HITTING THE MARK

Fall activities are under way! Last year we had a reprieve from smoke-filled air and hot weather but they are back this year with a vengeance. However, the smoke-filled air and warm temperatures have not stifled the enthusiasm shown by participants during the beginning of another fall season.

The MHSA Executive Board recently met and a couple issues that were discussed during their meeting are relevant to MOA officials. First, in regard to cancellations resulting from air quality issues, the Board confirmed that officials must be paid appropriate mileage for traveling to game sites even though the contest was postponed while at the site. MOA rules state that officials will also be paid one half game fee if they are present and were not notified of the cancellation. In some cases games were cancelled after the latest air quality report was reviewed with all participants ready to play and even though officials were present the game wasn’t postponed without notice so schools would not be obligated to pay the half game fee. If schools decide to pay this half game fee there is no violation of MOA rules. These games, more than likely, will be made up using officials from the same pool. The Board and staff appreciates the officials understanding that every intention was to play the game, but because of the smoke level in the air at game time the contest(s) could not be played that day. If you have any questions concerning smoke-related issues please contact me.

Second, the Board heard reports that during the beginning of fall sports seasons there have been numerous taunting violations by participants in fall sports contests. Some of those violations are being called, but some are not being appropriately penalized by officials or dealt with by coaches and school administration. The Board has directed that all taunting violations be immediately penalized by game officials according to the appropriate rules code and that coaches and administrators deal with the violators appropriately. Section (33) Sportsmanship Guidelines, Coaching Staff, # 3 in the MHSA Handbook states, “Discipline those players who display unsportsmanlike behavior. If necessary, forfeit their privileges of representing the school”.

As this season progresses it is important that schools and local officials’ pools work together when scheduling officials for contests now and throughout the year. As most of you have come to realize, there is a shortage of officials in some areas and for some sports. If schools and officials’ pools cooperate in scheduling game times and even possibly adjusting game days, contests can be covered adequately. I have received numerous calls from both school administrators and from officials expressing their appreciation for the cooperation exhibited in the scheduling, and sometimes the rescheduling of contests to accommodate the availability of officials. The MHSA appreciates these cooperative efforts between administrators and officials. But, if there are any major problems or conflicts with the scheduling of contests that cannot be solved between schools and officials’ pools, please contact the MHSA office and hopefully we can help facilitate a solution to the problem. I have also shared this information with all MHSA superintendents, principals and activities directors in my September Quick Bits article. Also, this a reminder that MOA officials are required to display the MOA patch on their shirt whenever working any MHSA contest. MOA Handbook, XII. Official Uniform, B. The MOA patch must be displayed on the left breast of the official’s uniform. A black jacket is the mandatory jacket for all indoor sports. Embroidered patches are acceptable as long as they are black with white background and the same size as the current patch (1 3/4” x 3”). The penalty for failure to display the MOA patch is misconduct, MOA Handbook, XIX. Misconduct by Officials, 12. Failure to wear the proper MOA uniform including failure to wear the MOA patch.

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

WINTER SPORTS EXAM DATES

Basketball and Wrestling
Nov 19 - Dec 10, 2012 – Apprentice Exam
Nov 26 – Dec 3, 2012 – Certified and Master Exam
**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, 2012 TO SATISFY YOUR 2012-13 RULES CLINIC REQUIREMENT. We strongly suggest you print the verification page and keep a copy as proof of your clinic attendance.

**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.

**EJECTION PROCESS & PROCEDURE**

Please remember it is important, in most situations, to talk briefly about ejecting a participant with the other official or with other members of the crew. 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 unsportsman 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.

**FOOTBALL INFORMATION**

**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 halftime is expired. MHSA halftimes are 12 minutes except for special situations mentioned below. It is important for officials to communicate that game management should notify both teams when there are three minutes left in the intermission (See table 3-1 below from the NFHS Football Rule Book).

Schools, however, do have the option of using longer halftimes because of homecoming or parents’ night, and officials should encourage this option. 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.

**Smart phone App for Coaches, Administrators and Officials:**

For your information, a new smart phone application for coaches, administrators and officials created by Vanderbilt University is now available and offers real-time information on heat index and lightning strikes at your location. The app is free and available for the iPhone and Android and is called CoachSmart. Use of this app by school personnel is strictly a local school district decision but we wanted to share this technology with you.

