

Make the Right Call



WASHINGTON OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

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Sportsmanship: Just Play Fair!

One of the reasons often given as to why an official decides to retire is the lack of sportsmanship displayed at athletic events. Sure, there are other factors involved, but the lack of sportsmanship leads officials to think twice about whether they truly enjoy going out night after night. What can be done? The WIAA is constantly discussing this issue with the member schools, but what can the officials do to promote sportsmanship? Each local association/board should take the promotion of sportsmanship seriously and develop a program that involves both the officials and the member schools. Many associations/boards have established a sportsmanship program within their service area and the feedback has been tremendous.

One association believes the sportsmanship program they have implemented has made a huge impact on the relationship between the coaches and officials. This impact will have long-term benefits for the officials, coaches, players and the game.

The most effective programs will be those that have the schools and officials working together to reach a common goal. Associations/boards that play an active role in developing such programs will be able to look back and know they played a prominent role in changing the culture of sports.

The best way to improve the atmosphere for the officials is to take an active role in developing sportsmanship expectations and recognizing those who meet

the established standards.

Another key element to any sportsmanship program is to hold the members of your association/board to the same, if not higher, standards as the coaches and players. This will demonstrate through your actions that sportsmanship is an important component. If your association/board currently has a sportsmanship program involving the schools in your service area, please send the details to the WOA staff. Staff will compile the information and make it available to associations/boards that currently do not have a program, but are interested in starting one.



2010 WOA Conference and Golf Tournament

Planning is underway for this year's conference and golf tournament. In order to make the conference relevant to all officials, the WOA staff is working on developing the sport-specific breakouts to be more

productive as they relate to the nuances of the given sport. The other breakout sessions will include a mix of speakers that will appeal to officials and assigners. The conference is a great networking opportunity.

Save the dates: August 6-7 at the Yakima Convention Center.

Registration information for the 2010 WOA Conference and Golf Tournament will be available in April.

Special points of interest:

- SPORTSMANSHIP PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN RETAINING OFFICIALS
- LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS/BOARDS NEED TO BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SPORTSMANSHIP
- IMPROVED SPORTSMANSHIP PROVIDES LONG-TERM BENEFITS FOR THE OFFICIALS, COACHES, PLAYERS AND THE GAME

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2010 State Championship Judges: Spirit



Tom Jones II, South Sound Basketball, working at the 4A Girls Basketball Tournament.

Photo Courtesy of Max Howard

Cheerleading Championships
January 23, 2010
Comcast Arena, Everett

Head Judge
Anne Taylor

Judges
Millie King
Charlene Johnson
Travis Millspaugh
Katie Crowley
Jodele Mistretta
Jennifer Fallon
Tara Wood
Kim Cherry
Jorgan Werry

Dance/Drill Championships
March 26-27, 2010
Yakima SunDome

Head Judge
Cara Heiner

Judges
Hailey Heinrich
Rachel Heinrich
Andie Webb
Shayna Jones
Jane Huh
Marla Ann Boyd
Jennifer McMullen
Mindy Fischer
Teresa Wilson
Jennifer Stokes

Julie Holmberg
Jeanne Wehr
Stacey Purpura
Gina Englund
Laurie Daniel
Leslie Purpura
Natalie Murdock
Kim Petty

Interns
Jasmine Ray-Symms
Erica Dall
Claire Catt
Alyssa Castro

“THE WOA
ENCOURAGES
THE MEMBERSHIP
TO WORK WITH
THEIR LOCAL
ASSOCIATION/
BOARD TO
NOMINATE
OFFICIALS”

Officials' Recognition Program

Over the last few years, the WOA has made a concerted effort to recognize officials. This is an area that can always be improved upon. In order to do so, the WOA encourages the membership to work with their local association/board to nominate officials who are deserving of the following awards:

Official of the Year

Local associations/boards nominate an official to be considered for this award. One official is selected from the pool of nominees to be the state official of the year for each sport.

Meritorious Service Award

Officials are eligible to receive this award if they have 15 years of service,

state tournament experience, and have been active as a local board member.

Hall of Fame

The most prestigious award for a member of the WOA. Inductees are selected from a pool of qualified nominees.

If you know of an official deserving of any of these awards, please contact your assigner.



Todd Weber, Snohomish County Basketball, working at the 3A Boys Basketball Tournament.

Photo Courtesy of Max Howard

The original article pertaining to the Lystedt Law appeared in the October 2009 WOA Newsletter. Since the spring sports are underway, it seems like a good idea to review the basics of how officials should conduct themselves in regard to the Lystedt Law. Here are the key aspects from the previous article:

Lystedt Law Refresher

The most important aspect to remember is that officials are expected to follow the guidelines established by the rules book of their sport.

After checking with representatives from American Specialties, WOA insurance provider, they

confirmed the need to follow procedures addressed by the NFHS in regard to dealing with participants. It is extremely important that officials stay within their role and stay away from the temptation of getting too involved in the diagnosing of injuries, regardless of the severity.

Baseball: Helmets, Bats, and More Bats

Here are a few issues that have been brought to the attention of the WIAA staff and rules clinicians for clarification.

