



THE OFFICIAL WORD

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MOA CENTRAL HUB IS UP AND RUNNING

Remember when you paid your dues in May each official paid an additional \$5.00 increase? And, as I stated in an earlier article, this dues increase wasn't for the obvious reason to cover costs to provide the same services for our officials. The increase we incurred by the NFOA (National Federation Officials Association) was mainly to provide a website for officials (a very costly undertaking) that would provide a variety of services for our officials including:

- Rules books, case books, and officials manuals online with immediate search capabilities for any rule reference
- The ability to take tests online
- The possibility of registering officials online
- High quality video on a variety of rule topics
- The ability for local pools to load video on the site and use the video(s) as training tools

I am very pleased to report that website is live and accessible to our officials. The football, volleyball and soccer pages are up to date and the staff is working on updating all the other sport pages as their seasons near. Brian Michelotti and Theresa Stanisich have done an outstanding job working with the Federation's technology partner Arbiter Sports to build this website (we are very fortunate to have their technology expertise on staff). This is our website and, as you will see, will provide not only all the National Federation information (searchable rule books, casebooks, video clips etc.) but will provide MOA specific information on the homepage of each sport.

It is extremely easy to navigate (even I surf through without any trouble). The web address for Montana's Central Hub is: <http://moa.arbitersports.com/front/106278/Site>. To sign in (look in the upper right hand corner of the site) – your sign in id is the email address you have provided to the MOA. If you are uncertain which email we have on file for you, please contact Theresa Stanisich to confirm that information. Your initial password will be your last name in lower case letters. Once you've logged in, you are able to change your password if you'd like. ***If an official has an existing ArbiterSports account, their password will not change.***

The MOA Regional Directors and MHS/MOA staff have placed a high priority on providing more services and training for our 1550 registered officials. Over the past few

years we have been working towards that goal by providing clinics for mechanics training at the MCA clinic in football, basketball, volleyball and wrestling and now are able to offer this excellent online resource for officials. I can assure that we will continue to emphasize expanding services and resources for our officials. It is a challenging task in these tough economic times but innovative planning such as the MOA Central Hub will allow us to provide more training and resources.

Mechanics Clinics - As I stated in the August Official Word, the third year of MOA/MCA "Train the Trainer" Mechanics Clinics conducted for wrestling and football were extremely successful ventures. Next year the rotation will be to provide volleyball and basketball once again. Also we are exploring adding a softball mechanics clinic next year or the year after. The MOA is continuing to work on formulating a mechanics clinic for soccer.

On behalf the MOA Regional Directors and MHS Executive Board and Staff I want to express our appreciation to the clinicians who instructed in both clinics and to the MCA for funding the clinics through MOA/MCA associate member dues. I also want to thank each MOA member who joined the MCA as an associate member; this membership not only provides benefits to each member official but funds these important mechanics clinics.

Fall sporting events have gone extremely well. The weather has been exceptional and we are hoping for good weather for our fall post season events.

Football, volleyball and soccer playoffs are approaching and one question that continues to be asked when post season play arrives is how officials are selected for playoffs, district, divisional and state tournaments and championships. I usually include an explanation of the selection process for each sport from the staff members responsible but this year we have placed those explanations on the MOA Central Hub, on the sport specific page.

Also concerns have been expressed that some officials' pools are providing an availability list without a written request from a district, division or conference. The new rule states – Pools may provide information regarding availability of eligible officials for post season assignment to a district or division representative for distribution to schools in those districts or divisions, **when requested in writing**. Individual officials shall not provide such

information. The Regional Directors are allowing pools to provide a list of officials and the dates those officials are available for post season assignment to a district or divisional representative to distribute to the schools in their respective districts or divisions allowing coaches to vote for officials who are available on each weekend of post season competition.

See you at the MOA Central Hub!
Mark Beckman, MOA Commissioner

EXAM DATE SET

Exams for Prospective / Apprentice officials for winter sports will be administered online. If you will be taking the apprentice exam, detailed instructions will be emailed to the email address you provided on your registration form. If you have any questions regarding the online testing process, please call Theresa Stanisich at 406-442-6010.

