**WMSOA Pre-Season Meeting Minutes – Spring 2013**

**Wednesday, March 13 Kentwood Public Library**

(Concurrent Meeting covering the same agenda held at Baymont Inn, Muskegon, MI)

Members arrived for sandwiches and drinks between 6:30 and 7:00pm. 58 members signed in for the Kentwood meeting, and 27 attended the Muskegon meeting.

Shortly after 7:00pm, the Kentwood meeting began with Greg Pilbeam welcoming everyone, including a couple new members to the association, and reminding the attendees that the first scrimmages of the girls’ high school season will be this Saturday. Regular season games begin late next week, weather and field conditions permitting.

Greg reported that Arbiter Game, provided through MHSAA, is now fully in use for WMSOA assigning, despite the many struggles and issues for both assignors and schools to make it functional. We will get our usual game reminders from the WMSOA side through Arbiter, but there will be some schools that will not use it due to ongoing issues, opting to continue with ScheduleStar or whatever other system they have been using to communicate with officials.

WMSOA assignors (Greg Pilbeam, Bill Wagner, Matt Carlson) have fully assigned 924 games to date, filling 1995 officiating slots, subject to any changes that may come through. Since changes will come up, please email Greg is you have blocks of days without games, as this may help him find available replacements more easily on short notice.

We were reminded that the NCAA is now the principal owner of Arbiter, which also owns RefPay. We can expect more schools to start using RefPay, so set up a RefPay account through the Arbiter link as soon as you can to be ready if you work at a school that pays through it. It was also noted that there have been some instances of RefPay issuing 1099 tax forms to officials, but this practice is under review, as we are working for individual schools. If you earn enough at an individual school for a 1099 to be required, it should be issued by the school. We will pass along more information about this as it becomes available.

The OK Conference is now up to fifty-one schools in eight divisions. The divisions for the spring are the same as those that were in place last fall. There are, however, several new athletic directors and some new secretaries who still learning the proper ways to work with Arbiter and the scheduling and communication processes. Be sure to contact schools before your games to make certain of dates, times, and locations. The conference continues to put an emphasis on safety and responsible behavior from players and team personnel. You may see representatives of the conference at your games. They are there to observe how well game administration is being handled by the school’s representative, the behavior of participants and spectators, and whether you are being treated with respect and courtesy. The observers may speak with you briefly is the opportunity arises. In any case, if you encounter any safety or security issues with fields, game sites, or participants and spectators, contact Greg as soon as possible after the game, just as you would if red cards were issued, and include the information in your game report comments.

Mark Lundvick distributed two handouts, one of which had several articles and/or comments about officiating from Referee Magazine. The other included information about the current game lengths and overtime procedures for games in the conferences WMSOA assigns, as well as the current pay schedules for both 2-man and 3-man officiating systems, at the varsity, JV, and freshman levels. Most of the information from this sheet may be found on the “Officials” tab of the WMSOA website. Mark also stressed the need to “take care of business” if you have player or bench control situations. Deal politely but firmly with inappropriate behavior as necessary, protect your partner during the game, and leave things better for the next crew that will officiate for those teams.

Greg reminded everyone to review all the rules for high school before the season starts, and confirm the specific procedures for the event that you are working. This includes pre-season scrimmages, which will use different game lengths than the regular season, and may or may not use a tie-breaker at the end of the schedule time. Be sure you understand the overtime policy for the regular season games, depending on the schools involved. It is the same as what was used last fall for the boys’ season. Remember the OK conference only uses overtime (with NO SHOOTOUT) for regular season games between schools in the same “color” division. Other conferences use different methods. Then when you get to the end of the season, review the specific procedures for overtime and shoot-outs for the MHSAA tournament games. If you are interested in working tournament games, you MUST take the MHSAA on-line soccer rules test if you did not do so in the fall; and you will need to send in your regular season game schedule to the MHSAA by April 1. The game schedule report is available through the “Officials” tab when you log in to the MHSAA website.

We have several new or relatively new members in WMSOA that you may not have met or worked with, some of whom do not have a great amount of experience. Please make the newer members welcome and do everything you can to support them. Answer their questions and share suggestions from the experience you have gained over your officiating career. The more we all work together, the better we will be able to do our jobs on the field.

New WMSOA warm-up jackets have been ordered and will be available at the mid-season meetings for $30.00. WMSOA is paying $15 toward the total cost of $45. Jackets are of a style similar to, but not exactly like the older version. If would like a jacket, plan to attend the mid-season meeting. One jacket per member, please.

Paul Holwerda spoke about our responsibilities before game day. Center referees in particular (or “lead” referee in a 2-man crew) should contact the school and their assistants at least two days before game day to confirm the game time and location and where you will plan to meet before the game. If you know the uniform colors the teams will wear, you can also plan on which referee shirts you will use. Plan your travel route to the game, and check for information about possible road construction or traffic delays that you might encounter. Print out your Arbiter schedule so you will have phone numbers for others in your crew so you can call if you are delayed.

Remember to complete your game reports on Arbiter promptly and accurately. The assignors read these, and it is important to have information about any significant game issues reported as soon as possible so Greg can communicate with the conferences about any concerns that come up. Keep your personal information and availability up to date as well so your contact numbers are accurate and your schedule shows when you can be called to fill in on short notice, if necessary.

Duncan Purvis presented a video covering assistant referee mechanics and procedures prepared by the US Soccer Federation. This excellent video covered the proper signals to be used by ARs in almost all game situations and emphasized the need for communication by eye contact, verbal, and other means between the ARs and the center referees to get the calls right. It was mentioned that the USSF website also has other videos available covering a number of refereeing topics.

Thanks to all who attended these meetings. The turnout was very good and much appreciated. We look forward to the coming season and to seeing many of you on the fields. Have a great spring.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Olsen / WMSOA Secretary