



# THE OFFICIAL WORD

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A Publication of the Montana Officials' Association

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## HITTING THE MARK

It is hard to believe we are heading towards post season play for our fall activities. From most reports, the fall season has gone well so far (especially with the limited smoke we experienced this year compared to last fall).

**Universal Athletic / MOA** – The Montana Officials Association (MOA) has entered into an agreement with Universal Athletic, a Montana based sporting goods dealer, to be the official supplier of officiating apparel and accessories for MOA members. Universal Athletic has been the long-time t-shirt concession vendor for Montana High School Association state tournaments. The MHS/ MOA has been pleased with the first year of this relationship. Universal Athletic will stock product locally and will also offer a wide variety of officials merchandise on a custom website at [www.universalathletic.com/moa](http://www.universalathletic.com/moa). Universal Athletic's goal is to provide high quality products and service to allow the officials to look consistently professional, feel more comfortable, and have a reliable product they can depend on for multiple seasons. The MOA encourages officials to use this site because a percentage of sales will be returned to the MOA. Those monies will be used strictly for MOA purposes including recruiting and retention of officials, the Respect Officials Campaign and other appropriate MOA initiatives. Officials can still purchase items from their dealer of choice however please check out the site and consider using the MOA official supplier.

**Rule Enforcement** - It is important to enforce all NFHS and MOA rules. The following rules have been violated this year and in the past. I attribute some of the violations to inexperienced coaching staffs and some first-time administrators. However, it is especially concerning that some of these violations were endorsed /approved by the officiating crew. Some examples this year and from previous years are:

- Officials agreeing to officiate a contest where one team asked to use non-MHSA approved eighth graders, so the varsity team would not have to forfeit
- Officials allowing players to have piercings or illegal headbands because the coach has a doctor's note. The school must submit the doctor's note to the MHSA office for review and if we do approve we will send a letter for the coach to carry to show the officials. **However, the Executive Board approved,**

during their September meeting, allowing schools to submit a request on behalf of an individual to have a Daith piercing (Daith Only) to the Executive Director for review. If approved, a letter would be in the possession of the coach.

- Some coaches at sub varsity football games requested to play an extra quarter or quarters to get the players more time (violation of NFHS, MHS/ MOA rules).
- In volleyball, even though the officials should not be involved, we have had officials state it was acceptable for teams in Class C to start more than two players from the sub varsity match in the varsity contest.
- We have had MOA members work with non-MOA's during varsity contests (the contests should not have been played).
- Six-player football – only three officials worked the varsity game when four are required (the game shouldn't have been played).

These are just a few examples and, once again, I want to relate the seriousness of these situations if some incident had taken place during the contests that could have precipitated legal action against the administrations of the schools involved and the game officials for violating MHS/ MOA policy. Violations of MHS/ MOA rules and policies are extremely serious, and noncompliance can place the school, coach and official in a precarious legal position. Also, there could be a question on whether MHS/ MOA catastrophic and concussion insurance coverage would be in effect in a situation where properly certified officials were not used, or rules and policies have been purposely disregarded.

**NFHS Network** – Continuing in partnership, the MHS/ MOA and the NFHS Network are excited to build on the success of the past four school years of high school post season broadcasts. Also, many schools are members of the School Broadcast Program (SBP) and have approval to stream their regular season games on the NFHS Network. Once again, the NFHS Network will video stream live MHS/ MOA state championship games/meets in numerous sports throughout the entire year. The games will be available by subscription pay and can be accessed through [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org). **Remember that officials are not allowed to wear microphones, cameras etc. during any MHS/ MOA contest.**

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 again this year we have placed those explanations on the MOA Central Hub, on the sport specific page.

Mark Beckman, MOA Commissioner

#### **MOVING?**

You say you've moved? Well, LET US KNOW! You can notify us of address changes by calling Dani Cummings at 442-6010, emailing the information to [dcummings@mhsa.org](mailto:dcummings@mhsa.org) or mailing a change of address card to the MHSa Office. There is also a change of address form on the [MOA Central Hub](#). Just fill it out and fax (442-8250), mail or scan and email it to us. **Updating your information in Arbiter does NOT update our MOA database – please be certain to forward any changes to the MOA Office.**

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.

