



MIAA Game Officials Newsletter

SPRING 2015

The Snow Machine...

As the winter of 2015 continues to punish us, it is difficult to imagine that our spring sports season begins on March 16, 2015. I'm sure they'll be many unique challenges this spring, however, I'm very confident that officials and school administrators, working together, will handle each and every obstacle.

I've recently read an old article from the NFHS/Referee Leadership Guide 2008-09 titled "Develop Your Own Degree of Tolerance". As you approach your spring officiating duties, I thought you might find a review of this article (published below) helpful.

"At some point in your officiating career, you need to develop a list of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior, Start with the rulebook and then customize the list over time. Try to come up with consistent philosophies that mesh with your partners, supervisors and state offices. Some tenets you might want to consider:

1. *Dealing with poor bench and on-field or on-court behavior early in the contest.*
2. *Making bench and on-field or on-court behavior a high priority.*
3. *Asking association leaders to work with the administrators and coaches to develop acceptable bench behavior guidelines.*
4. *Working with administrators when behavior starts to get out of control.*
5. *Understanding ourselves—our pressure points, our hot buttons, our responses to stressful situations and our non-verbal messages.*
6. *Discussing sporting behavior in every camp, clinic, and meeting.*
7. *Establishing a benchmark on what is or what is not acceptable to you."*

I wish you all the best and thank you for your dedicated service to the MIAA and student-athletes across the commonwealth.

Best Regards,

Ned Doyle
MIAA Assistant Director

OFFICIAL'S BACKGROUND CHECK UPDATE: The MIAA Board of Directors has approved a policy to conduct background checks for all game officials, beginning in the fall of 2015. The implementation of this policy is currently being developed and more information will be sent to all game officials within the next few weeks. There will be an invitation sent to Board Reps (presidents/secretaries) for a late April summit to discuss the entire policy and to explain implementation procedures.

Sports Specific Tournament Formats



In order to be assigned to tournament events, all game officials are required to be well versed in their sport tournament format. The format is a breakdown of how each sport tournament is run. It's important to remember that each sport has its own format, covering dates, rules, tournament ball agreements, overtime rules, tie breakers, among other things. This information can be found on the [MIAA Tournament Formats](#) page of the MIAA website (miaa.net).

Student and Coach Disqualifications

It is recommended that all game officials carry coach and student disqualification forms with them to each contest. These forms can be found on the [MIAA Game Officials](#) page on the MIAA website. All game officials are required to know all procedures when it comes to disqualifications, including MIAA Handbook Rule 49.1 (pg 48).



Tournament Ball Agreements



All game officials are required to know exactly what tournament ball is to be used during MIAA tournament contests. This information can be found on the [MIAA Game Officials](#) page of the MIAA website.

2015 Spring Sport Rule Highlights

OUTDOOR TRACK



4-3-3, 9-6-3 The prohibition of wearing jewelry has been removed from the rules for track and field and cross country competition. As in previous years, the wearing of a medical alert with the alert visible continues and is encouraged for purposes of risk minimization.

BASEBALL



MLB collision rule applies to home plate ONLY, rule 7.13:

The MLB collision rule will be in affect for plays at home plate only. This rule better explains collisions at home plate.

[Click here for the rule.](#)

The NCAA collision rule (NCAA rule 8, section 7) will be utilized at all other bases.

Refer to the 2015 Baseball format for both rules and clarity for tournament play

LACROSSE



Girls Lacrosse: Dangerous Play

The “win at all costs” mentality affects the safety of all players on the field. The committee asks that coaches teach and encourage appropriate play, players play within the rules, and officials are vigilant in keeping the play safe and fair. Strict enforcement of rules addressing safety is essential, including carding of fouls that are dangerous, intentional or are without any regard for player safety. Please click on the following links to view the [2015 US Girls Lacrosse rule changes](#) and [points of emphasis](#).

Boys Lacrosse: 1-7-3: ART. 3 . Any strings or leathers are limited to a hanging length of 2 inches. All hollow crosse handles must have their open end covered with an end cap manufactured for a lacrosse stick. In both cases, the crosse shall not be considered illegal; however, it shall be removed from the game until corrected. Please click on the following links to view the [2015 NFHS Boys Lacrosse rule changes](#) and [points of emphasis](#).

VOLLEYBALL



Beginning in the 2014 season, it will be required that either the libero or her teammates wear a solid color jersey. The solid-colored uniform must clearly contrast from the predominant color(s) of the teammate(s) jerseys. Predominant colors are those that appear on approximately half of the body of the uniform.

Concussion Information

56.2 Each school's medical person/staff is responsible for the members of that team. These individuals annually must have taken, and been certified in, the NFHS on-line Concussion Course ([click here](#)) or other recognized education program. In the event of injury, that medical person/staff will make the final judgment as to whether a student athlete may return to play (please see Rule 56.4 below regarding concussions). Whenever a medical person is on duty at an athletic event, he/she shall be responsible for both teams (unless the other team has its own medical person present). ***When a physician is not present at an athletic event, a licensed/certified athletic trainer, if available, shall be considered the higher medical authority on-site when an EMT is providing medical coverage at the same event.*** His/her judgment will be final. Physical disqualification by the medical person renders the student ineligible. The Penalty for playing an ineligible student is forfeiture.

56.4 Any student athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the practice or competition and must not return to practice or competition that day, and further shall not return to play until cleared (in writing to the Athletic Director) by an appropriate health-care professional (as determined by the Department of Public Health). Whenever it is decided to disqualify a student-athlete from further participation for a suspected concussion or other injury, the person making that decision must communicate about this matter with the injured athlete's coach and athletic director in a timely fashion.

105 CMR: Department of Public Health – 201.007 (E) Training Program

*“Game officials **shall complete** one of the training programs approved by the Department as specified on the Department's website **annually** and shall provide independent verification of completion of the training program to schools or school districts upon request.”*

The yearly certification requirement is only valid between July 1st and June 30th of a given academic year. In support of Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations cited above, and in the best interests of our student athletes, all MIAA Tournament Directors and Tournament Assignors will require successful completion of a DPH approved concussion training program as a condition for an official accepting an MIAA tournament assignment. Your acceptance of an MIAA Tournament contest assignment will be considered an implicit confirmation that you are a member in good standing with your local board, that you are enrolled with the MIAA, and that you have successfully completed a concussion training program as required by the DPH.

The National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) training module, “Concussions in Sports: What You Need to Know”, is one of the MDPH approved training programs and may be accessed using the link: [Concussions in Sports: What You Need to Know](#)

MIAA Team Sportsmanship Awards



The MIAA would like to encourage game officials to nominate a boys or girls varsity team for consideration by that MIAA Sport Committee for recognition at the MIAA State Championship contest. Nominated teams do not have to be tournament teams but should exemplify the tenets of good sportsmanship to the highest degree. The nomination form information can be found in each sport specific [MIAA Tournament Format](#).

Game Officials Fees

The recommended Game Officials' regular season fees for 2014-2015 will remain the same as the recommended fees from last year, 2013-2014. The entire list of recommended fee's can be found under MIAA Rule 91 (pages 106-107) of the MIAA Handbook.



Contest Officials' Code of Ethics



In 2001, the Officiating Development Alliance, a group of individuals representing various officiating organizations, such as the NFHS, NCAA, ASA, USSF, NFL, NBA, MLB and NASO, developed the *Code of Conduct for Sports Officials*. The *Code* outlines the personal responsibilities officials have to the game. This can be found on page 12 of the MIAA Handbook.