

**2024-25 MHSAA OFFICIALS REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
Tuesday, October 29, 2024 - 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Shawn Andrews, Flushing  
Marla Grant, Jackson  
Vincent Gross, Whitefish  
Leroy Hackley, Muskegon  
Linda Hoover, Marshall  
Sharonda Hurd, Lansing  
Nichole Martin, St Ignace  
Anika McEvans, Detroit  
Nicole Norris, East Lansing  
Malcolm Pennington, Detroit

Allison Sartorius, Waterford  
Fred Smith, Bangor  
Matt Stabley, Macomb  
Justin Terry, Lansing  
Jeff York, Hale

**MHSAA STAFF**

Sam Davis (Recorder)  
Jeff Spedoske  
Ryan Wieferich

The Officials Review Committee met on October 29, 2024. The committee was reminded of its responsibility and the process by which policy changes occur.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**2023-24 ORC MEETING MINUTES REVIEW**

The committee reviewed last year's ORC meeting minutes, including staff recommendations that were implemented in 2023.

**MHSAA OFFICIALS AND DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

Staff explained the ejection report/appeal process in detail. He highlighted the most problematic issues with the report process (late reports, accuracy of information, professionalism of writing reports).

Committee members mentioned questions relating to the role of an AD in following through on the report process. Concerns centered on the timeliness of the official report being filed and the need for schools to respond to the MHSAA with the appropriate response.

Staff explained how ejection appeals process works within the office. Information was shared on the number of appeals received over the past year. Data was presented to the committee regarding the number of appeals and the dispositions since the Spring of 2023 to date. Athletic directors must appeal ejections within 48 hours of the end of the contest.

The committee discussed the perceived inequity of athletes being required to miss the next date of competition and taking the NFHS sportsmanship course for a rule violation instead of a sportsmanship issue. The example given was a DOGSO in soccer. Discussion centered around why the act should result in a game disqualification but not an ejection, like what happens in hockey and basketball. It was unanimous from the committee that the soccer committee discuss a rule proposal that would allow game disqualifications, but not ejections and suspensions, for violations that were not sportsmanship/conduct related.

The committee was informed of MHSAA efforts to attract mentors for new officials. Experienced officials can sign up when they renew to become mentors for new officials. To date, there are nearly two thousand mentors for one thousand mentees.

The committee was advised that service year recognitions for officials will take place the year they begin their milestone year, instead of the year after, as has been the past practice.

The committee received a report on NASO and Midwest Officials meeting. Both meetings focused on topics including recruitment and retention of officials, professional development (training) for officials, recognition and respect for officials, and sportsmanship and the culture for officials.

Staff shared that the Association Leaders and Registered Assigner's in-person meetings were held at two locations this summer. A July meeting was held in East Lansing and an August meeting was held in Traverse City. There will not be an in-person meeting in 2025 with the meetings being held online. It was shared that the MHSAA will host the National Association of Sports Officials Summit in 2026 in Grand Rapids. We will be soliciting volunteers to help with the host responsibilities.

The committee supported the encouragement of registered officials to join and actively participate in an approved association. The committee also believed that approved associations need to do a better job of training their officials.

Discussion took place on official's registration numbers when compared to this time last year. Football, volleyball and soccer have seen increases of just over one hundred officials in each sport. The 2024-25 recruitment focus is the "youth movement." The focus is being bolstered by the introduction of RefReps classes in a few schools across the state. This training-based program is training new officials before they register with the MHSAA.

A discussion was held about an official's role in observing the post-game handshake line. The consensus was that the officials should not be required to manage events after the conclusion of the contest. Any sports that require officials to observe the handshake line might want to re-examine if it is needed and whether staying to observe this process becomes problematic.

The committee talked about the ongoing sportsmanship issues with spectators. The thought is that schools must be firm and consistent when dealing with spectators who violate the rules of good sportsmanship.

At the request of volleyball staff, the committee discussed whether there should be an extension beyond September 15<sup>th</sup> to allow officials to wear shorts. The committee did not support a change of the current approach.

The staff presented the idea of implementing a required training program for all new officials. Specifically, wants to provide online training and curriculum for people wanting to become officials. It is critical for the MHSAA to provide comprehensive online course curriculum complete with instruction guides, support materials, assessments, and video examples before the new official works their first contest. The program being considered is paired with innovative point-of-view video training packs; learners see the game through the eyes of the officials, make calls, and apply what they have learned so they can build confidence before ever stepping out on the field, court, or mat. The recommendation was embraced as it provides educationally consistent training for all new officials.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

The MHSAA will require RefReps training for all new officials begin with the 2025-26 registration period and that the MHSAA determines how to make it work financially. (16-0)