



Talking Points

Knowing how to properly dialogue with coaches is critical to ensuring a positive environment at competitions. Remember that you do not have to give a coach an answer to something you don't know. It is alright to say something like, "Let me review my note sheets and I will get in touch with you if I recognize something."

There are also some questions you don't have to, and probably shouldn't, answer. An example may be, "Why did you give me a 9.7 instead of a 9.8?" Attempting to justify your scores may only increase the problems. If they persist, you could say, "My scores are based on my training and experience through seeing many teams of many levels."

Reading a Round 3 Description

It currently isn't mandated that descriptions sheets be written in any specific format. For this reason, officials should be understanding that there may be instances when Round 3 descriptions are not written in a way that is exactly what you would prefer, and that there are often more ways than one to write stunts and skills.

Give the coaches a athletes a break and review or evaluate Round 3 descriptions even if they are to you particular liking. Take the time to educate and advise in a non-condescending way that represent what educational athletics is all about.

Preparation for a Meet

Pay close attention and have access to an AD's or Meet Manager's contact information.

Try to have the contact information of the other officials with whom you are judging.

Have early communication with the AD or school representative for information and expectations. Provide the person with your contact information so that you can be reached in the case of inclement weather or other unusual situation.

Wear the proper uniform. Do not deviate from the required uniform (on page 15 of the Girls Competitive Cheer Manual). Your dress is a reflection of you, your fellow officials and the MHSAA.

Properly wear the MHSAA emblem suspended from a black lanyard around the neck.

Arrive to the competition one hour (or more) prior to the scheduled start time.

Bring judging materials, manual and any approved ruling or interpretations with you and have at your disposal, if needed. (These can be found through the Officials page of the mhsaa.com website.)

Bring extra pens and pencils, highlighters, calculators and extra paper.

Safety officials should also bring a timer and clipboard.

Importance of Mentorship: Mentors play a critical role in the continued development of new and/or inexperienced officials. If you're new to the sport, seek out a veteran cheer official that can provide you with guidance and sound advice as you begin the process of working competitions. Mentors impact individuals in more ways than just the technical aspects of the job. They also serve as a sounding board, discuss the theoretical and philosophical approaches to officiating and offer support.

If you've been fortunate enough to have someone like this to assist you in this avocation, be sure to give back to the sport and the community by serving as a mentor. Be there to offer encouragement, motivation and a listening ear.