#### **WINTER SPORTS EXAM DATES**

##### **Basketball and Wrestling**

Nov 26 - Dec 17, 2018 – **Apprentice Exam**

Nov 26 – Dec 3, 2018 – **Certified and Master Exam**

Exams for all sports are administered exclusively online. If you are registered to take the exam, detailed instructions will be sent via email to the email address you provided on your registration form. If you do not receive these instructions by the opening date of the exam or have any questions regarding the online testing process, please call Dani Cummings at 406-442-6010.

**NOTE: If you wish to take the upgrade exam you must notify the MHSa office, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to day the test opens.** A request for upgrade form is available on the MOA Central Hub, or we will be happy to fax or email the form to you. Please contact Dani with those requests. Upon receipt of your upgrade request, your name will automatically be added to the test list if everything is in order. If there is a problem with your request 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 prior to the published deadline; 3) pay annual MOA dues by June 1<sup>st</sup>; 4) complete yearly concussion training prior to the published deadline or 5) receive a favorable evaluation from your regional evaluation committee.

#### **WINTER RULES CLINICS ONLINE**

The MHSa/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 MHSa office. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLINICS MUST BE VIEWED BY November 30, 2018 TO SATISFY YOUR 2018-19 RULES CLINIC REQUIREMENT WHETHER YOU WILL OFFICIATE BY THAT DATE OR NOT.** We strongly suggest you print the confirmation email and keep a copy as proof of your clinic attendance.

#### **CONCUSSION TRAINING**

The online concussion course must be viewed *every year*, after June 1<sup>st</sup>, for an official to be eligible for the coming school year. ***The deadline for viewing the course will coincide with the deadline for viewing the rules clinic for each sport, whether you will officiate by that date or not.*** For officials who work more than one sport, you must complete the concussion course by the rules clinic deadline for your first sport of the year. The concussion course must be completed only once per school year, but it must be completed before officiating any high school scrimmage or game. The penalty for not completing the concussion clinic by the deadline will be immediate suspension from the MOA until proof of concussion training is produced. Also, as with rules clinic deadlines, *if you fail to complete concussion training prior to the published deadline, you will incur a loss of rating and loss of eligibility for post season assignment. The MOA official, by Montana state law, cannot work any scrimmage or contest until the concussion clinic has been viewed.*

#### **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. If we do not receive the reports in the appropriate time frame, we cannot send the report to schools in a timely fashion. Reports that are 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](mailto:bmichelotti@mhsa.org).

#### **EJECTION PROCESS & PROCEDURE**

Please remember it is important, in most situations, to talk briefly with the other official or with other members of the crew about ejecting a participant. 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. Sport-specific and MHSA rules do not allow ejections to be overturned by game officials. 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 MHSA within 48 hours and direct any questions to the MHSA or your local regional director after the incident. Refrain from commentary on the MHSA 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.

## ***VOLLEYBALL INFORMATION AND RULES CLARIFICATIONS***

### **Jewelry:**

Just a reminder, the wearing of jewelry in warm-ups as well as during competition is prohibited. If a referee observes a player in warm-ups wearing jewelry, the head coach of that player shall be notified and have her withdrawn from participating until the jewelry is removed. It is preferred the contact be only with the head coach. There is no further action necessary unless the player does not remove the jewelry and is charged with unsporting conduct with a card issued at the start of set. Remember that tape can't be used to cover jewelry. **The daith piercing for migraines is an earring and considered to be jewelry, therefore illegal unless approval has been given by the Executive Director and the coach has a letter stating such.**

### **Reminder – Hair control devices:**

In an effort to allow a practical means of controlling a player's hair, provided the item used does not pose concern of injury to the player, NFHS Volleyball Rules permit the wearing of unadorned, flat barrettes no longer than two inches to be worn along with bobby pins and flat clips. The NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee feels that these items do not create a concern for risk of injury and can securely be fastened and serve as an efficient means to control a player's hair. **A volleyball player can wear a hair control device made of soft material and no more than three inches wide.** Reflective material or sequins,

on headbands, should not be hard, unyielding or easily removed. If a legal item worn in the hair becomes loose and falls to the floor and this becomes a problem because the contest is being delayed to resolve the problem, the R1 may call unnecessary delay and the player must correct the problem before returning to play.

