

Virginia High School League



Sports Official's Handbook

2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to become a VHSL contest official! The Virginia High School League is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization which has as its members the 313 public high schools in the Commonwealth. More than 200,000 students participate annually in 29 athletic and 6 academic activities competing for 155 state championships. Officials are an integral component of VHSL athletic and activity programs. In fact, without officials, there would be no programs. This guidebook is intended to assist you through the process of becoming a VHSL contest official.

The League registers officials in baseball, basketball, competitive cheerleading, field hockey, football, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swim and dive, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling. We are always looking for men and women who wish to join the ranks of the approximately 7,500 officials already in service. Registration is a privilege, and as such, it comes with responsibilities. Those responsibilities are detailed in this Official's Guide.

Officiating is not for everyone. It requires hours of study and practice. It requires an ability to "see" the game a different way, from an official's viewpoint rather than as a spectator, player or coach. It requires dedication and discipline. It requires people management skills. It requires good judgment. It requires the ability to read, understand and apply the rules as intended. It requires confidence without arrogance. It requires the ability to stay calm while other participants may be very emotional. It requires physical fitness and mental toughness. Good officials make it look easy! But, every good official has spent hours, days and years developing their craft. The best officials have a passion for what they do. They don't officiate for the power or so that they can be in control, they officiate because they love it, they want to stay involved in the sport, and they want to contribute to the education of young people. As an official, you have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of today's young people – tomorrow's leaders. If you think you have what it takes to become a VHSL contest official, then welcome – and read on!

2. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS

As independent contractors, officials are responsible for their own scheduling, personal equipment, uniforms, insurance, transportation, education and training expenses associated with officiating. VHSL registered officials are "Independent Contractors" who are contracted to perform a specific task. Officials are not eligible for unemployment compensation, disability or worker's compensation benefits. Each contracting entity should review this matter with its local legal counsel in order to make its own determination regarding practices to follow with regard to officials who serve as its independent contractors.

3. GENERAL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. You must be at least 18 years of age or a high school graduate to register to officiate contests in the interscholastic program. (Exception: A high school junior or senior who is at least 16 years of age may register with an association, but may only officiate contests below the high school level. The registration fee for these individuals is \$15.00 per sport.)
- B. You may not officiate contests involving VHSL schools until all registration procedures and annual requirements have been completed. An official who works a VHSL contest without having completed all required procedures may be fined, suspended for the remainder of that officiating season and/or denied registration the following year(s).
- C. If you are inactive due to illness, job requirements or other similar reasons you may retain your classification by registering with the League office (through the local association) and passing the required exam. The maximum time you retain this privilege is one year.

4. ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Complete the VHSL registration process, paying all registration fees and association dues to your local officials' association.
- B. Take and pass the VHSL required rules exam.
- C. Meet the VHSL rules clinic attendance requirement.
- D. Meet local association requirements.
- E. Make a commitment to yourself to become the best official you can be.

5. COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LAW

As required by § 22.1-296.1(C) of The Code of Virginia, you must certify to your local association that you have never been convicted of a felony or any offense involving the sexual molestation or physical or sexual abuse or rape of a child. This is an annual requirement and a condition of registration with VHSL. A sample form can be found on the VHSL website at <http://www.vhsl.org/doc/upload/adm-felony-conviction-form.pdf>. If you can't or won't sign such a statement, you may not register with VHSL. Records must be maintained at the local association level. Local associations may have to provide documentation to schools under contract verifying that any official assigned to work games has a signed statement on file.

