

ARTICLE 9

OFFICIALS

Section 1. REGISTRATION OF OFFICIALS

The registration fee for approved Baseball, Basketball, Field Hockey, Football, Gymnastics, Hockey, Lacrosse, Winter and Spring Track; Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Volleyball and Wrestling officials shall be \$12.00 plus the cost of the rule book for the respective sport.

- A. Rules as approved by the Committee shall be the rules followed in all contests of the RIIL.
- B. The fee is waived for probationary officials.
- C. Registered officials are entitled to free admission for themselves only to all contests of member schools in the sport of which they are a registered official upon presentation of their Registration Card. (with the exception of RIIL Playoffs).
- D. All officials must register and pay all applicable fees in the Arbiter system prior to each season. Officials are not eligible to be assigned to any RIIL games unless they have completed the Arbiter registration and paid all applicable fees.

E. All new registered officials are required to have a Criminal Background Check.

The RIIL requires all new RIIL officials, to undergo a background investigation conducted by the Bureau of Criminal Identification of the Department of the Attorney General for the State of Rhode Island. Should the BCI investigation indicate the existence of disqualifying information (a list of disqualifying information is available through each official's association), the individual shall be deemed "disqualified" for assignment in this capacity as an official. In the absence of disqualifying information (and consistent with Article 9) the individual shall be cleared for employment.

PROCEDURE

New Officials:

- a. All new officials will be given a copy of this policy by their association to review in advance of completing step (b.).
 - b. Officials will complete the BCI disclaimer form and present it in person to the Bureau of Criminal Identification for processing.
 - c. The BCI results will be forwarded to the Officials Assigning Board (Association) for review. Should the BCI investigation indicate the existence of disqualifying information (a list of disqualifying information is available through each official's association), the individual shall be deemed "disqualified" for assignment in this capacity as an official. The Officials Assigning Board (Association) will then provide the RIIL a list of all officials one week prior to the start of the season who have complied with all requirements. No new official will be authorized to officiate until cleared by the Officials Assigning Board (Association).
- F. All officials serve at the pleasure of the RIIL.
 - G. All RIIL approved Officials are employed as independent contractors, and not as an employee of the RIIL, or of the school districts or high schools competing in an interscholastic athletic competition event.
 - H. Each sport's official organization must annually certify that all registered officials are members of the NFHS Officials Association.

Section 2. ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments will be made by the Executive Director/Assistant Executive Director or the Director of the Sport with the assistance of the designated representative. Notification of all assignments will be made through the Arbiter online system.

- A. No official shall be assigned to the game until his/her registration, fee, and the list of available dates has been received by the RIIL office.
- B. A new official shall not be assigned for any contest whether or not under the jurisdiction of this Committee, unless such new official *has had a criminal background check, had no felony convictions, and is on the approved list of officials of the RIIL*. After the initial BCI requirement is met, any official convicted of a felony (a list of disqualifying information is available through each official's association) shall not be assigned for any contest.
- C. The Director of each sport has the right to negate or withdraw assignments from officials who withdraw from assignments without just and proper cause or failure to enforce the Rules and Regulations of the RIIL. The Director of each sport involved shall determine just and proper cause. An official may appeal to the Executive Committee of the sport involved for redress.
- D. Officials will be assigned in accordance with the terms stipulated in the agreement with the Board. Official unable to fulfill an assignment must notify the Executive Director/Assistant Executive Director and/or Director of the Sport in a timely fashion.
- E. Assignments of all officials to RIIL and RIIL-sanctioned contests shall be made through the RIIL office.
- F. Non RIIL Schools requesting the use of RIIL Officials will be accommodated provided officials are available.
- G. Playoffs: Assignment of officials to all RIIL play-off games will be made by representatives of each RIIL sport committee. This committee includes the RIIL Sport Director(s) and representatives including officials (1), coaches and athletic directors.

Section 3. FAILURE TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENT

If an official fails to notify the proper authorities of his/her inability to work a game, unless due to unavoidable circumstances, that official shall be suspended for a period to be determined by the Sport Director.