**Mixing Playing Rules in a MHSA Contest (11 to 8 or 8 to 6):**

We have had many questions lately from schools wanting to play sub varsity games against teams from a different classification. Many times schools want to mix playing rules (Play eleven player football on offense and eight player on defense). We do not allow mixing of playing rules in any MHSA contests (11 to 8 or 8 to 6).

Schools that would like to schedule a game that crosses over to a different level of football need to send in a formal request to the MHSA. Also, MOA officials should not work these contests without written permission from the MHSA.
because of liability concerns. If an official or pool is contacted to work a game that mixes NFHS rules, please contact the MHSA office to verify that the schools have followed the proper procedure for a waiver and at what level the game was approved for play.

The reasons for not allowing schools to mix playing rules include:

- It would be very challenging for officials to switch between playing rules.
- It would be very complicated to operate two sets of chains. 6-player has 15 yard line to gain and 8 and 11 player has 10 yard line to gain.
- On pass plays, rules for eligible receivers vary significantly for the three different types of football.
- Football field dimensions differ from the 11 player game versus the 8 and 6 player game.
- Liability issues in regard to a lack of definite playing rules – Coaches and Officials would be subjected to that liability.

We have even had a Montana team that wanted to attempt to play 9-player football against another Montana team, which is an extremely serious violation of MHSA Rules because we do not even sanction 9-player football. Please contact Brian at the MHSA office if you have any questions or would like to play an opponent from another level of football.

**FALL RULES CLINIC SUMMARY**

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

**FOOTBALL:**
- Total: 1044
  - Officials: 374
  - Coaches/Administrators: 670

**VOLLEYBALL:**
- Total: 772
  - Officials: 302
  - Coaches/Administrators: 470

**SOCCER:**
- Total: 297
  - Officials: 135
  - Coaches/Administrators: 162

**VOLLEYBALL INFORMATION AND RULES CLARIFICATIONS**

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 NFHS/MHSA guidelines, the coin flip is done after the pre-match conference. After the coin flip, the warm-up period will begin.

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, a coach of that player shall be notified of the player wearing jewelry and have her withdrawn from participation until the jewelry is removed. It is preferred the contact be 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.

**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 two 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 remove the item?

**Assistant Coaches Standing Limitations (Rule 12-2-5):** Only head coaches are allowed to stand during the match. Assistant coaches are not allowed to stand during play. Assistant coaches shall remain seated on the bench during a set except to:

- a. Ask the second referee, during a dead-ball situation, to review the accuracy of the score, verify the number of time-outs used, the serving order of his/her team, or to verify the proper server for the opponent;
- b. Stand at the bench to greet a replaced player;
- c. Confer with players during time-outs;
- d. Spontaneously react to an outstanding play by a member(s) of their own team;
- e. Attend an injured player with permission of a referee.

**Logged Waistband:** Continuous logoed waistbands are not legal per NFHS Rule 4-2-9, which states... “A single partial/whole manufacturer’s logo/trademark/reference, no more than 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension more than 2 ¼ inches, is permitted on each piece of the uniform provided placement does not interfere with the visibility of the player’s number.” If a player wearing an illegal uniform attempts to enter the set, unnecessary delay shall be assessed to the team. The player shall not enter the set until the illegal uniform is replaced or made legal.

**Re-serves:** Rule 8-2-5 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.”

**Officials’ Signals:** Official’s signals are the main source of communication with coaches, players, fellow officials and fans. Signals are intended to clearly communicate violations and results and should be precise and clearly visible. The referees should not underestimate the importance of their signals. A referee should review the signals to be certain he/she is comfortable with the signals, when a signal should be used and uses the proper mechanics. Signals should also be reviewed during the prematch referees’ conference. Special attention should be given to reviewing signals such as the proper technique and hand placement for the line violation (signal #2) and ball lands in bounds (signal #13), as well as the situations in which ball touched (signal #10) and out-of-bounds (signal #14) should be used.

