



# THE OFFICIAL WORD

August 2007

A Publication of the Montana Officials' Association

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## EXAM DATES SET

Following are the scheduled dates on which the MOA qualifying examination will be given. **Please note that fall and spring sports exams are again scheduled for August and March, respectively.**

Football	August 28, 2007
Volleyball	August 28, 2007
Soccer	August 28, 2007
Basketball	December 3, 2007
Wrestling	December 3, 2007
Softball	March 17, 2008

NOTE: If you wish to take the upgrade exam on one of the above dates you must notify the MHSa office, in writing, at least twenty (20) days prior to the test date (August 8<sup>th</sup> for the August exams). A request for upgrade form is available on our website at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org), 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) view rules clinics; 3) pay annual MOA dues by June 1<sup>st</sup>; or 4) receive a favorable evaluation from your regional evaluation committee.

## JUNE MOA DIRECTOR MEETING

The MOA Regional Directors met in Helena on Sunday, June 11, 2007, and Monday, June 12, 2007, for their summer meeting to address issues and concerns for the MOA. Below are some of the items discussed and actions taken by the Directors:

### Regular June Meeting – the Directors:

1. Established the next meeting dates as December 9-10, 2007.
2. Synchronized the inclusion of case books for basketball, football and softball packets to the printing of new officials' manuals – except in the case of new officials.
3. Allowed the gray shirt as an option for wrestling officials.
4. Allowed basketball officials to wear either the gray or the black and white shirts based upon the entire crew wearing the same shirt.

5. Added a rotation for three person crews at a six team basketball tournament.
6. Added language to the assignment section to exclude an official working a varsity contest or tournament **where they cohabitate with, or have** an immediate relative who is participating as an athlete or a head coach.
7. Increased the limit, from \$100 to \$300, of the fine that may be imposed for misconduct.

Also, the Regional Directors approved the following for the 2008-09 school year: For football and basketball: Attendance will be required for each registered official at a certified MOA mechanics clinic or verification of training by a "train the trainer" representative who has attended the MOA mechanics clinic at the MCA in Great Falls and who provides the training at a mandatory mechanics study club by all MOA basketball and football officials. Recertification of trainers will be required concurrent with the printing of each new NFHS officials manual. For the first year football and basketball will be piloted and committees will be created to formulate mechanics clinics for soccer, softball, wrestling and volleyball.

Below are proposals presented by the MOA Board and **approved** by the MHSa Executive Board in January:

1. The implementation of a conviction status policy and mandatory background as follows:  
**Conviction Status and Background Check: Any individual convicted of: (a) a felony involving the use, possession or sale of a controlled substance within the last ten years; (b) a crime involving the use or threatened use of violence against a person within the last ten years; or (c) a crime involving a minor child at any time is prohibited from membership in the MOA. Registering officials are subject to a public criminal records background search. If he/she is found to have been convicted or is in a period of deferred imposition for any crime listed in the MOA Conviction Status Policy, subject to the right of appeal, he/she will be considered ineligible for membership.**
2. Amended the number of officials for a six player state championship football game from four (4) to five (5), with the fifth official replacing the alternate.
3. For football - 12 minute halftimes and 3 minute warm-ups as a maximum, with existing exceptions by rule.
4. Added the following language to Article XXV, A, 5: **"Officials who coach are prohibited from working a contest or tournament of their gender specific sport in the classification that he/she coaches."**

5. Amended Article XXVII, B, 1 to read: All postseason driver officials will be paid a round trip travel allowance from their home sites to the postseason tournament or playoff site **“except for the official who is a bona fide member of a pool outside his/her local pool. He or she will be paid a riders allowance from the home site to the postseason tournament or playoff site.”** But whenever feasible . . .
6. Replaced the existing language of Article XXVI, J, 5 with the following: **When separate officiating crews are requested or used for different contests which occur on the same date, schools must pay the driver official for each crew the required travel allowance, when it isn't feasible for the officials to travel together. This applies even when the officials are from the same city or pool site.**
7. Adopted a pilot flat fee program for the State Soccer Tournament for 2007-08.