6. VHSL RECOGNIZED OFFICIALS ASSOCIATIONS

Except for swimming and track and field, officiating in Virginia is association based. Contracts for officiating services are made between schools and officials associations. Therefore, it is necessary for individuals who wish to work contests involving VHSL schools to affiliate with a VHSL recognized association. VHSL recognized associations in good standing with the League are (1) listed annually in the VHSL Directory; (2) listed on the VHSL website; (3) may participate in officials' awards and recognition programs; (4) may provide officials to District, Conference and Region tournaments; and (5) will receive consideration for State tournament assignments. To be a VHSL recognized association in good standing, the following criteria must be met:

- A. The association must be approved by the district(s), conference(s) and region(s) in which it works. This approval is for contract period.
- B. The association must provide officiating services at the varsity level to a minimum of six VHSL schools.
- C. The association must maintain a minimum membership of 20 active officials whose classifications are either "approved" or "certified."
- D. The association must provide to the League office a list of its current members. This is an annual requirement.
- E. The association must provide to the VHSL a copy of its Constitution and Bylaws and any amendments as they are made.
- F. The association must provide to the VHSL a list of its officers with contact information. The assigner and local rules interpreter should be included in this list. This is an annual requirement.
- G. The association must hold a minimum of four local meetings per year at which rules and mechanics are discussed. This is an annual requirement.
- H. The association must provide to the VHSL a copy of its meeting schedule and proposed agendas. This is an annual requirement.
- I. The association must provide a minimum of 10 hours of training for all new/beginning officials. The association must also provide a copy of its training curriculum to the VHSL office.
- J. The association must submit all requested reports/forms to the League office by the announced deadline dates.

- K. The association must provide an assignment committee and/or grievance committee to review game assignments and to hear possible grievances by members.
- L. The association must accept any transfer official from either in-state or out-of-state associations without requiring an excessive waiting period. A one year probationary period is the maximum permitted. This maximum does not apply to new/beginning officials.
- M. The association must periodically review policies, fees and membership requirements.
- N. The association must meet periodically with member schools to review contracts, conditions and fees.
- O. The association must not require members to join national organizations of officials (IAABO, USFHA, USSF, NASO, etc.) as a condition for officiating VHSL member school contests, nor require as a precondition of voting membership in the local association the taking of any examination other than the examination of the NFHS.
- P. The association must not deny membership to properly registered VHSL officials who are in good standing with the League without stating in writing its reasons to the Executive Director of the League or his/her designee.
- Q. The association must not have any rule or regulation which is in conflict with the rules and regulations of the VHSL.
- R. The association must not assign officials to games in which the official has a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- S. The association must not discriminate in any way in either its membership or assignment policies.

The VHSL Executive Director or his/her designee may waive any of the above requirements if doing so would be in the best interests of member schools.

7. CHOOSE AN ASSOCIATION

Choosing the right association is an important first step toward becoming a VHSL contest official. You will find lists of associations, by sport, on the VHSL website. You can access the lists by going to www.vhsl.org and clicking on "Officials." A point of contact is listed for each association. In some cases there may be more than one association that works games at schools near where you live or work.

8. DUAL AFFILIATION

As an independent contractor, you may choose to affiliate with more than one association in the same sport. Before doing so, however, you should carefully consider the complexities of working for multiple associations. It is unethical to belong to more than one association for the purpose of "cherry-picking" games. Once you accept an assignment from one association, you are obligated to keep it, and owe it to your other association(s) to make sure that your availability information reflects that you are no longer available on the date of your assignment. If you do choose to affiliate with more than one association in the same sport, you must declare one of them to be your "primary" association. Your primary association is the association that will register you with the VHSL and to which all of your officiating materials will be sent.

9. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES – RETURNING OFFICIALS

Registration Period – July 1-31

You are a returning official if you registered with the VHSL as an official in any sport during the previous school year. The registration period for all returning officials in all sports is July 1 – July 31 each year.

- A. It is up to you to let your association know whether or not you intend to officiate
- B. It is up to you to notify your association of any address, telephone or email changes.
- C. Depending on your association's policies, your VHSL registration fees will either be withheld from your prior year's earnings, or you will pay your VHSL registration fees to the appropriate person in your association. Do not send money to the VHSL office.
- D. The association will submit payment to the VHSL for each individual listed on its roster.
- E. Registration fees are established annually by the VHSL Executive Committee. Current registration fees are as follows:¹

Single (first) sport - \$45.00 (beginning in 2015-16)
Additional sports - \$30.00 each (beginning in 2015-16)

