

MHSAA OFFICIALS BULLETIN



Last week we talked about new Swimming and Diving officials. Let's spend some time this week on officials with a few years' experience. By the time you are in your fourth or fifth year of officiating you have probably made a few contacts that have resulted in you being offered meets to officiate. If you are in an area with few pools, you may not have the opportunity spend a lot of time on the pool deck. If you are in an area with many pools your chances of being utilized are likely to be greater. Whatever your circumstances, in order to get into the "network" you need to do a little research.

You need to know how the schools for which you wish to officiate obtain their officials. Several of the schools I interact with have a member of the Athletic Department staff, usually the Athletic Director's Secretary, performing the scheduling duties. The staff member usually has scheduling duties for a number of sports each season. His/her days are truly hectic as each season approaches. Other districts use Assigners. These are individuals contracted with multiple schools or districts to arrange for officials for a specific sport. If a scheduled official is unable to make his or her commitment it is the assignor's job to refill the vacant spot.

Assigners are generally compensated by either the school or the district for their work. Although rare, some assigners will request a stipend from the scheduled official for assigning them to a meet. In a few instances it is the Athletic Director or the Swimming Coach themselves that obtains the officials for their competitions.

If you are working through an Athletic Department staff member be sure they have your name and a contact number well ahead of the season. Several have Swimming and Diving officials that they have worked with for years and it may take awhile to get on the schedule. Over the years I can't tell you how many times I have filled in for an incapacitated official on a short notice basis during one season only to be offered meets the following season. Schedulers seem to have a pretty good memory!

We'll talk about working with an Assigner and instances where the Athletic Director or the Swimming Coach is responsible for obtaining officials in the next bulletin.

You Can't Officiate What You Can't See

It's the 200 Freestyle Relay. The first swimmer is about to finish, and the second swimmer is on the blocks. Just as the exchange is about to occur a swimmer, who has just completed the 500 yard Freestyle, walks between you and the pool blocking your view of the pool and breaking your concentration (sound familiar?). Is it illegal yes, but is it often called, probably no. Prevention is the key here. This could be a topic for the pre-meet Coaches and Captain's meeting, a comment to the coach or an individual correction to the offender. Remember "YOU CAN'T OFFICIATE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE".

Something to Consider: You arrive at the pool 30 minutes ahead of time. In surveying the pool prior to the meet, you notice that the pool has lane markers with odd colored floats in the vicinity of the 15-meter mark and orange cones on the pool side marking what is the 15-meter mark. During the 200 Medley Relay the backstroke swimmer in lane 3's head surfaces after the cones but before the float on her lane which is farthest down the pool from the starting end. You disqualify the swimmer, the coach protests that the swimmer surfaced prior to the farthest float out that marks 15 meters. What is your response?