



Winter 2025

MIAA GAME OFFICIALS WINTER SEASON NEWSLETTER

As the winter season begins, I am thankful for the work by our many officials participating in a successful fall season. There were many exciting games throughout the season and the tournament supported by professional officials throughout the state. Preparation for those contests makes a difference.

During the fall I was fortunate to visit with five high schools offering officiating courses during the school day. About 110 students participated in coursework supported by the RefReps curriculum. The students were excited and very interested in the opportunity. As you work in your many contests this year lookout for some of these new officials and consider lending your expertise to their growth. Encouraging these students as well as mentoring others in your chapters is a direct way to increase the number of available officials. When talking to new officials, using your ability to pass along “game experiences” is one of the best vehicles for improvement. Please look to embrace their growth and bring them into the fold learning to be an excellent official.

In this issue are some best practices for assigning and officiating tournament contests. Of course, these are valuable suggestions for all contests throughout the year. As you begin this winter season be sure to look up any sport specific rules in the MIAA Handbook on pages 55-80. This is especially pertinent to overtime rules that have been adopted for MIAA contests. With many officials doing different age levels - town, college and high school, sometimes these procedures can be different. Please be aware of differences between rule making bodies. A quick review of these differences will help when the time comes to make an important distinction.

Mentoring, preparation and continued commitment to the sports you enjoy officiating has a great impact on student athletes and the schools you serve. Thank you for being an important part of MIAA Interscholastic sports.

Richard L. Pearson
Associate Director
MIAA & MSAA



MIAA Tournament Assigning - BEST PRACTICES 2024-2025

As all are aware, rounds prior to the state semi-finals (round of 4) are assigned by the higher seed/home team assignor. This has gone well for the past few years with assignors working to place the best officials on contests during those early rounds. Thank you to all assignors for helping to make the tournament experience a successful opportunity for student athletes.

Many assignors received this same information last year. In preparation for tournament assigning this year, please take a moment to reflect on these “best practices”.

1) Conflict of Interest (COI)

- Be sure to vet the individuals very carefully being assigned to a game.
- All **must** avoid assigning an official who has any connection to a school playing in the contest.

Suggested Procedure:

- ◇ Ask all officials to look at the assigned teams and identify any conflicts they may have – former student of the school, son/daughter attends school, close relative associated with school, ever employed by school, to name a few.
- ◇ Ask the official to immediately inform you of this conflict and agree to switch out for another assignment.
- ◇ Assignors could also ask, in advance, any official being considered to send back a clear list of COI.

2) Make sure all assigned officials are approved through the MIAA ArbiterSports Database

- Additional requirements set forth in the MIAA Handbook (Rule 91.1):
 - ◇ Be at least 18 years of age.
 - ◇ Be a certified member of a MIAA-recognized officials' group for the specified sport.
- Be sure the official has met sport specific guidelines (for example – field hockey officials must have officiated in at least 7 varsity games during the season)

3) Be certain all officials understand the sport format and MIAA sport specific handbook rules.

- Have a copy of the Sport Format on their person at every assignment.
- Have NFHS rule book (or equivalent) on their person at the contest.
- Have a copy of the sport specific pages from the MIAA Handbook on their person; **very important!**
- Always have any other forms (DQ, etc.) ready and on person at contest

4) Assigning yourself to contests

- After much discussion it has been strongly recommended to not assign yourself to **assignments you are responsible for**, and definitely not when only one of the teams in the game is assigned by you during the regular season. The suggestion would be to work with other local assignors you have a relationship with and consider working that game(s)