**BASKETBALL RULES CLARIFICATIONS**

**Team Control Clarification:** Rule 4-19-7 has been revised to read: A team-control foul is a common foul committed by a team that has team control, including a member of the throw-in team from the start of the throw-in until player control is obtained inbounds. The addition of the statement, including a member of the throw-in team from the start of the throw-in until player control is obtained inbounds, allows all rules affected by the team-control definition change last season to revert to their previous verbiage and brings the rule in line with the interpretations that were released last year. Now, on a team-control foul, the rule clearly states that team-control includes a member of the throw-in team from the start of the throw-in until player control is obtained inbounds.

**Clarification:** Arm compression sleeves, if worn, can be white, black, beige or a single solid school color, shall have only a single manufacturer’s logo that does not exceed 2½ square inches, shall be the same color for each team member but need not be the same color as the headband/wristband color. This clarification should make enforcement of arm compression sleeves rules more consistent for officials. Arm compression sleeves must still be worn for medical purposes. For the 2012-13 basketball season, in order for any basketball athlete to wear compression sleeves on their arms (elbows), the athlete shall present a note from an MD, DO, PAC or NP stating that the athlete must wear the compression sleeve. The note must be presented to the officials at the pre-game conference. If a medical note is not presented, the athlete shall present a note from an MD, DO, PAC or NP stating that the athlete must wear the compression sleeve. The athlete must remove the compression sleeve before participating in the contest.

**Pink Whistles:** The MOA Regional Directors have approved that pink whistles can be used by officials only at contests designated as breast cancer awareness events. All other NFHS/MOA uniform requirements must be followed during those events. For the 2012-13 basketball season, officials may wear either the black/white shirt or the gray shirt with black pinstripes. But remember, for officials working any MHSA event, each member of the officiating crew must wear the same shirt. Also, the official’s uniform includes black pants, black socks and black shoes (an official’s shoe must be predominately black but may have some clear or grey trim or deviate slightly from solid all black but whenever possible, any different color must be dyed or colored over with black.)

**MHSA Basketball Mercy Rule:** For the 2012-13 basketball season, the Basketball Mercy Rule will again be used by all MHSA member schools. It will be used for all levels of play, (Varsity, JV, Sophomore and Frosh). In the second half only, once a team has a forty (40) point or better lead against their opponent, a running clock will ensue until the end of the game even if the difference in the score drops below the forty point margin. The only time the clock will stop will be between quarters, time outs, and when replacing an injured or disqualified player.

In the second half of a basketball game, the official scorer and timer will be responsible for running the clock continuously except for the below situations, once a team has a forty (40) point or better lead against their opponent.

1. Once the clock signals the end of a quarter or overtime period, the clock will be stopped until play is started for the next quarter or overtime period.
2. Once an official signals for a called time-out, the clock will be stopped until play is started following the time-out.
3. Once an official beckons or bench personnel come onto the floor to attend to an injured player; the clock will be stopped until play is started again.
4. Once an official informs the head coach that a player has been disqualified from further participation in the game, the clock will be stopped until play is started again.

The clock will be restarted:

1. If a free throw is not successful and the ball is to remain live, the clock shall be started when the ball touches or is touched by a player on the court.
2. If play is resumed by a throw-in, the clock shall be started when the ball touches, or is legally touched by, a player on the court after it is released by the thrower.

Game management must inform the official scorer and timer of this MHSA Basketball Mercy Rule and the provisions of the rule.

If you have questions about the above issues, please call Scott McDonald in the MHSA office.
SOCCER SEASON CONCLUDES IN OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

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.
- KidSport Complex - Kalispell

Officials who are eligible for post season assignments were emailed a form requesting input on their availability. If you did not receive a form and you are a certified or master soccer official, please contact the MOA office. If you did receive a form but did not complete it, please take a moment to do so. This information is extremely helpful in filing post season playoff and tournament assignments.

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 MHSA office with input from the local administrators/pools.

ENCLOSURES:

MOA Pocket Calendar

Basketball Rule Book,
Basketball Casebook Changes for 2012-13
Rules Revisions & Preseason Guide

Wrestling Rule Book, Case Book/Officials’ Manual,
Rules Revisions & Preseason Guide

Winter Sports Online Rules Clinic Instructions