Upgrading officials will continue to take the proctored exam which is scheduled for Monday, November 29th, at various locations around the state. Please contact your pool leader or regional director or check the website for the times and sites of the upgrade exam.

NOTE: If you wish to take the upgrade exam you must notify the MHSAs office, in writing, at least twenty (20) days prior to the test date. A request for upgrade form is available on the Central Hub, or we will be happy to fax or email the form to you. Please contact Theresa with those requests.

Upon receipt of your request, your name will automatically be added to the test list if everything is in order. If a problem occurs we will contact you.

Please remember that upgrading will be denied for a one-year period for **failure to**: 1) complete the required number of study clubs; 2) complete rules and mechanics clinics; 3) pay annual MOA dues by June 1st; or 4) receive a favorable evaluation from your regional evaluation committee.

WINTER RULES CLINICS ONLINE

The MHSAs/MOA rules clinics are again being provided in an online format. A detailed information sheet explaining the procedure for accessing these clinics is included with this newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact the MHSAs office. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLINICS MUST BE VIEWED BY December 3, 2010 IN ORDER TO SATISFY YOUR 2010-11 RULES CLINIC REQUIREMENT.** *We strongly suggest you print the verification page and keep a copy as proof of your clinic attendance.*

REPORTING EJECTIONS

Officials **in all sports** must report, in writing, ejections of coaches or students. These reports must be submitted to the MOA office within 48 hours of the incident. We thank those officials who have carried out their responsibilities thus far. If we do not receive the reports in the appropriate time frame, it becomes difficult to send the report to

schools in a timely fashion. Note that reports which are continuously delayed are in violation of MOA rules, so please submit them within 48 hours of the incident. They can be faxed to 406-442-8250 or emailed to bmichelotti@mhsa.org.

EJECTION PROCESS & PROCEDURE

Please remember it is important, in most situations, to talk briefly about ejecting a participant with the other official or with other members of the crew. Sometimes this allows time to reflect on the situation and gather other viewpoints if appropriate. It is vital to get the correct number, and name if possible, of the player, and to record that number.

After you eject a participant (coach or player) use the proper reporting process per your sport's rules and execute the ejection. Remember to inform the coach whether or not the ejection was for unsporting conduct. Make sure you understand who can remain on the premises and those who cannot. If a spectator must be ejected from the premises, the official must first contact the contest administrator and **the administrator** must remove the spectator from the premises. Use law enforcement if appropriate and available.

It is never acceptable for the contest official, after a contest is finished, to review a tape or film of a game or get together post game and change or overrule an ejection after it is issued. The specific sport rules do not allow this and MHSAs policy does not allow officials to do this. It is also wise not to discuss your ejection with school personnel, parents or the media. Simply use the proper procedure in reporting and enforcing the ejection, report the ejection to the MHSAs within 48 hours and direct any questions to the MHSAs or your local regional director after the incident. Refrain from commentary on the MHSAs ejection rule and how it applies to students or coaches or adding your opinion regarding the conduct that was displayed. We need only the simple facts of the ejection and a brief explanation of the incident.

FOOTBALL INFORMATION

Mixing Playing Rules in a MHSAs Contest – (11 to 8 or 8 to 6)

Question - We have planned to play a JV game, on offense we would like to play 6-player and on defense we would like to play 8-player. They will do the same.

Answer - We would not have a problem with you playing the JV game, but the MHSAs would not allow a mix of football rules. Reasons for this denial include:

- We do not allow the mix of playing rules in any MHSAs contests (11 to 8 or 8 to 6)
- It would be very challenging for officials to switch between playing rules.
- It would be very complicated to operate two sets of chains. 6-player has 15 yard line to gain and 8 and 11 player has 10 yard line to gain.

- On pass plays, rules for eligible receivers vary significantly for the three different types of football.
- Football field dimensions differ from the 11 player game versus the 8 and 6 player game.
- Liability issues in regard to a lack of definite playing rules – Coaches and Officials would be subjected to that liability.