MIAA Tournament Assigning - BEST PRACTICES 2024-2025

- 5) Work to spread out assignments.
 - Try to include as many different qualified officials as possible.
 - Try to avoid duplicating multiple assignments for one person.
 - In particular, your best officials whom you will recommend to final two rounds would be best to not duplicate in earlier rounds; it is not guaranteed they will be assigned but if they are, having duplicated them (or more) in previous round has them working 2, 3 or 4 tournament games.
- 6) Do not ask coaches for suggestions.
 - There is not a coaches recommendation protocol for tournament assignment; please do not engage in discussion with coaches about whom should be assigned to their contests.
 - Use your evaluation system to assign the best and most neutral officials to each game.
- 7) Recommendations to MIAA State Assignor
 - Be sure to meet the deadlines for recommending officials to the State Assignor
 - ALL assignors must send recommendations as requested; it is not helpful for an assignor to avoid providing recommendations to the State Assignor
 - Rank/give feedback to the State Assignor as requested; some responses in the past have not been clear as to detailing your best officials for semi-final and state final assignment.
 - Work with State Assignors to send along, as requested, names of officials previously assigned in the tournament, especially Round of 8 assignments.
 - Set expectations for your group of officials. Recommending officials does not guarantee an assignment.

Overtime and Suspended Play Quick Reference Document

Athletic directors, coaches, fans, and officials have asked for a quick reference document to access overtime procedures and suspension of play rules. Throughout the years, there have been different NFHS and MIAA specific rules. Now there is a compiled document that can be accessed via the MIAA website. You can access this document by [CLICKING HERE](#). The document contains information about suspended play rules as well as regular season and post-season overtime procedures. This document was compiled to clarify when NFHS rules apply and to also clarify if there is a state association adoption of a specific suspended play/overtime rule. When you view this document you will see strikethroughs when there **IS NOT** a state association adoption, thereby the NFHS rule fully applies.



2024 WINTER SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

BASKETBALL

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Warnings for delaying game
- Faking being fouled - [CLICK HERE](#) for more

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Limits use of electronic devices
- Clarification to and addition of new penalties

Visit the [NFHS Basketball](#) page for additional information...

Visit the [MIAA Basketball](#) page for local rules and information...

GYMNASTICS

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Sportsmanship
- Superior Credit

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- A number of scoring changes
- Allowance of additional padding for some events

Visit the [NFHS Gymnastics](#) page for additional information...

Visit the [MIAA Gymnastics](#) page for local rules and information...

ICE HOCKEY

Point of Emphasis

NFHS Ice Hockey Rule 3 Sect. 4 Art. 4:

... All players shall properly wear a neck laceration protector that shall not be modified from its original manufactured state and shall be worn as intended by the manufacturer. If a player's neck laceration protector is not being worn, or comes off while play is in progress, an official shall order the player to return to the player's bench and play may continue. If the player does not comply, play shall be stopped, and that player shall be penalized. PENALTY: MINOR.

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Requirement of neck laceration protection
- Puck control modification

Visit the [NFHS Ice Hockey](#) page for additional information...

Visit the [MIAA Ice Hockey](#) page for local rules and information...



2024 WINTER SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

INDOOR TRACK

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Excused athletes
- Time limits in vertical jumps
- False starts

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Time limit guidance
- Various edits to help officials manage events

Visit the [NFHS Track & Field/Cross Country](#) page for additional information...

Visit the [MIAA Track & Cross Country](#) page for local rules and information...

SWIMMING & DIVING

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Risk minimization & athlete well-being
- Use of electronic devices

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Removal of the word “clerical” from official’s authority over a meet

Visit the [NFHS Swimming & Diving](#) page for additional information...

Visit the [MIAA Swimming & Diving](#) page for local rules and information...

WRESTLING

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Stalling & Stalemate
- Dangerous moves & holds
- Use of proper terms: default, forfeit, medical forfeit
- Referee’s duties
- Imminent scoring

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Only one point of contact required to be in-bounds - [CLICK HERE](#) for more

- Redefinition of how near-fall points are awarded
- Takedown points increased from 2 to 3

Visit the [NFHS Wrestling](#) page for additional information...

Visit the [MIAA Wrestling](#) page for local rules and information...