### **MOVING?**

You say you've moved? Well LET US KNOW! You can notify us of address changes by calling Theresa at 442-6010, emailing the information to [tstanisich@mhsa.org](mailto:tstanisich@mhsa.org) or mailing a change of address card to the MHSa office. There is also a form on our website – [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org) for address changes. Just fill it out and fax (442-8250) or mail it to us.

Most of the problems experienced by officials not receiving MOA information including dues forms, books, clinic info, etc., could be avoided by ensuring that your address information is current.

MOA mailings are usually sent as bulk mail. The post office **does not** forward bulk mail – even if you have filed a change of address with them, nor do they return those items to us.

So, please keep us in mind when you are making address change notifications and we'll keep your newsletters and other publications coming to you without interruption.

### **OFFICIAL REPORT FORM**

Enclosed with this publication you will find a form entitled “Official Report of Unusual Situations.” This form is to be used to report the behavior of a coach or member(s) of the coaching staff, to report a problem with a school's facility, to report a crowd control problem or any unusual circumstance experienced while you are officiating. It is to be used to report a positive situation as well as a negative problem. These forms are available from your Regional Director, the MOA office or downloadable at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org).

NOTE: Coach/player ejections must be reported in writing to the MHSa office within 48 hours of the incident. This form should be used to report ejections, but if forms are not available a letter will suffice – mail, fax, or email. It is very important for ejections to be reported promptly.

### **OFFICIALS' FEES**

Mileage for the driver official has changed to reflect State of Montana rate changes for 2007-08. The driver official will receive .485 cents per mile, while each passenger official and driver official still receive .08 cents per diem. Therefore, the driver official receives .565 cents per mile. This travel allowance is established for the entire fiscal year commencing on July 1 and continuing through June 30 of the following year.

### **STUDY CLUB DEADLINES**

All study club attendance information must be in the hands of the Directors by the respective dates shown below:

- Football, Soccer and Volleyball – December 1
- Basketball and Wrestling – April 1
- Softball – June 1

Please use the study club attendance form provided by this office. If you are not in possession of this form please contact Theresa and she will be happy to send you one via fax, email, or through the mail. You can also download this form from our website – [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org). These forms are to be sent to your Regional Director for his/her signature. It is his/her responsibility to forward them on to us. Please do not send them directly to the MOA office. We recommend that each pool coordinator retain a copy for his/her records, to be used as a backup if necessary.

These forms are important for many reasons, not the least of which is the impact on each official's rating. Pool heads should list each official as favorable/unfavorable for upgrade regardless of their current rating or number of years of service. Hopefully, this will help to erase some of the confusion when ratings letters are mailed each year.

### **HALL OF FAME**

NorthWestern Energy provides financial assistance for the rings presented to Hall of Fame inductees. Their generous support also went into buying rings for all past inductees. We would like to publicly thank NorthWestern Energy for their financial assistance. As was reported in the June Official Word this year's inductees into the MOA Hall of Fame are Dick Huse of Missoula and Ken Leland of Kalispell.

### **INFORMATION ON RECIPROCITY**

Once again there will be a reciprocity agreement for the four contiguous states. Membership in the MOA allows you to officiate in Wyoming for a \$5 per sport membership fee, in North Dakota and Idaho for a \$10 per sport membership fee, or in South Dakota the fee is a flat \$10 regardless of the number of sports you officiate. For those who wish to take advantage of the reciprocity agreement here are the addresses:

- Barb Collins, Administrative Assistant, Idaho, P.O. Box 4667, Boise, ID 83711
- Patty Bass, Activities Secretary, North Dakota, PO Box 817, Valley City, ND 58072

- Paula Lind, Administrative Assistant, South Dakota, PO Box 1217, Pierre, SD 57501
- Bonny O'Briant, WHSAA Secretary, Wyoming, 731 E. 2<sup>ND</sup> Street, Casper, WY 82601