- F. If you officiate multiple sports, it is up to you to inform your association(s) so that you do not pay registration fees in excess of what you owe.
- G. Returning officials who fail to register during the month of July are subject to a registration late fee of \$25.00 per sport. (Note: If you are registering in a sport in which you have not previously registered, you will not be charged a late fee provided that you register during the time frames shown below for new officials.)
- H. Refunds will not be issued for individuals who attempt the exam or the rules clinic.
- I. If a refund is authorized by the VHSL's Director of Officials, VHSL will retain a \$15.00 processing fee per official per sport.
- J. Returning officials will not be permitted to register for the current year once the late/new officials' registration period ends.²

10. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES – NEW OFFICIALS

Fall Sports Registration Period for NEW Officials – July 15 – August 5

Winter Sports Registration Period for NEW Officials – October 15 – November 5

Spring Sports Registration Period for NEW Officials – February 1 – February 21

You are a new official if you were not registered with the VHSL as an official in any sport during the previous school year. If you are registering in a sport for the first time, you may also register during the applicable registration window without penalty. The registration periods for new officials are shown above. These are also "late" registration time frames for returning officials. Officials who register after the prescribed deadlines are subject to a late fee of \$25.00 per sport.

- A. You must complete the VHSL Official's Application Form (on the VHSL website).
- B. You must affiliate with a VHSL-recognized officials' association. Recognized associations are listed on the VHSL website – click on "Officials" and then on "Associations."
- C. Complete any paperwork and pay applicable registration fees and/or association dues to your local association. Registration fees are established annually by the VHSL Executive Committee. Current registration fees are as follows:³

Single (first) sport - \$45.00 (beginning in 2015-16)
Additional sports - \$30.00 each (beginning in 2015-16)

¹ In September of 2014, the VHSL's Executive Committee approved a \$5.00 registration fee increase for 2015-16. In 2015-16, registration fees will be \$45.00 for the first sport, and \$30.00 for each additional sport.

² Category A transfer officials may register until the mid-point of the applicable season has been reached.

³ In September of 2014, the VHSL's Executive Committee approved a \$5.00 registration fee increase for 2015-16. In 2015-16, registration fees will be \$45.00 for the first sport and \$30.00 for each additional sport.

- D. Your association will request a VHSL ID for you. You will need this ID to take the mandatory exam and rules clinic. VHSL ID's are not provided until all fees have been received.
- E. New officials who register after the deadlines shown above will be charged a \$25.00 late fee.
- F. Refunds will not be issued for individuals who attempt the exam or the rules clinic, with or without a VHSL ID.
- G. If a refund is authorized by the VHSL's Director of Officials, VHSL will retain a \$15.00 processing fee per official per sport.

11. CLASSIFICATION OF OFFICIALS

- A. **Certified** – A Certified official may officiate regular season varsity and sub-varsity contests and, if selected, District, Conference, Region and State Tournament contests. To be a Certified official, you must:
 - 1) Be registered and in good standing with the VHSL;
 - 2) Score a minimum of 85% on the annual VHSL-required rules exam;
 - 3) Meet the annual state rules clinic requirement; and
 - 4) Be in good standing with your local association.
- B. **Approved** – An Approved official may officiate regular season varsity and sub-varsity contests, but is not eligible for post-season play. To be an Approved official, you must:
 - 1) Be registered and in good standing with the VHSL;
 - 2) Score a minimum of 75% on the annual VHSL-required rules exam;
 - 3) Meet the annual state rules clinic requirement; and
 - 4) Be in good standing with your local association.
- C. **Registered** – A Registered official may officiate sub-varsity contests only. To be a Registered official, you must:
 - 1) Be registered and in good standing with the VHSL;
 - 2) Score a minimum of 70% on the annual VHSL-required rules exam;
 - 3) Meet the annual state rules clinic requirement; and
 - 4) Be in good standing with your local association.

12. TRANSFER OFFICIALS – CATEGORY A

A Category A transfer official is an individual who has in the past 12 months been an official in good standing with another NFHS-member state association, and who is registering with the VHSL for the first time; or who is returning to VHSL officiating after a break in service of at least one year but no more than five years. The League will honor officiating records submitted by the sending state high school association. Records from local officials associations are not acceptable unless verified by the sending state association. Category A transfer officials shall be afforded the opportunity to be evaluated without requiring an excessive waiting period. A one-year probationary period is the maximum permitted. This maximum does not apply to new or beginning officials. Associations may register Category A transfer officials in July, or during the new officials' registration period for the applicable sport. After the new officials' registration period has ended, late fees will apply. No one will be permitted to register for the current year once the mid-point of the applicable sport's season has been reached.