Coaches Wearing Helmets

Adult base coaches are not required to wear batting helmets while on the field. Players/students in the coaching box are required to wear batting helmets

Bat Standard

The new bat standard does not go into effect until the 2012 season. The reason for

the new standard being included in this year's rules book is to allow ample notice to the schools that there will be a change that may have a financial impact on their program. Please make sure you are holding the coaches and players accountable to the current bat standard, not the one that will go into effect in 2012.

Equipment Inspection

Umpires are required to inspect all bats and helmets prior to the start of the

contest. This responsibility should be taken seriously, since the umpire is determining what equipment is safe and belongs in the game.

If you have any questions you would like addressed by the baseball rules clinicians, please bring them to the attention of your assigner. Your assigner will make the decision whether or not to submit the question to the WIAA for an official interpretation.



Adam Pregeluber, Evergreen Baseball, and Jim Dodson, Western Washington Baseball, checking equipment prior to a state tournament game at Safeco Field.

Photo Courtesy of Dale Garvey

Softball: 43' Pitching Distance

The WIAA Executive Board has approved the new 43' pitching distance for the 2010 season. The change is mandatory for all levels of high school fast pitch, but is a league option at the middle school/junior high level.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if the umpires arrive at a high school game and the pitching distance is 40'?

A: The proper distance shall be marked before the game may begin. At the high school level, the 43' pitching distance is mandatory due to the WIAA adopting the new pitching distance.

Q: How are umpires to know what pitching distance the middle schools/junior high schools will be utilizing?

A: Assigners should communicate with each league to determine which pitching distance will be used. The assigners will then inform the umpires as to whether 43' or 40' will be enforced.

Please contact your assigner if there are any questions or concerns in regard to the pitching distance.

“AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, THE 43' PITCHING DISTANCE IS MANDATORY DUE TO THE WIAA ADOPTING THE NEW PITCHING DISTANCE.”

Soccer: WIAA Red Card Initiative

Many of you had heard the discussions on a mandate passed down by the WIAA to reduce the number of red cards in boys' soccer. The information that is out there is a little misleading, so hopefully we can clear up the initiative from the WIAA to the member schools.

The issue in regard to red cards deals with the acts of violent conduct and language. The WIAA Executive Board has challenged the member schools to reduce the red cards in these two areas by 60%. At no time, has the WIAA mandated that the officials reduce the number

of cards. The feeling is that if a card is warranted, it should be given. The issue at hand is the behavior of the players and for the 2010 spring season, the WOA and WIAA expect the officials to officiate the game using all the tools available to them, even if that means having to hand out a few red cards.



Gerald St Clair, Seattle Metro Softball

Photo Courtesy of Dale Garvey



Officiating the Game for the Athletes!

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Note from the Commissioner:

What a busy few weeks. Two weekends of wrestling tournaments, one weekend of gymnastics, three weeks of basketball.....and we still have one weekend to go.....State Dance/Drill Championships. Thank you to all the officials who worked throughout the winter state tournaments, as well as the officials who served as liaisons and coordinators to make sure the officials were treated right. If you have any ideas on changes that would improve the state tournament experience, please let me know (info@woa-officials.com).

The 2010 WOA Conference and Golf Tournament registration will be available next month. The conference is a great networking opportunity and I encourage every association/board to send a few people to the conference. Every association/board can benefit from the exchange of ideas at the conference. We still have comments in regard to how the ideas shared by Stephen Walkom changed the way in which a few local associations/boards have operated. They were able to implement some of the ideas to create a team atmosphere rather than officials looking out for themselves. It has improved the level of officiating, but it has already improved the camaraderie of the membership. Maybe something that is discussed at the 2010 Conference could have a similar effect on your association/board.

Todd Stordahl
WOA Commissioner



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WOA Spotlight: Mike Burton



Mike Burton and Bob Berg, WOA Executive Board, at the 2009 WOA Conference.

Photo Courtesy of George Eastman

Mike Burton is a great example of the official who knows when it is time to move on to other aspects in the officiating community. Mike worked 36 years as a high school football official, working nine championship games and six semifinal games. In 2000, Mike made the difficult decision to retire from officiating. He could have continued to officiate, but he made the decision to retire from the on field activities and focus more on the behind-the-scenes effort to improve the way football

games are officiated throughout the state, as well as improving the WOA as a whole.

Mike served on the WOA Executive Board from 1985 until 2007. During his tenure on the board, he was instrumental in the creation of the football summer camps, the football senior seminars, and the WOA Hall of Fame.

Since leaving the Executive Board in 2007, Mike has stayed involved in the WOA, by serving as the football evaluations chairman and

continuing his involvement in developing officials through his work with the senior seminars.

Mike was inducted into the WOA Hall of Fame in 2009. He is also a member of the WIAA Hall of Fame in multiple categories: Official, Fine Arts Coach (Forensics-Debate), and Fine Arts Team (Forensics-Debate).

The WOA is a stronger association because of the efforts of Mike Burton. We look forward to his continued involvement in the association.