Section 4. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS

- A. Officials assigned to RIIL games may be required by the Executive Director to file with the RIIL immediately after each game a report on the conditions of the contests.
 - 1. Any official who ejects a player from a game must notify the RIIL Office by phone no later than 9:00 A.M. of the following day. An official who fails to make such notification within the prescribed time may be suspended from one half the normal assignments given in that particular sport. If necessary, the suspension will extend into the next season of the same sport.
 - 2. Prior to the start of any RIIL authorized contest at the pre-game conference, the Head coach shall notify the official (Head Official/Chief Umpire) that s/he is the only coach or s/he identify additional certified assistant coaches of the team authorized by the school. In the event a head coach is ejected from a contest and there is no certified assistant coach who had been identified to the officials prior to the start of the game, the game will end and the opposing team shall be awarded victory by forfeit. A coach who is ejected shall leave the vicinity [out of sight and sound] of the playing area immediately and shall not return to the playing area during the remainder of the contest. Further, the ejected coach is prohibited from any further contact (direct and/or indirect) with the team or any team member for the remainder of the contest and not until both teams have left the playing area. Any coach determined to being violation of this provision may be subject to an additional period disqualification as defined an Article 6, Penalties.

Section 5. NOTIFICATION OF POSTPONEMENT

Officials are entitled to one-half fee in the event they report to the facility ready for duty and no game is played. Schools, which have made an attempt to communicate with the officials before they leave for the game, are exempt from this charge. Such notification must be made not less than two (2) hours before game time or in accordance with the Official's Association Agreement. The home schools' responsibility rests primarily in reaching the official by telephone. The postponement also will be made online. Postponed games retain the original fee regardless of date.

- A. After the official has been notified of the postponement, it is the responsibility of the official to contact the assignor if s/he cannot work the rescheduled contest date/time. The assignor will then replace the official as necessary.

Section 6. OFFICIAL FEES

The fees for officials in Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Field Hockey, Football, Gymnastics, Hockey, Lacrosse, Winter Track, Spring Track, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Volleyball, and Wrestling are as follows:

A. BASEBALL:

1. Two umpires required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. If one of the assigned umpires fails to appear and one Board member umpires the game, that umpire shall receive one and one half the regular contest fee.
3. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

B. BASKETBALL:

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. If one official fails to appear and one official referees the game, that official shall receive one and one half the regular contest fee.
3. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

C. CHEERLEADING:

1. Officials assigned will be determined by the director.
2. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

D. CROSS COUNTRY:

1. Officials assigned will be determined by the Director.
2. Fees-Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

E. FIELD HOCKEY:

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. If one official fails to appear and one official referees the game, that official shall receive one and one half the regular contest fee.
3. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

F. FOOTBALL:

1. Four officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. Fees –Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

G. GYMNASTICS:

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

H. HOCKEY:

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

I. LACROSSE

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

J. WINTER TRACK:

1. Three (3) officials assigned as determined by the Director.
2. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

K. SPRING TRACK:

1. Officials assigned will be determined by the Director.
2. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

L. SOCCER:

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. If one official fails to appear and one official referees the game, that official shall receive one and one half the regular contest fee.
3. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

M. SOFTBALL:

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. If one official fails to appear and one official referees the game, that official shall receive one and one half the regular contest fee.
3. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

N. SWIMMING:

1. Three officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. If only two officials work the meet, each official shall receive an additional fee per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.
3. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

O. VOLLEYBALL:

1. Two officials required, except in cases of unusual circumstances approved by the RIIL or emergencies.
2. If one official fails to appear and one official referees the game, that official shall receive one and one half the regular contest fee.
3. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

P. WRESTLING:

1. One official required.
2. Fees – Per rate published in the RIIL Rules Book.

Section 7. SPORTSMANSHIP AND OFFICIALS RESPONSIBILITY

The Committee believes that the ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior, which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Further, awareness of the impact of an individual's influence on the behavior of others is expected. Good sportsmanship is viewed by the RIIL as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity.

If you examine the standards of conduct required in high school athletics compared to the major college and professional levels, you will conclude that the older the athlete is, the more immature that person is allowed to behave.

