



Spring 2026

## MIAA GAME OFFICIALS SPRING SEASON NEWSLETTER

As we begin the final season of the 2025-26 school year I again thank you for all of your efforts this year and for the upcoming season.

If this is your first season officiating, welcome to an exciting opportunity to make a difference for MIAA high school athletes. Annual spring season registration is open now and closes on May 1. Please do not wait until the last day and then miss the deadline.

The end of the year is always a time to reflect and if you have officiated during a previous season, think of how you can end this year strong! What can I do to close out on a high? Bringing the best of you to serve the sport you enjoy and work to create the best environment for athletic competition should be your driving force to the end!

At the close of this school year, the summer months might allow you to prepare ahead for the next school year. I know many of you work year-round to become the best you can be. I am aware that boards lead their officials through training opportunities and rule updates. Any preparation that you and your board can do in advance of next year will certainly help strengthen the officials in your region. Please continue to build professional growth for all.

During the past few years, I have mentioned the RefReps officiating curriculum. This year I have been fortunate to visit classrooms and speak with many students learning the rules of the game in multiple sports. In the fall semester of this school year, I visited 13 schools and spoke with approximately 240 students. This spring semester I have already visited 4 schools and about 60 students. It was a great opportunity to discuss the value and need for officials. As I said to them, when you officiate, you teach the game, you are the expert on the rules, and the games cannot be played without you. The students have been interested and very receptive for the future opportunity to officiate.

It is my hope and I am sure the hope of our MIAA schools, that many of the experienced officials will help to support the growth of these new officials. If you have a chance to work a game as a “mentor” official, please do. In a previous newsletter I suggested that facilitating the learning of the rules independently or with some guidance, then creating a greater emphasis on mentoring may prove to be an impactful approach.

With the support of the MIAA Board of Directors and the annual partnership with *RefReps*, we have been able to offer 20 schools 10 seat licenses to jump start their in-school program. Let’s all try to increase the opportunity thereby increasing the early excitement of officiating!

Thank you for being a very important part of Massachusetts’ interscholastic sports. Your professionalism and hard work make a difference for thousands of young athletes!

Richard L. Pearson  
MIAA Associate Executive Director



# MIAA Tournament Assigning - BEST PRACTICES

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

- 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.



# 2026 SPRING SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

## BASEBALL

### Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Discipline - respecting decisions of umpires
- Bench decorum/sportsmanship
- Proper pitching positions
- Running lane awareness

### Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Double first base mandatory starting January 1, 2027
- Clarification of player-to-player meetings
- Clarification of allowable use of audio or video feeds

- Clarification of what is allowed on school's official baseball uniform

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

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

## LACROSSE - BOYS

### Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Properly Wearing Equipment
- Personal Foul – Contact with the Head/Neck
- Sportsmanship and Role of Head Coach
- Pregame Responsibilities

### Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Establishes that an interrupted game that cannot be resumed on the same day is considered complete if 75% of playing time has elapsed.
- Allows an official to assess a delay of game penalty if player positioning on the face off must be adjusted repeatedly.

- Reclassifies the foul for a player, other than the properly equipped goalkeeper, that enters the crease with the intent to block a shot as a personal foul for illegal equipment.

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

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



# 2026 SPRING SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

## LACROSSE - GIRLS

### Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Identifying and Managing Fouls During Scoring Plays
- Efficient Draw Administration
- Delay of Game/Use of the Green Card

### Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- No on-field player can wear an audio or video device during the game.
- Stick checks may be requested at any point during a quarter break, halftime, a team time-out,

prior to the start of an overtime period, prior to the start of a draw, and immediately following goals in regulation and overtime periods.

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

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

## RUGBY

MIAA high school rugby is governed by the **World Rugby Laws of the Game** [CLICK HERE](#) for 2026 Law Book

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

## SOFTBALL

### Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Obstruction
- Maintaining an Unobstructed View

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

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

### Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- No player shall transmit or record audio or video from the playing surface.
- Umpires have the option of wearing heather gray, charcoal gray, or navy blue slacks. Effective January 1, 2027, heather gray slacks will no longer be permitted as part of the umpire's uniform.