13. TRANSFER OFFICIALS – CATEGORY B

A Category B transfer official is an individual who is transferring between VHSL recognized associations without a break in service. Category B transfer officials must register during the July registration window or pay applicable late fees. Category B transfer officials shall be afforded the opportunity to be evaluated without requiring an excessive waiting period. A one-year probationary period is the maximum permitted. This maximum does not apply to new or beginning officials.

14. ASSIGNMENTS

The League staff does not assign officials for regular season contests. Officiating assignments for regular season, Conference and Region Tournament contests are made through local associations. Each association has an individual who assigns officials to games. It is important that you have a good relationship with your assigner. To have a good relationship, you must be honest and current regarding your availability. Assigners don't like having to assign the same game twice! If you have indicated you are available and you receive an assignment, accept it. Don't worry about who is working other games, work yours to the best of your ability each and every time. Officials with limited availability will likely get fewer games. Officials who reject or turn-back assignments will likely get fewer games. Assigners want people who say yes! The level of games you are assigned will be determined by your VHSL registration status and your ability as ranked or compared to other officials within your local association. Your local association will make that determination. Remember that there is no game that is "beneath" you – every game is important.

State tournament assignments are made through the VHSL office and are based on input from local associations, observers, past performance, and knowledge of VHSL staff.

Officials for Conference, Region and State tournament contests must be on the list of VHSL "Certified" officials. A Certified official is one who is duly registered with the VHSL, attains a score of 85% or higher on the required rules exam, meets the annual rules clinic requirement, and is in good standing with his/her local association and the League.

15. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The integrity of contest officials must be without question. If you have a conflict of interest at a school(s), you must identify those issues for your assigner/commissioner before accepting games. You must not accept assignments to games involving the school(s) at which you have a conflict of interest. Following are some examples of conflict of interest that must be avoided:

- A. You should not accept an assignment to a contest involving a school at which you are currently, or were recently (within the last 5 years), employed.
- B. You should not accept an assignment to a contest involving a school from which you graduated.
- C. You should not accept an assignment to a contest involving a school in which your child/children is/are currently, or were previously, enrolled.
- D. You should not accept an assignment to a contest involving students you work with on a regular basis in an AAU or club setting.
- E. You should not accept an assignment to a contest involving a coach with whom you socialize on a regular basis.

Prior to the start of each season, you must inform your assigner regarding any conflicts of interest. If your assigner assigns you to a game involving a school at which you have a conflict of interest, you should communicate with your assigner and decline the assignment.

16. NFHS AND NFOA

All VHSL registered officials are members of the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) Officials' Association (NFOA). As an NFOA member, you receive the following benefits:

- A. Access to educational content at the NFHS Central Hub (www.arbitersports.com), including searchable NFHS Rule Books and Case Books; other NFHS publications; video and animation of NFHS rules and mechanics; an "Officials' Forum;" feature articles on officiating including archived issues of the NFHS publication "Officials Quarterly;" and other general officiating content.
- B. Eligibility for the NFHS national and state level awards programs.
- C. Insurance coverage for all levels of officiating except professional.
- D. Eligibility to participate in the NFHS rules-making process.
- E. Free access to some selected resources on NFHSLearn.com and NFHSOfficials.com.

17. TRAINING

VHSL relies heavily on local associations to provide proper training for both new and experienced officials. VHSL requires that local associations provide a minimum of 10 hours of training for new officials. This training should include classroom sessions as well as game/scrimmage experience. The VHSL also requires that associations hold a minimum of four meetings per year for the purpose of discussing rules, mechanics, position, philosophy, situations, and other pertinent topics. A good meeting will likely last an hour or more.

