**WMSOA SPRING 2012 PRE-SEASON MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, March 12 – Grand Rapids Area Meeting at Kentwood Library – 51 members signed in

(Concurrent Meeting held for Lakeshore Area at Baymont Inn in Muskegon, covering substantially the same information – 16 members signed in)

Mark Lundvick, WMSOA Vice-President presided over the Grand Rapids meeting, which opened at 7:00pm.

Greg Pilbeam reported that we have 12 new referees to start this season. There are 9 new officials in the GR area and 3 in the Lakeshore area. (Minutes of the Lakeshore meeting indicate that 4 new officials were in attendance there.)

OVERTIME PROCEDURES will remain the same as those that were in use last fall by the various conferences that we assign. Specifically for the OK Conference, that means overtime is used ONLY for divisional games (e.g. OK Red v OK Red team uses OT tied at end of regulation; OK White v OK Blue does NOT use OT, no matter the score at the end of regulation), and it is 2 FULL 10-minute periods. There is NO GOLDEN GOAL and there is NO SHOOTOUT if still tied, except in conference tournament play. Other conference procedures are shown on the chart on the WMSOA website (www.wmsoa.org).

PAY RATES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GAMES this spring are:

JV & Varsity – Both games with 2-man crew $93 ($38 for JV and $55 for Varsity)

JV 2-man and Varsity AR $88 ($38 for JV and $50 for Varsity AR)

Varsity Center $65

Please be aware that more schools are mailing paychecks after the game rather than paying at the site. Include in your game reports whether you were paid at the game. Follow up with the school if paycheck is not received within two weeks. Also notify your assignor if you do not receive your check in that time.

A printout of standard officials’ responsibilities for pre-game and post-game may be found on the WMSOA website. Please look it up and review it carefully before your first game. Key points to remember are:

1. Contact partner(s) and host school at least a day before to confirm game time and location.
2. Try to arrive 30 minutes before game time, if possible, and check in with game administrator.
3. Introduce yourself to both coaches, get rosters, and ask about legal and/or special player equipment or physical conditions.
4. Inspect the field and its environs to make sure all areas and equipment (goals, nets, flags, etc.) are in place, in good repair, and safe.
5. Have a pre-game conference to discuss potential situations, game management expectations, game length, and overtime procedures.
6. Post-game, leave the field and the area together. Watch each other’s backs.
7. Complete game reports on Arbiter (and for MHSAA, if necessary) promptly. Required information is detailed on the Pre- / Post-Game Responsibilities sheet. All RED CARD EJECTIONS of coaches, players, or bench personnel MUST BE REPORTED by phone to Greg Pilbeam (616-437-4630) or Bill Wagner (616-363-4151) immediately after the game. The official who issues a red card must complete the necessary MHSAA report.

UNIFORMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GAMES – The yellow jersey is the preferred color for MHSAA games. Either USSF stripe pattern (old pinstripe or new wide stripe) is OK. Officials are not required to have the same stripe pattern, but try to match the stripe pattern and sleeve length, if possible. Red and black striped jerseys are acceptable, if necessary to contrast with the teams. USSF blue and green jerseys are NOT acceptable. Socks should be the traditional black with 3 white stripes. Make sure you have all the clothing and equipment you will need for the game, especially if inclement weather is a possibility.

WEATHER POLICY – “Lightning is lightning, thunder is thunder.” If you see lightning or hear thunder, the game MUST be stopped and players directed to shelter. Players may not return to the field until 30 minutes from the last occurrence of lightning or thunder. Check the MHSAA Officials Guidebook at the MHSAA website for specific weather delay policies.

CONTROL THE BENCHES during the game. The OK Conference wants more control of bench areas. Do not let coaches or other bench personnel misbehave or become abusive. If a caution or disqualification is appropriate, issue the appropriate card and provide basic details in your game report.

ONLY OFFICIALS REGISTERED WITH MHSAA may work MHSAA games. Liability coverage will likely not cover you if an incident occurs in a game where unregistered officials are used. The registered official(s) at the game may work it, even if that is only a single official, as long as the coaches agree.

Officials are reminded that hard casts and form-fitting face masks require a signed and dated medical release from a physician. If you encounter players with these medical situations, please request a copy of the release before the game and keep it for the duration. Please note that prosthetic limbs do NOT require a medical release, but they still must meet acceptable safety standards.

When conference tournament games are assigned to you on Arbiter, these are initially for the game date only. Please accept these assignments and plan on working that day. Games sites and times will not be known until a couple days before the games, but you will have the information soon enough to make travel arrangements.

Officials are reminded not to post anything related to your soccer game activities to internet sites such as MLive, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and the like for anything. We have a WMSOA policy against this, and violation of the policy is grounds for disciplinary action.

Tom Walters will again be doing informal assessments of officials and game sites this spring. If you would like him to view one of your games, contact him and give him you schedule. He also made several general comments and observations:

1. Be professional. You are being paid to do a job as a referee – look like one. Dress appropriately and always act in a controlled and professional manner, no matter what you encounter.
2. Don’t let coaches, bench areas, or spectators get out of control. Deal with benches, including with cards, as necessary. If there are spectator issues, get the game administrator to deal with them. Suspend the game temporarily, if that is needed to get problem situations resolved.
3. Use the proper mechanics for your signaling – Whistle, Point, Signal. Use the girls’ season to work on your positioning, movement, mechanics.
4. Use your whistle as a tool to manage the game. Vary the intensity to meet the need of the situation.
5. “Trail” officials should watch action behind and/or away from the ball most of the time for those “off the ball” incidents that need attention. Don’t just be ball watchers.
6. Support your partner(s). Make eye contact as often as possible and try to find a common standard for the calls that you are making, especially when working a 2-man system.
7. Talk to the players. Use comments that encourage fair and safe play, warn them about play that is approaching the reckless stage, offer positive comments for good play when possible.
8. Enjoy what you are doing. If the game is not fun, it probably isn’t worth it.

Other reminders:

Check Arbiter regularly for game changes and new assignments and keep your availability updated. Please note that “changes” must be accepted, just like new assignments. Please accept things as quickly as possible.

Do not accept communication after a game from coaches, either by phone or email or other methods. After a game, a coach should not be contacting you. Anything comments, questions, or criticisms after the fact should only come to WMSOA through the school’s athletic director.

Have a great spring season.