Routinely, high school athletes will be penalized and ejected from contests for antics that are praised and emulated at higher levels. This is to the everlasting credit of those who lead, coach, officiate, participate in, and watch interscholastic athletics. It is this challenge that the contrast between educational athletics and so-called higher levels becomes even more obvious as we raise the standards of what is expected and tolerated in school sportsmanship.

The problem of decaying sportsmanship at all levels of competition is a major concern that needs to be addressed. Misconduct in athletics is a high-profile reflection of the general acceptance of disrespect in society. It is a social problem and sports are a microcosm of that problem.

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League formed a Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct Committee for the purpose of addressing the issue of sportsmanship and ethical conduct. The Committee, with the approval of the Principals' Committee on Athletics, developed a packet and recommended that all schools adopt and adhere to the expectations.

The Committee was particularly concerned about "taunting." The Principals' Committee on Athletics passed a recommendation of the Sportsmanship Committee to broaden the definition of "taunting" and make it a disqualifying foul in all sports. As a result, officials will be expected to eject players and bench personnel (*including coaches*) for taunting; and the Rhode Island Interscholastic League tournament supervisors will be expected to eject from the premises any spectator who engages in taunting.

The definition of taunting is this:

"Any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters."

Examples of taunting include:

"Trash Talk"

Physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game.

References to sexual orientation.

"In the face" confrontation by one player to another.

Standing over or straddling a tackled or fallen player.

Noticeable improvement in school sportsmanship will require concerted effort.

Good sports don't need to wait for other's actions. Good sports already know what is offensive, and what has no more place in school sports than it would have in a school classroom. This is educational athletics. We must maintain the highest education standards in all facets of the athletic arena.

OFFICIALS RESPONSIBILITY: Officials assigned Rhode Island Interscholastic League contests **MUST** enforce the rules regarding sportsmanship without tolerance for abuse. The only warning to participants and coaches regarding sportsmanship should come at the beginning of the contest. Once the contest begins, penalties not warnings, must be assessed for unsportsmanlike conduct. The Rhode Island Interscholastic League expects that officials will eject any coach who protests an unsportsmanlike conduct call provided by the rules of the sport.

Each official at a Rhode Island Interscholastic League sponsored event will be provided with a card with the following statement which **MUST** be read to the **Captains and Coaches and/or teams together** at **EVERY** contest prior to the beginning of the contest:

"The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and your state association require officials to enforce sportsmanship rules. High school athletics emphasize positive values. All of us have worked hard to create a sense of teamwork, respect, responsibility and perspective. We remind you that we expect good behavior and will quickly penalize misconduct. We encourage and appreciate your help. Let this competition reflect mutual respect among all participants, coaches and officials. Coaches please certify that your players are legally equipped and uniformed according to the NFHS rules. Good luck and have a great contest!"

Note for Hockey: The reading of the "Sportsmanship Card" by officials shall take place as follows:

- For the 1st game, officials shall enter the locker room 20 minutes prior to the start of the game and read the "Sportsmanship Card" to coaches and entire team.
- For the 2nd game, officials shall enter the locker room prior to the start of the 3rd period of the first game and read the "Sportsmanship Card" to the coaches and the entire team.

Section 8. OFFICIAL UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Unprofessional conduct on the part of the official such as, but not limited to, taunting, baiting, use of profanity, shall be reported in writing by a school administrator from the aggrieved school to the executive

director. A request will be made to the appropriate Official's Association to conduct a complete and thorough investigation of the incidence and to report their action in writing to the executive director in a timely manner. The Executive Director will weigh all reports, evidence, and dispositions by the Officials Association and if necessary recommend further disciplinary action. The official in question may appeal this decision to the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

