mhsaa.com for FTP information.

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