# 2026 SPRING SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

## TENNIS

High School Tennis Rules are found in the **USTA Friend At Court rulebook** - [CLICK HERE](#)

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

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

## TRACK & FIELD

**Points of Emphasis** - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Throws Safety – Shot Put, Discus and Javelin
- Restricted Areas
- Protest/Appeal Process

race, trial, or while in restricted areas.

- Clarifies that the time limit for a consecutive attempt applies within a height and at a height change.

**Rules Revisions** - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Permits the Games Committee to determine takeoff board placement in horizontal jumps.
- Clarifies athletes are not permitted to wear any type of audio or video recording devices during a

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

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

## VOLLEYBALL

**Points of Emphasis** - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Lineup Card
- Ball Handling
- First Referee Assigning Line Judges
- Uniforms - Contrasting Colors

tact fault in a single attempt to play the ball on the second team hit if the ball is next contacted by a teammate

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

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

**Rules Revisions** - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, state associations may adopt the use of a non-smooth or textured volleyball
- Eliminates the judgment call of a multiple con-



# CONGRATULATIONS 2024-25 GAME OFFICIALS OF THE YEAR

The MIAA would like to send their warmest congratulations to the recipients of these distinguished awards. Each individual was honored at the Annual MIAA Game Official of the Year Banquet on December 15, 2025.

Andrew Rogers	Baseball
Cole McKenney	Boys Basketball
John Kreider	Girls Basketball
Helen Gregory	Cross Country
Laura Lasa	Field Hockey
Paul Sarno	Football
Joseph Flynn	Boys Ice Hockey
Steve Foley	Girls Ice Hockey
Patrick O'Connor	Indoor Track & Field
George Shaheen	Boys Lacrosse
Margaret Curtis	Girls Lacrosse
Brian Moody	Outdoor Track & Field
Michael Rudzinsky	Rugby
Jason Dizak	Boys Soccer
Beth Lepore	Girls Soccer
Kathy Searl	Softball
Kelly Pierce	Swimming & Diving
Chuck Nugent	Swimming & Diving
Ted Wilcox	Girls Volleyball
Jeff Zinchuk	Boys Volleyball
Ed Barrett	Wrestling



# STUDENT AND COACH CONTEST DISQUALIFICATION FORMS

Updated **MIAA Student and Coach Contest Disqualification Forms** are available in the "**Officials**" section of the MIAA website. These forms were updated in June 2025 following approved changes to MIAA Handbook Rule 49. Below are essential reminders for game officials regarding the required completion and submission of these forms when a student or coach disqualification occurs:

1. 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.**
2. Officials must complete **all fields** (**student name, uniform number, grade, school, etc.**) within the form, including a description of the circumstances resulting in the disqualification **and the specific violation called.** Please note that the official's signature and name are required at the bottom of the form.
3. There are three specific check boxes on the student form that should **only be utilized** to indicate violations of MIAA Handbook Rules **49.3.6, 49.3.8 or 49.3.9**. These specific rules generate suspensions greater than one game. Please review these scenarios and corresponding rules below.  
**Please check below ONLY if the disqualification was issued for the following actions:**
  - Was the violation for fighting, punching or kicking an opposing player, or spitting at someone?  
(Rule 49.3.6 – 2 Game Suspension)
  - Was the violation for physically assaulting an official?  
(Rule 49.3.8 – \*Recommended One-Year Suspension)
  - Was the violation for willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempting to injure an opponent?  
(Rule 49.3.9 – \*Recommended One-Year Suspension)
4. Per MIAA Handbook Rule 49.1.3, "Judgments of game officials are not subject to appeal or review." Therefore, the MIAA **does not permit** the review of video footage and/or requests to appeal or reconsider a disqualification. MIAA staff relies solely on the information provided by game officials on the contest disqualification forms and does not have the authority to overturn or reconsider a call made by a game official.

For additional information regarding the responsibilities of game officials when a student or coach contest disqualification occurs, please refer to **MIAA Handbook Rule 49.1** (pages 40-41).



# STUDENT AND COACH CONTEST DISQUALIFICATION FORMS

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**

[CLICK HERE](#)

### 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:

**Spring Season - May 1**

*Background checks are valid for three years.*