Section 9. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. No school will be permitted to deviate from the above schedule of fees for the various sports.
- B. The school shall strive to provide game fees to officials on the day of the game or within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the game
- C. Whenever a school team arrives late at a site for a regularly scheduled RIIL contest, they shall be allowed a reasonable amount of time to warm-up once on the playing field. A reasonable time will be no less than fifteen (15) minutes.
- D. The jurisdiction over the coaches and players by the officials assigned to that game remains in effect until s/he leaves the premises, the premises to include the parking lot. Officials are required to arrive one half hour prior to game time and may leave after the ceremonial handshake.
- E. When a contest is protested because of a decision of an official(s) and the decision is upheld, new officials will be assigned to any portion of the contest, which must be replayed. The Officiating Board of that sport will pay the fee of the reassigned officials. If a contest is protested, and the decision is to replay the contest, it shall be resumed at the *POINT of PROTEST*.
- F. If the student-athletes' doctor gives clearance to participate with the use of a protective cast that is approved by the Rule of the Game (NFHS), the student-athlete will be required and must have an authorized letter from the doctor which shall be considered valid for a period of six (6) weeks from the date of the letter. (It shall not be necessary for the student-athlete to present a note each week.) At the end of the six (6) week period the student athlete may provide another doctor note which shall remain valid for another six (6) weeks from the date of the letter. The school is required to have the doctor's authorization letter for review by the official prior to any RIIL contest.
- G. Mutual Consent: If less than the number of scheduled officials shows at an event, the contest can only be played if both coaches agree and give mutual consent to play the contest with less than the number of scheduled officials, provided further, that the official(s) on site must also consent.
- H. The following procedure is to be used in all outdoor sports/activities sponsored by the RIIL by game officials and/or athletic directors and/or sport directors and/or coaches.
 - 1. 1. Criteria for suspension and resumption of play:
 - a. When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately.
 - b. Thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minute after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
 - c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count reset the clock and another 30 minute count should begin.
 - 2. All activity is to be postponed or suspended if a thunderstorm appears imminent before or during a contest (regardless of whether lightning is seen or thunder heard) until the hazard has passed. Signs of imminent thunderstorm activity are darkened clouds, high winds and thunder or lightning activity.
 - 3. Officials, coaches, sport directors or personnel in charge will designate a safe shelter for each venue, such as inside a residential school building, but not dugouts or under trees or bleachers where lightning can still strike. An alternative emergency safe shelter is a school bus, car (solid roof, not a convertible) with windows rolled up completely.

4. Officials are to make the call to remove individuals from the field. Coaches/Athletic Directors/Sport Directors are to make the call to remove individuals from any sport/activity where no official(s) are present.
5. Other:
 - a. Be more wary of the lightning threat than the rain. Lightning can strike far from the rain shaft.
 - b. Lightning or thunder should be the determining factor in postponing or suspending the activity—not the amount of rainfall on the playing field. Even a gentle rain can bring lightning.
 - c. For further information on the topic: “Lighting Safety for Athletics and Recreation” <http://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/LightningSafety4AthleticsRec.pdf>

For more detailed information, refer to the “Guidelines for Lightning Safety” section contained in the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook.

I. Officials

- a. All prospective officials will be given a copy of this policy to review in advance of completing step (b).
- b. Officials will complete the BCI disclaimer form and present it in person to the Bureau of Criminal Identification for processing
- c. The BCI results will be forwarded to the Officials Assigning Board (Association) for review. Should the BCI investigation indicate the existence of disqualifying information (see appendix 1), the individual shall be deemed “disqualified” for assignment in this capacity as an official. The Officials Assigning Board (Association) will then provide the RIIL a list of all officials one week prior to the start of the season who have complied with all requirements. No official will be authorized to officiate until cleared by the Officials Assigning Board (Association).

Disqualifying Information

Convictions (guilty pleas, nolo plea, or found guilty) of any of the following offenses will disqualify an individual from having an officiating assignment in any RIIL game.

Felony Convictions

Murder
 Manslaughter
 Kidnapping
 Kidnapping with the intent to extort
 Rape
 First Degree Arson
 First, Second or Third degree sexual assault
 Abuse of Assault of a minor
 Assault with intent to murder
 Assault with intent to rob
 Assault with intent to commit first degree sexual assault
 Assault with intent to commit specified felonies
 Felony assault
 Domestic assault
 First or Second-degree child abuse
 Sale of illegal drug:
 Any offense constituting a felony that is enumerated in Rhode Island General Law 21-28-1 et. Seq. (The Uniform Controlled Substances Act)
 Burglary
 Robbery
 Larceny
 Felony Banking Violations (RI Stat. Sec. 23-17-37)

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