Schools that would like to schedule a game that cross over to a different kind of football, need to send in a formal request to the MHSA. Also, MOA officials should not work these contests without written permission from the MHSA because of liability concerns. If an official or pool is contacted to work a game that mixes NFHS rules, please contact the MHSA office to verify that the schools have followed the proper procedure for a waiver.

Band playing during live ball

Question - can bands play during a football game when the play is "live"?

Answer - Yes – Bands cannot play when the ball is live at indoor events, but the MHSA does not have these same restrictions at outdoor contests. Here is the language in regard to bands playing at MHSA events. This is taken from the 2010-11 MHSA Handbook, page 53, letter J:

Section (34) – J. The use of bells, air horns, whistles, wooden blocks and other noise makers during indoor Association contests is prohibited. At indoor contests bands may only play before the start of a contest, during intermissions between periods (quarters) and during a time out. They may not play during "live ball." **At outdoor contests band directors should use discretion when determining the appropriate times to play.**

For instance, if a band only plays when the visitor is on offense, we expect local administration to get involved and ensure that their school is exhibiting good sporting behavior and respecting the opponent. In most of the cases I have seen with this issue, the band director is not aware of the problem, and once he/she is notified, will take care of the issue.

Halftime Intermission – Homecoming and Parents Night

Remember, football coaches must be back on the field or be on their way to the field before the twelve-minute half-time is expired. It is important to communicate that game management should notify both teams when there are three minutes left in the intermission.

Schools, however, do have the option of using longer half-times because of homecoming or parent's night, and officials should encourage this option for homecoming and parent's night. By NFHS rule, half times can be extended up to twenty minutes, provided the opposing coaches have been notified five minutes prior to the game. Remember, the additional three minute warm-up period is always mandatory. Also, we receive many questions about the maximum time allowed for halftime for homecoming – It

would be 20 minutes + the mandatory 3 minute warm-up period.

FALL RULES CLINIC SUMMARY

The attendance for football, soccer and wrestling rules clinics was as follows:

FOOTBALL:

Total	615
Officials	388
Coaches/Administrators	227

VOLLEYBALL:

Total	526
Officials	303
Coaches/Administrators	223

SOCCER:

Total	217
Officials	130
Coaches/Administrators	87

AIM HIGHER – BUY POWERADE AND COKE

Coca-Cola Bottling companies in Montana help to fund the MHSA AIM Higher program which provides workshops regarding leadership, mentoring, sportsmanship, prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among students, and hazing awareness. Thus, we encourage you to buy Coke products and especially PowerAde because the program receives a rebate on every case of PowerAde sold in our state. This rebate goes to fund the program. Many thanks to Coke and PowerAde.

VOLLEYBALL INFORMATION AND RULES CLARIFICATIONS

State Volleyball Officials Rotation

There has been a great deal of discussion in regard to revising the six person volleyball officials' rotation for tournaments, so that officials would work with other officials during a tournament. Currently, the six person volleyball officials' rotation has two officials working together for the entire tournament. The MOA Regional Directors have voted to allow a new Volleyball Officials' 6-person rotation to be used at the 2010 State All Class Volleyball Tournaments as a one year pilot program. This rotation will allow state volleyball officials to work with other officials in their crew. This pilot official's rotation will be evaluated after the State All Class Volleyball Tournament.

Tournament Travel Allowance

All tournament officials are paid a round trip travel allowance from their home site to the tournament site, except for the official who is a bona fide member of a pool outside his/her local pool. Then he/she will be paid only a rider's allowance from the home site to the postseason tournament or playoff site. Whenever feasible, any official traveling to a playoff or tournament through a community where other officials working the same playoff or

tournament reside, the officials shall car pool and only the driver official will receive the one travel allowance (the MOA/MHSA recommends having only three officials per car). The Tournament Manager will determine which official gets paid the travel allowance and officials should not contact the Tournament Manager to request to be the driver and receive the travel allowance amount.