Each official has a responsibility to seek out and participate in activities that will provide opportunities to improve his/her skills. Go to camps. Observe others. Study the rules. Understand the sport. Watch video. Ask questions. Be receptive.

18. LEAGUE DISCIPLINE OF OFFICIALS

The League can censure/reprimand, suspend, deny registration and/or fine an individual for actions or behaviors that are inconsistent with the League's mission and/or the profession of officiating. Actions for which an individual might be subject to discipline by the VHSL include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Working a game for which you do not have the proper certification level.
- B. Working a game involving a VHSL school with an individual who is not registered as a VHSL official.
- C. Working a game in which you have a clear conflict of interest.
- D. Conduct that is detrimental to the League or to fellow officials.

19. VHSL SPORTSMANSHIP RULE

VHSL athletic and activities programs are education-based. Students who participate in VHSL programs have opportunities to learn and develop those skills, attitudes and strength of character that will serve them well

throughout their lives. VHSL programs are intended to “build better citizens” through participation in athletics and activities. Officials have the privilege of being a part of this process. The VHSL Sportsmanship Rule (27-11-1 in the VHSL Handbook) is as follows:

27-11-1 SPORTSMANSHIP RULE – Member schools are required to conduct all their relations with other schools in a spirit of good sportsmanship. Acts which are prima facie evidence of failure to abide by this rule are those which are noted below and others of a similar nature which transgress the usually accepted code for good sportsmanship. All incidents of conduct relating to either athletic or academic activities that are violations of the Sportsmanship Rule must be reported to the Virginia High School League.

Noted examples of violations of the VHSL's Sportsmanship Rule include, but are not limited to (1) failure to provide for proper control of spectators; (2) failure of any team or competitor to stay in a contest until the normal end when the failure to do so is related to dissatisfaction with the officiating; (3) harassment of contest officials by a coach or a coach's ejection from a contest; (4) failure of a school to use every means at its disposal to impress upon its “school community” the values of sportsmanship and the importance of observing rules governing same; and (5) the ejection of a player and/or coach from a contest, scrimmage, jamboree or Benefit Game.

20. REPORTING EJECTIONS

You must report all ejections and sportsmanship incidents to your local association, usually to your Commissioner/Assigner. Your assigner will send a report to both schools and to the VHSL office. Schools and associations have 48 hours to complete this process, so don't delay in making your report.

If, during the course of the contest, it becomes necessary to eject a player(s) or coach(es), the following procedures should be observed.

- A. Using the approved on-field/on-court mechanics for the sport, indicate that the player or coach is ejected.
- B. Communicate to all head coaches the number and/or name of the player/competitor and that he/she has been ejected. Do not say such things as, “#25 is done for the night” or “#25 needs to leave.” Tell the coach that “#25 has been ejected from this contest.” Also tell both head coaches WHY the player has been ejected – e.g., for fighting; for a flagrant foul; for a second technical foul; or for two “cautions.”
- C. Have the official scorekeeper record the ejection in the official score book, noting the name, and/or number of the person ejected as well as the time on the clock when the ejection occurred and the reason for that ejection (e.g., #25 White, Ejected 3:53 4th Q - Fighting, or Green Head Coach Ejected, 3Q 1:21- Flagrant technical foul). Make sure this information is recorded in each team's scorebook or official record of the event.
- D. As soon as you get home after the contest (or before, if possible), you should send an email (or call) your assigner and provide a narrative describing the circumstances that resulted in the ejection. The assigner needs to know who (name or number), when and why the person was ejected.

It is important to remember that it is not within your prescribed duties as a contest official to set aside any rules. If an individual violates the rules in a way that requires ejection, you must apply those rules. Players or team personnel who violate the rules by leaving the bench during a fight or when a fight may occur MUST be ejected and the ejection(s) reported to your assigner. It is not always possible to get the numbers of all players who leave the bench/team area, but you must report the numbers that you DO get. Also be aware that officials cannot “undo” an ejection, even if you realize later that you have made a mistake. Officials can't “make deals” with coaches or AD's after the fact. It doesn't matter if the ejected player is “a great kid” or is usually a model citizen.

ALL ejections must be reported to your commissioner or other designated individual. If you made a mistake, let your commissioner know that. Be honest.