CONGRATULATIONS 2023-24 GAME OFFICIALS OF THE YEAR

The MIAA would like to send their warmest congratulations to the recipients of these distinguished awards. Each individual will be honored at the Annual MIAA Game Official of the Year Banquet on December 16, 2024.

Frank Lawler	Baseball
Owen Shanahan	Boys Basketball
Greg Meininger	Boys Ice Hockey
Sean Murphy	Boys Lacrosse
Mike Gulla	Boys Soccer
Kyle Wescott	Boys Volleyball
Steve Cherella	Boys Wrestling
James Morris	Cross Country
Melissa Levine	Field Hockey
Joe Lavoie	Football
Michelle Anzalone	Girls Basketball
Michelle Nietsche	Girls Gymnastics
Brian Doherty	Girls Ice Hockey
Sharon Feid	Girls Lacrosse
Jose Isidro	Girls Soccer
Steven Wall	Girls Volleyball
Anne Bernazzani	Indoor Track
Albert Provost	Outdoor Track
Tom Beriau	Rugby
Michael Lasorsa	Softball
Stephen Davidson	Swimming & Diving
Jennifer Kelly	Swimming & Diving

**Nominate a deserving official for the 2024-2025
Game Official of Year today!**

[CLICK HERE](#) to get started



Student and Coach Contest Disqualifications Forms

Please make sure to use the most up-to-date version of the MIAA Student and Coach Contest Disqualification Forms. These forms were updated in August 2023 and are available in the [“Officials” section](#) of the MIAA website. When a student or coach is disqualified from a contest, the required form must be completed by the game official and submitted to the athletic director in charge of the contest before leaving the site. Below are links to each form:

[Student Contest Disqualification Form](#)

[Coach Contest Disqualification Form](#)

Please note - All fields within the form are required to be completed by the game official, as well as a description of the disqualification including the violation called. Forms submitted with incomplete information may be returned.

Rule 49 of the MIAA Handbook details the responsibilities of officials, students, coaches, and athletic directors relative to sportsmanship expectations as well as submission of forms listed above. Below is the portion of the rule pertaining to game officials.

49. Sportsmanship: Athlete and Coach Contest Disqualifications/Suspensions

49.1 Game Officials' Responsibilities

- 49.1.1 The contest official who disqualifies a student or coach under the provision of this rule must immediately inform the coach of each team, official scorer (if any), and state the violation. The contest official(s) must complete the coach/student contest disqualification forms before leaving the site of the contest.
- 49.1.2 If the game official fails to file the written coach/student contest disqualification form, the individual is nevertheless bound by the suspension. An official who fails to complete the required disqualification form shall be suspended from officiating any MIAA contest in that sport for at least two weeks or until the form is completed and received by the principal of the disqualified athlete or coach.
- 49.1.3 Judgments of game officials are not subject to appeal or review. *Refer to 49.3.10 & 49.4.10 for additional information.*
- 49.1.4 Fighting and unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will always be within the authority of the game official. The game official's authority extends to pre-game and post-game oversight.
- 49.1.5 Additional reasons that an official may disqualify a student or coach from a contest outside of sport codes that would lead to a game disqualification are:
- Fighting
 - Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct which is defined but not limited to violent action toward a player, official, or spectator, the use of foul or abusive language, taunting, trash talk, and the like.



MAKE THE RIGHT CALL BECOME A HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIAL

BE THE DIFFERENCE MAKER YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS

GET STARTED



If you know of someone who would be a great fit as an official or has some initial interest, send them to <https://highschoolofficials.com/>

REGISTER AS AN OFFICIAL TODAY!

Register Annually through *ArbiterSports* once per year by [CLICKING HERE](#) - registration opened in July

MIAA Annual Registration Deadlines

To be eligible for MIAA Tournament assignments, all officials must complete annual sport registration. Seasonal Registration will close on the following dates:

Winter Season - Jan. 15

Spring Season - May 1

Background checks are valid for three years.

