

# MHSAA OFFICIALS BULLETIN



## Dealing with Coaches:

### Ask, Tell, and Dismiss—Control What You Can Control

Not all critical activity occurs on the field of play. The bench or technical area can be the scene of irresponsible behavior that impacts what is happening on the field of play. In these cases, using the USSF sanctioned policy of Ask, Tell, Dismiss can easily and readily be applied to our high school games as necessary with team officials. These include not only the team coaches, but other non-playing individuals in the technical area.

Coaches cannot commit fouls, but they can engage in irresponsible behavior that interferes or undermines the referee's ability to manage the game. Most of the time, coaches behave appropriately, even in the face of their obvious passion and excitement for the game. However, when those actions become inappropriate and abusive, the referee must be willing to take the following actions:

1. Ask the person to modify his or her behavior.
2. Tell him or her to stop the irresponsible behavior and inform the person that their actions will no longer be tolerated. This is also now when a yellow card should be shown as allowed by NFHS rules.  
In both of these situations, the referee needs to be specific in explaining the exact behavior of the team official that must stop. Being generic at this point does not clearly identify the expectation of the referee as to which behavior needs modification.
3. If the conduct continues, the referee must then take the next step and dismiss the offending person from the game. NFHS

rules also require the showing of the red card (or 2 yellow cards then a red card) for this dismissal.

Remember, high school sports are an extension of the classroom. If the conduct being displayed by team officials cannot be displayed in the class, it cannot be displayed on the field. It is important that we as referees have a professional and mutual relationship with team officials. Showing respect should result in receiving respect. When the behavior crosses the line, however, we must take the necessary actions to eliminate this behavior for the good of the game.

### NFHS Rule Change: Substitutions

The following rules have been changed for the 2019-20 season:

**3-4-3:** The clock shall (must) be stopped when a substitute by the team in the lead is beckoned on the field in the final five minutes of the second period or in the final five minutes of the second overtime period.

**7-4-3:** Stops the clock during the final five minutes of the second period or the final five minutes of the second overtime period.

This requirement cannot be altered either by the referee or with the coach's agreement. Let's not overthink this law change as it is quite simple. Regardless of which team is in possession or the manner of the restart, if it is legal for the substitution to enter, the clock MUST be stopped if the team in the lead is substituting in the final five minutes of the second period or second overtime period. This includes all situations for even when the team in the lead is leading by multiple goals and also if the losing team has the throw in and is the cause of the substitution. This is not required for subvarsity contests.

**Rules Review:** The players from both teams are dissenting throughout the game, and a number of cards have been issued. After a verbal altercation, the head coach of Team A is shown a red card and disqualified from the contest. Players A18, A20 and A29 are standing together behind the official's back when one of them uses a personal insult toward the official. The official turns and asks the now-ejected head coach and his players which of the players made the remark, but the coach and players refuse to tell him.

**Ruling:** Since the specific offender cannot be determined, the acting head coach is ejected. If there is an assistant, this would be the person ejected. If no other school assistants remain, a school administrator may coach. If no administrator is available, the game is forfeited.