### **“HITTING THE MARK”**

Welcome back to another fall sports season. I have heard it said that summer vacation is the time to get away from the people and places you love best so that you can put up with them when you get back. There is no doubt that holds true for sports officials! Hopefully you were able to take a “vacation” and you are “back” refreshed and renewed to officiate another year of high school sports. Also, I hope the extremely hot and smoke-filled days that most of us have been experiencing this summer will be waning as we start our fall activities season. In regard to air quality issues caused by smoke it is important to work closely with game administration to determine whether it is safe to play outdoor contests in the areas affected by smoke. It is the school’s responsibility to determine whether their student athletes should be participating depending on the advice and counsel of each local community’s health department. Those decisions will be made before the game and the officials notified. If, by chance, air quality deteriorates during a contest it will be the shared responsibility of the officials and the game administrator to determine whether the contest should continue. We do not want ever to risk the health and safety of our participants. If you have any questions regarding air quality issues please contact your local school activity administrator and/or the MOA office.

A few years ago the MOA Regional Directors directed that **“by June 1, 2007, every pool shall be required to have written by-laws, general assignment, and evaluation procedures on file with both their Regional Director and the MOA office.”** We have very few of those by-laws and assignment and evaluation policies on file. Please take time in your pool to craft those documents and send them to your Regional Director and to Theresa in our office. Also, Theresa has some example policies available if you would like to review those to help formulate your policies.

As you review your pool policies and procedures one area that you may want to address is establishing ethical standards for your pool. By addressing this area it may help you with formulating the appropriate by-laws, assignment procedures and evaluation policies. A recent article by Jerry Grunski in NASO on Board had some good information I would like to share. He states that step one should be to form a committee to recommend ethical standards for your pool. The issues that he believes should be addressed are:

1. Fairness and equity in assigning games.
2. Steps in a training process for incoming officials, including probationary procedures and designations.
3. Ongoing requirements for continued “good standing” within the association, to assure high levels of knowledge and competence.
4. A system of evaluating officials within the pool.
5. Definitions of conflicts-of-interest, plus a system for assuring effective policing.

6. A definition of “standards of conduct” and a system for monitoring and administering policy.

He believes that these are monumental issues because their absence leads to problems that trouble dedicated and forthright officials everywhere.

And now I would like to ask Jo, Scott and Brian to share a few important thoughts with you concerning some points of emphasis in soccer, volleyball and football –

Let’s begin with **Joanne Austin**, MHSAA Soccer liaison:

By now you’ve had an opportunity to read the 2007-08 Soccer rules materials. While changes were few, two edits to the rules book are of particular interest, both involving equipment.

First, please be aware that the requirement to use NOCSAE-certified shin guards has been delayed until the fall of 2008. The NFHS rules committee delayed the implementation because the nationwide manufacturers could not guarantee availability for all market areas by 2007. Second, officials are no longer required to inspect each player’s equipment. Officials should ask coaches if players are properly equipped and offer assistance if any coach has questions or concerns. There is no longer a need to line up players for equipment and uniform inspection because coaches will have the responsibility for ensuring that players are dressed out in compliance with the rules. As noted in the rules clinic, coaches can be issued yellow card(s) if players do not comply with the rule. Please review the information that was presented in the soccer rules clinic for specific game situations.

Also, you are encouraged to use a new item on the soccer page of the MHSAA website. On the soccer page you will find a link to contact information for your local activities directors. Many of you have requested email addresses for administrators in order to send your game reports. As always, officials are required to report any red cards to the host administrator and to the MHSAA office. In addition we appreciate receiving *all* reports, specifically those involving yellow cards and unusual situations.

In previous years officials have been discouraged from conducting a post-game handshake with teams. This remains true for the coming season, especially when more than one game is scheduled for a particular site. Officials should gather their belongings and exit the field using the plan determined by the local pool and/or local administration.

Enjoy the coming soccer season, and please contact our office if we can be of assistance.

