

OFFICIALS REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

East Lansing, September 28, 2020

Members Present:

Eric Albright, Midland
Jesse Brown, Jackson
Mike Brya, DeWitt
Donta Favors, Detroit
Don Gustafson, St. Ignace
Matt Lehman, Concord
Karen Leinaar, Frankfort
William McCoy, Detroit
Vic Michaels, Detroit
Ron Nagy, Hazel Park
O'Neal Ollie, Kalamazoo

Michael Roy, Vicksburg
Matt Stapleton, Frankfort
Jon Studley, Alpena
Marci Tawney, Lowell
Connor Thomas, Caro

Staff Present:

Tony Bihn
Sam Davis
Faye Verellen-Brown
Brent Rice (Recorder)

The 2020-21 MHSAA Officials Review Committee met to review topics involving high school officiating. After introductions were completed, the committee reviewed the terms of appointment to the Officials Review Committee, as well as the charge and mission of the group relative to the MHSAA decision making process.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Representative Council Action Review: MHSAA staff provided the committee with information regarding Representative Council action from the May Council meeting which covered the non-act of God compensation policy for officials, mandating the completion of a rules meeting by officials to work high school-level contests and the requirement for a sportsmanship course to be completed before a coach or player may return to participation following an ejection.

Discussion Items: A brief update was provided from the entirely virtual 2020 NASO Officiating Summit. The topics of this convention of officials ranged widely, and included both new content and recorded presentations and information from past Summits. This year's virtual Summit @ Home was provided entirely free, and it remains online for access by any official.

Committee members were also apprised of the Assigners and Association Leadership meeting topics and focus on the importance of local officiating leaders effectively spreading messages and information from the MHSAA office to ensure that expectations by schools and others of officials from across the state are consistent.

The committee was provided an early update on preparations for the return of Officiate Michigan Day and the NASO Officiating Summit to Grand Rapids, MI in July, 2021.

Subcommittees composed of athletic directors and officials have been created to handle the upcoming event, expected to be attended by 1500-2000 officials from across the state and country.

The system for schools to rate officials was discussed, and committee members were provided a review of last year's recommendation for changes to this process. Representative Council requested more details, and staff will be presenting an online mockup at the upcoming May Council meeting.

Staff provided the committee with details of an ad hoc committee made up of people within MHSAA schools with an officiating background to develop a framework and content for curriculum to be made available to schools that wish to create officiating courses as part of their programs. O'Neal Ollie provided the committee further explanation of the ad hoc committee's goals. This ad hoc committee will reconvene again after the first of the year for further proceedings.

The committee was provided the details of a proposal being offered by the MHSAA to alter the process for the selection of basketball officials at the District level, with the goal of more local input and less assignment turn-backs. This proposal will be made to the Representative Council in December.

Committee members were asked for discussion and feedback regarding the current assignment of umpires for the baseball Quarterfinal of the postseason tournament. The details of the appropriate number of assignments at this level was discussed, as well as a comparison of previous years in baseball and the current practice of softball at the Quarterfinal round. A vote was taken and recommendation to the Representative Council on this topic.

Officials Recruitment and Retention: MHSAA staff presented registration demographics for MHSAA officials and trends for the past decade. The committee was given data that showed a sharp decline in the number of officials registered this year, as expected with the mandates in place and the abundance of caution taken by a number of others. The largest percentage declines to date are with our winter sports of ice hockey, wrestling and basketball.

The committee was provided information as to recruitment efforts directed at local high schools to recruit, train and mentor new officials in the MHSAA Legacy Program. The use of complimentary vouchers was reiterated as a good option for schools with interested students. In an effort to be more efficient with resources, it was explained that schools may request vouchers from the MHSAA office.

Sportsmanship Initiatives: The proposed Game Day Ambassador Program was discussed as a possible solution to some sportsmanship issues. The program would consist of three areas, including providing ideas and materials to assist ADs in hosting game officials, offering a framework to schools for implementation of #officialthanks initiative and “Thank Officials” events and the administration of schools’ sportsmanship feedback scores and awards. Due to restrictions caused by the impact of COVID-19, the Game Day Ambassador Program was delayed in implementation. It is projected that the program will be soft-launched in the spring, with a full launch expected at Officiate Michigan Day in July, 2021.

Recommendations to the Representative Council:

1. Change the format for assignments of umpires at the Quarterfinal round from three umpires assigned to officiate three games with two umpires (*i.e., two Regional Finals and a Quarterfinal*), to four umpires assigned to officiate the two Regional Final games with two umpires and the Quarterfinal game with all four umpires. This would increase the number of umpires selected at this level by 16, and would be comparable to softball in that the number of umpires used for the Quarterfinal game is the same used for the Semifinal/Final rounds. (15-1)