**Re-serves:** Rule 8-1-5 and 6 states... "Each player may have only one re-serve during a team's term of service. A re-serve shall be called when the server releases the ball for service, then catches it or drops it to the floor. The first referee shall cancel the serve and direct a second and last attempt at serve. The server is allowed a new five seconds for the re-serve. A re-serve is considered to be part of a single attempt to serve." **A tossed ball that contacts a backboard or its supports hanging in a vertical position over the serving area is a service fault and not eligible for a reserve.**

**Captains:** Rule 1-6-2 continues to allow a team to have more than one captain at the pre-match conference. This more accurately reflects what many states (including Montana) already permit by allowing more than one captain to attend the pre-match conference as many teams have co-captains. The head coach and captain(s) from each team must attend the pre-match conference. Remember by MHSA guidelines, the volleyball prematch conference (with the head coaches and captains) and coin toss will occur when the twenty (20) minute warm-up countdown reaches minute sixteen (16).

## ***FOOTBALL INFORMATION***

### **Targeting**

During the 2018 season, we continue to get many questions and concerns about targeting in high school football. The problem is there is confusion on how to apply this rule and part of this appears to be a misunderstanding due to the differences between the NFHS, NCAA and NFL rule.

Let's focus on the NFHS rule regarding targeting:

Rule 2-20-2 defines targeting as an act by any player who takes aim and initiates contact against an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist, elbow or shoulders.

Here is how the foul should be penalized. Rule 9-4-3m states that no player or nonplayer shall Target an opponent. If this occurs, this is a personal foul and it would be a 15-yard penalty.

Now, disqualification could also occur if the foul is judged by the game official to be flagrant. In summary there are 2 types of targeting:

- Targeting – No ejection - An opponent makes contact against an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist elbow or shoulders (15 Yard Penalty).
- Targeting – Ejection – An opponent makes contact against an opponent above the shoulders with the helmet, forearm, hand, fist elbow or shoulders. Here are examples of situations that may warrant an ejection (15 Yard Penalty and ejection for unsportsmanlike conduct):
  - A player launches himself into the opponent in a forceful manner
  - An official judges there is an intent to harm or injure
  - A flagrant hit

### **Attempting the Try?**

With the post season fast approaching, we have had several questions regarding end of the game procedures. The question is if a team scores on the last play of the game or when a team scores on the last possession to win the game in overtime, should a try be attempted? Rule 8-3-1 states the following:

ART. 1 . . . After a touchdown, the scoring team shall attempt a try during which the ball is snapped from a spot designated by A anywhere between the hash marks on B's 3-yard line, unless moved by penalty. This involves a scrimmage down which is neither numbered nor timed.

EXCEPTION: If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period, the try shall not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

Note the exception in this rule states that the try should not be attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying. Officials must instruct the scoring team that they are to attempt the try because officials do not and should not have any idea what the post season tie breaking procedure is for each classification or conference. If the scoring team informs the officials that they will not be attempting the try; the game is over and the try is not to be attempted.

### **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.

## ***SOCCKER SEASON CONCLUDES IN OCTOBER***

This year's state soccer finals for Classes AA and A will be held this month.

### ***Class A Playoff Structure***

- October 8-13 – First Round
- October 15-20 – Semi Final Round
- October 25-27 – Championship Games
- Higher seeded teams will host

### ***Class AA***

- Playoffs held October 15-20
- October 25-27
- Eleven games per gender. Requires 18-20 officials.
- Siebel Fields - Helena

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 MHSAA office with input from the local administrators/pools.

## ***FALL RULES CLINIC SUMMARY***

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

### **FOOTBALL:**

Total	
Officials	412
Coaches/Administrators	748

### **SOCCKER:**

Total	
Officials	122
Coaches/Administrators	150

### **VOLLEYBALL:**

Total	
Officials	289
Coaches/Administrators	488

### **ENCLOSURES:**

*Basketball Rule Book, [Rules Revisions](#) & Preseason Guide*

*Wrestling Rule Book, Case Book/Officials' Manual, [Rules Revisions](#) & Preseason Guide*

*[Basketball](#) Preseason Information*

*[Winter Sports Online Rules Clinic Instructions](#)*

*[Concussion Training Information and Instructions](#)*