And now, let’s hear from **Scott McDonald**, MHSAA Volleyball liaison:

The libero, a back row, defensive specialist in volleyball, shall be allowed to serve in one position in the serving order, beginning with the 2007-08 high school volleyball season. This rule change allows the libero to participate fully while in the back row. The libero can only serve in one position in the serving order. Once the libero serves in that position of the

serve order for a game, the libero can only serve in **that** position for the rest of the game. If the libero is in the game immediately prior to moving to the serving position, there does not have to be a rally between libero replacements if the libero serves the next rally. When the libero is going to serve, it is good preventive officiating for the umpire to turn and verbally inform the scorer – “libero serving”. Other items worth noting about the libero serving:

- (1) The coach does not need to specify the libero's serving position on the line-up sheet. At any point in the game, the coach can send the libero into the serving position, and it is done without notifying the officials, so officials should be alert.
- (2) The libero is not required to serve in that position for all serves. The starting player or a substitute can serve there also.
- (3) The libero can serve in a different position during each game of a match.
- (4) If the libero is going to have the first serve of the game, the libero must wait in the replacement zone while the umpire checks the line-ups. The umpire will then authorize the entry of the libero to serve.

The scorer and the assistant scorer (libero tracker) have specific responsibilities related to the libero serving. If you would like a copy of these duties, visit [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org), click on volleyball, then the appropriate link.

In another rule change, each head coach is required to submit to the scorer the accurate, written lineup, listing the uniform number for the starting players in the proper serving order with the libero listed if used. The previous policy of submitting the lineup using players' floor position will no longer be allowed. The submission of the lineup in the serving order should help the scorer in recording the proper serving order on the score sheet. Umpires must be careful to identify the serving and receiving teams when transferring the coach's lineup information (with the proper serving order) to their own lineup card, to ensure the team's starting players are in proper floor position to start each game.

If you have any questions about either of the above rule changes, please contact Scott McDonald at the MHSA office.

And last but not least, **Brian Michelotti**, MHSA Football liaison:

Once again this year, there have been rules changes at the National Federation and MHSA that will benefit MOA officials. The National Federation of High School Football Rules Committee continued the commitment to safety by adding and clarifying rules in regard to proper blocking and tackling. Also, if you recall, last year the committee moved the line to gain crews two yards off of the field for safety reasons. This year a four inch wide broken restraining line must be placed around the outside of the field at least two yards from the sidelines and end lines, except in stadium where the total playing enclosure does not permit. This will create a safe barrier to keep players, press, and administration back off of the field. Also, schools may place four inch wide by twelve inch long bisecting marks along the restraining line at each five-yard line

between the goal lines. Please make sure you are working with local school administration to ensure that these lines are on every possible field.

Now for the changes that were approved for Montana. Last year, the Montana High School Association had implemented a standard point rule in Class A, B and C (Both 8 player and 6 player football). In previous years, each of these classes had different rules for their mercy rule, and this change will allow for easier understanding for everyone across the state. We received very positive feedback on this rule change and it will continue to be the standard for the 2007 season. Also, we have added one additional criterion, which states, when a first down is declared, the clock will not stop. We felt the clock should continue to run in this situation. Once again, Class AA does not have a point rule.

The MHSA / MOA has adopted a standard half time length for the 2007-08 football season. The length of all halftimes for all MHSA football games will now be 12 minutes. In addition to the 12 minutes, a mandatory three minute warm-up period is required by National Federation rule. The only exceptions to this are homecoming, parents' night and other exceptions provided by rule.

Finally, two years ago Montana made an exception to the six-player football rules by allowing multiple forward passes. It has recently come to our attention that no exceptions or experiments are allowed in any type of football without NFHS approval. 11, 9, 8 and 6 player must follow all rules in the National Federation football rule book. This year multiple forward passes in Montana six-player football will **not** be allowed. In the future, if schools want this option, we can present a proposal to the national committee to change this for six player football across the nation.

I hope you have a great football season and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the MHSA office.

Enclosures: Officials Report of Unusual Situations