

# Officials Considerations for COVID-19 Football Guidelines

<https://www.mhsaa.com/portals/0/Documents/Officials/football/fbcovid.pdf>

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2020 Preseason Meeting

September 11, 2020



# General Expectations

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- Guidelines Only:
  - Each Crew will need to make a decision regarding which Suggested or Permitted Guidelines they will adopt.
  - If a Crew adopts a Suggested or Permitted Mechanics Deviation, the whole crew shall abide by that Guideline.
- Officials are only expected to officiate “Between the Lines”:
  - Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines;
  - Ensuring physical distancing; or
  - Diagnosing symptoms of illnesses and other such issues.
- Face coverings need not be worn by officials during active game play, but must be worn in all other situations.



# More General Expectations

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- Please communicate in advance with the Athletic Director:
  - Communication early in the week will allow Officials to explain their expectations and to confirm the game date and game time;
  - There have been numerous game changes since September 4<sup>th</sup>, and game details may change day-to-day.
- On game day, a School Host should be available to meet the crew at arrival and provide for safe departure:
  - Officials should be provided a secure parking location;
  - Officials should arrive dressed and ready to officiate, as schools are not required to provide a locker room.
- If an Official tests positive for COVID-19, it is expected the Official will quarantine for at least 14 days or until medically cleared to officiate.



# Permitted Mechanics Deviations

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- Precautions and safety measures which officials are **allowed** to take during MHSAA contests, keeping in mind this is not an exhaustive list:
  - Officials may use electronic whistles;
  - Officials may wear gloves, whether latex, work gloves or sports gloves;
  - In lieu of face masks, Officials may wear plastic face shields;
  - The Umpire may carry a spray disinfectant to use on the football between downs;
    - Please try to use hand sanitizer only on your hands;
  - The Umpire may take a position deeper or wider than normal;
  - Sideline officials may take their starting positions one yard into the field of play;
  - The Crew has the option to not touch the football in relation to spotting the ball;
    - If using this Permitted Mechanic, all Crew members must use the same Mechanic;
    - Prior to the game, the Referee must inform the coaches whether this Mechanics Deviation will be used.



## Permitted Mechanics Deviations – Ball Mechanics

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- If the Permitted Mechanics Deviation related to spotting the ball will be used, Officials will not be responsible for handling the ball:
  - Offensive team will be responsible to bring out the ball for their series;
  - Offensive team will retrieve incomplete passes and balls out of bounds;
  - Offensive team will retrieve the ball after all kicks;
  - Receivers or runners will return the ball to the snapper in anticipation of the next down.
- Forward progress will be marked in the same manner as normal:
  - Umpire will mirror spot with foot;
- Officials will only handle the ball during a measurement.



## Permitted Mechanics Deviations – Ball Mechanics (cont.)

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- Play clock will remain as normal:
  - If the offense is delayed due to a defensive action, reset the play clock to :25 and resume;
  - If the offense is delayed due to their own inaction or incorrect action, penalize for delay of game if play clock expires.
- If the Officiating Crew uses the Ball Mechanics Deviation, the offense may rotate the ball on every play:
  - The Umpire would mark the spot of the snap and not allow a snap until the Crew is ready to officiate;
  - The Umpire would dictate pace of play even in a “hurry up” offense.



## Suggested Mechanics Deviations

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- Best practices for MHSAA officials based on the recommendations of health professionals. Not required, but **should be followed** if possible.
  - Each Official should:
    - Check his/her temperature on game days;
      - If displaying symptoms, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, or with a temperature of 100.3° F or higher, Official should stay home;
    - Consider bringing their own marked beverage;
    - Wash and sanitize hands frequently once onsite;
      - Especially after inspecting footballs, casts or braces, or checking the down markers prior to the contest;
    - Not share uniforms, towels or equipment;
    - Retrieve their own bean bags and penalty flags.



# Mandated Mechanics Deviations

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- Required practice in order to officiate MHSAA contests.
  - Officials shall:
    - Arrive at the same time and enter as a single group, maintaining physical distancing;
    - Conduct pregame meetings while practicing proper physical distancing;
    - Not engage in handshakes or fist bumps with players, coaches or administrators;
    - Conduct the coin toss with only the Referee, Umpire and one team captain for each team;
    - Not physically contact players during the contest, including to break up a pile;
    - Maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling;
    - Only send one Official to meet the Timer before the game;
    - Meet the Head Coach between the sidelines and the 9-yard marks to explain any on-field rulings requiring explanation.





# Rules Modifications due to COVID-19

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- TEAM BOX (Rule 1-2-3g):
  - The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (for players only) in order for more physical distancing space for the teams.
- BALL (Rule 1-3-2):
  - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
- FACE MASKS (Rules 1-5-1a, 1-5-3c(4)):
  - Cloth face coverings are permissible;
  - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.



# Rules Modifications due to COVID-19 (cont.)

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- TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS (Rule 1-5-1d(5)):
  - **\*\*Still being determined at this time on how to best handle the tooth and mouth protector during the contest.\*\***
- GLOVES (Rule 1-5-2b):
  - Gloves must meet the NOCSAE Standard or the SFIA Specification, per Rule 1-5-2b.



## Rules Modifications due to COVID-19 (cont.)

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- CHARGED TIMEOUTS AND AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES (Rules 2-6-2, 3-5-3, 3-5-8):
  - A single charged timeout may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length;
  - The authorized conference for the charged timeout should take place between the 9-yard marks and not at the sideline for physical distancing purposes;
  - More than one Coach could be involved in this conference and use technology on the field;
  - Each Official and Player should have their own beverage container brought to them.
- INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS AND AFTER SCORING (Rule 3-5-7I):
  - The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick.