Pink Whistles

The MOA Regional Directors have approved that pink whistles can be used by officials only at contests designated as breast cancer awareness events. All other NFHS/MOA uniform requirements must be followed during those events. No pink whistles are allowed at any MHSA post season event.

Situation 1: During the warm-up period officials discover that all Team A players, both starting and substitute, have a very fine glitter on their uniforms, on their arms and in their hair. The officials ask the coach to have the players shake their shirts, and wipe their arms and hair to remove as much of the glitter as possible. The officials determine that because of the small size of the glitter it will not come out of the uniforms until they are washed. After visiting with both coaches the officials determine that the glitter will not be a safety risk and allow the match to begin. What penalty should be applied to Team A? **RULING:** The officials should issue a point/loss of rally penalty to Team A, play the match and report the situation to the MHSA office. (4-4-2 Penalty #4)

Situation 2: A player is listed on the roster as #14, which is her regular uniform number and her libero number. For game #1 the lineup lists #14 as a starting player and has #14 listed as the libero for that game. Can #14 start game #1 as a regular player, play in game #1 as a regular player, switch into the libero #14 jersey and then play as the libero for game #1 also? **RULING:** No. If she starts the game as a non-libero, then that is her designation for the entire set.

Situation 3: If the libero is not listed on the lineup for a set, or the wrong libero number is listed, (libero's number is 12, but on the lineup #5 is listed for the libero, and there is no #5) would the team play without the libero for that game and follow the penalties listed in the penalty section for rule 10? **RULING:** Correct. If a libero is not identified or not identified accurately, the team shall not have access to a libero for that set. The penalties would be applied should a libero attempt to enter the set.

Situation 4: How close to the net must the blocker be to not consider the block the team's first hit? **RULING:** A player an arm's length away from the net in blocking position reaching higher than the net would be considered blocking.

Situation 5: After the whistle/signal to serve, Team A's RB drops the ball in an attempt to get a re-serve. As soon as the whistle sounds and the official signals re-serve, the libero replaces a back-row player. The official should (a) allow the replacement or (b) whistle and signal unnecessary delay (c) whistle and signal illegal alignment.

RULING: (a) and (b) Incorrect procedure (c) correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The libero may not replace a back-row player during a re-serve. (8-1-5)

Situation 7: The Team S libero is on the bench and has not served in this set. Before the referee whistles/signals for serve and while player #5 is in the service area, the coach instructs the libero to serve for #5. The libero and #5 exchange positions at the end of the court. Neither player crosses the sideline between the attack line and the endline. The officials whistle/signal delay of game. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENTS:** The players involved in a libero replacement must enter and exit the court over the sideline between the attack line and the endline so that the libero tracker is able to observe and record all libero replacements accurately so the libero tracking sheet reflects the players actually on the court at all times.

BASKETBALL RULES CLARIFICATIONS

Availability of eligible officials for post season assignment:

For the 2010 Basketball Season, Basketball Official Pools may provide information regarding availability of eligible officials for post season assignment to a district or division representative for distribution to schools in those districts or divisions, when requested in writing. Individual officials shall not provide such information. The MOA Regional Directors are allowing pools to provide a list of officials and the dates those officials are available for post season assignment to a district or divisional representative to distribute to the schools in their respective districts or divisions allowing coaches to vote for officials who are available on each weekend of post season competition. Basketball Pools should prepare a means by which to relate information of officials' availability (days and dates) to requesting district or division representatives for all weeks of basketball post season play (February 7-12, February 14-19, February 21-26, February 28-March 5 and March 10-12). Basketball Pools should keep a copy of the written request for the pool's official availability list and provide a copy of the request to your MOA Regional Director.

Three (3) Person Officiating Crews at District Basketball Tournaments

Again for the 2010-11 season, the use of three person mechanics in basketball at the district level will be allowed if so requested by the district. Rationale: The use of three person crews at state tournaments beginning in the 2004-05 and divisional tournaments beginning in 2006-07 were well received by coaches and officials. The MHSA/MOA has mandated three person mechanics training as a requisite for all post season assignment and has received requests from many districts to use three person mechanics at their district tournaments.

