



Spring 2025

MIAA GAME OFFICIALS SPRING SEASON NEWSLETTER

We are now in the final season of the 2024-25 school year. It has been an exciting year of competition for our member schools. Both the fall and winter seasons have seen great games during the regular season as well as exciting playoff competition. The officiating during the MIAA Tournament has been outstanding! The officials have made a difference in the games our athletes play!

There seems to be a bit of an increase in total officials registered this school year. That is a good sign as all boards have been working to recruit more officials. Thank you for that effort. Welcoming new officials and mentoring them will help all boards grow their membership.

Each year the MIAA selects a Game Official of the Year (GOY) for each sport. Most of the time we have plenty of nominations but sometimes, there are very few to choose from. Please consider nominating a colleague for this prestigious award. I respect that many officials work for the love of the game and for the benefit of students, not personal recognition, but allowing some recognition annually helps to validate the work of all officials across the Commonwealth. Application for the 2024-25 GOY can be accessed [here](#).

Student and coach disqualification forms are linked on page 8 of this issue. Please consider having a few copies of the most recent versions of the forms with you at your games. Sometimes the AD is not around at your games to get you a copy of the forms. Having access to a copy of the form may save some effort and time. Be sure to carefully fill out the form with clarity and accurate description of the incident. Please remember, the check boxes at the bottom of the form are only for those specific incidents beyond a basic game DQ. Filling out the form with the student/coach information and description is all that is necessary to deal with a basic game DQ.

Registration for this spring season should have already taken place. Thank you to all officials that have completed this in a timely manner. Annual MIAA registration is still open but will close on May 1. If not registered by May 1, officials will not be eligible for post season tournament assignment.

Game Officials Appreciation Week will be held April 6 -12, 2025!! This appreciation week has been a great success for many with schools, captains and athletic directors recognizing your hard work!

Thank you to all for a great 2024-25 school year! We need you and value your efforts to offer the best athletic experience for students!

Richard L. Pearson
MIAA Associate Director



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

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.



2025 SPRING SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

BASEBALL

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Pitching positions
- Bench decorum
- Improper use of communication equipment

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

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

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Resin, pine tar or any other drying agent is permitted on the bat in a specific area

LACROSSE - BOYS

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Unintentional vs. Intentional Checks Involving the Head/Neck
- Proper wearing of eyeshade and mandatory equipment

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

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

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Clarification of restarts in different situations
- Distinguishes intentional versus unintentional checks involving the head or neck
- A slow whistle will be implemented on a personal foul during a pass or shot

LACROSSE - GIRLS

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Proper use of Green Card/Delay of Game
- Managing safe play in 8-meter arc
- Offensive fouls inside Critical Scoring Area

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

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

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Clock will stop on official's whistle in last minute of each quarter when foul occurs
- Expands definition of major foul for illegal stick contact to include contact with opponent's crosse



2025 SPRING SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

RUGBY

MIAA high school rugby is governed by the **World Rugby Laws of the Game** [CLICK HERE](#) for 2025 Law Book

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

SOFTBALL

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Team's role in pace of play
- Situation awareness

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- A high school softball coach is now able to use electronic devices in the dugout for one-way communication to the catcher while the team is on defense
- Coaches are prohibited from using electronic device to communicate with any other team member while on defense or any team member while on offense and the coach cannot use the device outside the dugout/bench area
- When a baserunner who is declared out for being hit by a fair batted ball, the batter-runner is credited with a fielder's choice in the scorebook

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

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

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...



2025 SPRING SPORT RULE HIGHLIGHTS

TRACK & FIELD

Points of Emphasis - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Managing vertical jump landing systems
- Excused athletes
- False Starts

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- Offers officials guidance when warning competitors their time limit is about to expire
- Further vertical jump clarification
- Adjusts the recall distance to within the first 50 meters

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

- Ball Handling
- Scoring Best Practices
- Host Management Best Practices

Rules Revisions - [CLICK HERE](#)

- All rostered players can stand on respective end lines
- Line judges required to switch sides between sets

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

Visit the [MIAA Volleyball](#) 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 was 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* - [CLICK HERE](#)
once per year starting in July.

- Spring officials must register by May 1

Background checks are valid for three years.