Play-in and Challenge Games

Because Basketball Districts/Divisions are now scheduling play-in games on Monday or Tuesday to pare the tournament down to an eight team bracket, The MOA

Regional Directors have approved that if one of the tournament officials has a work related conflict and is unable to officiate the play-in or a challenge game, the MOA office or tournament manager can assign one of the other tournament officials to work this game(s).

Alternate Official Schedule at Tournaments

So that an alternate official is always available for basketball tournament games below the state level, the MOA Regional Directors have approved that a schedule of alternate officials be prepared by the tournament officials and coordinated by the tournament manager.

Officials Uniform

For the 2010-11 basketball season, officials may wear either the black/white shirt or the gray shirt with black pinstripes. But remember, for officials working any MHS A event, each member of the officiating crew must wear the same shirt. Also, the officials' uniform includes black pants and black shoes and black socks. The MOA Regional Directors approved at their June 2010 meeting to amend the **all black shoe requirement to read:** In an effort to make quality footwear available, an officials' shoe must be predominately black but may have some clear or grey trim or deviate slightly from solid all black. Whenever possible, any different color must be dyed or colored over with black. The MOA basketball uniform must be in compliance with NFHS requirements.

MHS A Basketball Mercy Rule

For the 2010-11 basketball season, the Basketball Mercy Rule will again be used by all MHS A member schools.

It will be used for all levels of play, (Varsity, JV, Sophomore and Frosh) in the second half only, once a team has a forty (40) point or better lead against their opponent, a running clock will ensue until the end of the game even if the difference in the score drops below the forty point margin. The only time the clock will stop will be between quarters, time outs, and when replacing an injured or disqualified player.

In the second half of a basketball game, the official scorer and timer will be responsible for running the clock continuously except for the below situations, once a team has a forty (40) point or better lead against their opponent.

1. Once the clock signals the end of a quarter or overtime period, the clock will be stopped until play is started for the next quarter or overtime period.
2. Once an official signals for a called time-out, the clock will be stopped until play is started following the time-out.
3. Once an official beckons or bench personnel come onto the floor to attend to an injured player, the clock will be stopped until play is started again.
4. Once an official informs the head coach that a player has been disqualified from further participation in the game, the clock will be stopped until play is started again.

The clock will be restarted when:

1. If a free throw is not successful and the ball is to remain live, the clock shall be started when the ball touches or is touched by a player on the court.
2. If play is resumed by a throw-in, the clock shall be started when the ball touches, or is legally touched by, a player on the court after it is released by the thrower.

Game management must inform the official scorer and timer of this MHS A Basketball Mercy Rule and the provisions of the rule.

If you have questions about the above issues, please call Scott McDonald in the MHS A office.

SOCCKER SEASON CONCLUDES IN OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

This year's state soccer finals for Classes AA and A will be held this month. Specific information is listed by classification below:

Class A Playoff Structure

- October 11-16 – First Round
- October 18-23 – Semi Final Round
- October 28-30 – Championship Games
- Higher seeded teams will host

Class AA

- Playoffs held October 18-23
- October 28-30
- Twelve games per gender. Requires 18-20 officials.
- Siebel Fields – Great Falls

Officials who are eligible for post season assignments were emailed a form requesting input on their availability. If you did not receive a form and you are a certified or master soccer official, please contact the MOA office. If you did receive a form but did not complete it, please take a moment to do so. This information is extremely helpful in filling post season playoff and tournament assignments.

Playoff officials are assigned by the local administrators/pools by using the list of available officials. State AA tournament officials and State A Championship officials are assigned by the MHS A office with input from the local administrators/pools.

Enclosures:

MOA Pocket Calendar

Basketball Rule Book, Rules Revisions & Preseason Guide

Wrestling Rule Book, Case Book/Officials' Manual & Preseason Guide

Winter Sports Online Rules Clinic Instructions