21. REPORTING SPORTSMANSHIP “INCIDENTS”

Sportsmanship “incidents” are situations that can occur during the contest, but that more often occur following a contest and can involve players, coaches, spectators or school administrators. Examples of incidents that must be reported include, but are not limited to, those that follow:

- A. Any incident involving a spectator, before, during or after the contest.
- B. Incidents involving damage to school or personal property.
- C. Physical or verbal altercations or other unsportsmanlike conduct between players, coaches, spectators or officials.
- D. Verbal abuse by players, coaches, or spectators directed toward opposing teams, coaches, or officials.
- E. Public criticism of officials by coaches in news media or social media.
- F. Coaches, players or school administrators entering the officials’ dressing area or standing immediately outside that area at any time for the purpose of criticizing or berating game officials.

Sportsmanship incidents must be reported by the school and by the assigning association. A “Sportsmanship Incident Report Form” is located at <http://www.vhsl.org/doc/upload/adm-sportsmanship-incident.docx>.

22. OFFICIALS RECOGNITION

VHSL Years of Service Certificates – Years of Service certificates are available in 5-year increments. Associations may request such certificates at any time using the VHSL-provided form(s).

NFOA State Active Official of the Year (by sport) – Candidates must be members of the NFHS Officials Association (NFOA) and must exemplify the highest standards of ethical conduct, moral character and carry the endorsement of their respective state high school association. They shall have made a recent significant contribution to high school officiating in Virginia.

Virginia High School Hall of Fame – The Virginia High School Hall of Fame recognizes those who have contributed in outstanding ways to athletic and activities programs serving Virginia's youth. Sponsored jointly by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) and the Virginia High School Coaches Association (VHSCA), the hall is dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of outstanding achievements by students and adults in sports and activities within Virginia's public high schools. Athletes are eligible for consideration 10 years after completion of their high school careers and are judged primarily for their achievements in interscholastic sports. Coaches are eligible after 15 years of experience or upon retirement and are judged on the merits of their achievements at the high school level. **Contributors are professionals who have rendered significant services in some other capacity such as administration, academic activities, officiating, media or sports medicine.** Nominations are due October 31 of each year for consideration for the following year. Athletes and coaches are screened by a committee from the VHSCA and contributors by a committee from the VHSL. Final selections are made by a joint committee.

NFOA National Contributor – Each state may nominate one CONTRIBUTOR to compete for the honor with nominees from other states. Nominees must exemplify the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and moral character, and carry the endorsement of their respective state high school association. The nominee need not be a member of the NFHS Officials Association. Some typical categories for this recognition are athletic administrators, writers, official's association leaders, etc. All candidates will be judged on their significant and/or long-term contribution to interscholastic officiating.

NFOA SECTIONAL/NATIONAL ACTIVE OFFICIAL – Each state association may nominate one active official for this honor to compete with nominees from other states within NFHS Section 2. Nominees must exemplify the highest standards of ethical conduct, moral character and carry the endorsement of their respective state high school association. The nominee may or may not also be a state level award recipient. All candidates will be judged on their significant and/or long-term contribution to interscholastic officiating. Candidates must be members of the NFHS Officials Association (NFOA).

NFHS Citation Award (Official) – This is the highest honor awarded by the NFHS Officials Association and goes to a person deemed to have contributed to the association at the highest level. Only one citation may be awarded each year. Each state may nominate one Citation nominee. NFHS Citations are presented to individuals who have made significant contributions to the NFHS and/or other national organizations that have had an impact on high school activities. This nominee need not be an NFHS Officials Association member. Among the factors that may be considered are the following: 1) a longstanding and distinguished record of promoting officiating at the local and state level; 2) recognition among their colleagues for excellence; 3) approval from the state association executive officer. The NFHS Citation award recipient is honored at the Awards Luncheon at the NFHS Summer Meeting each year.

23. NFHS PLAYING RULES AND QUESTIONNAIRES

The VHSL is a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). VHSL member schools compete using rules as written by the NFHS in all sports except golf, girls lacrosse, and tennis. The NFHS rules writing process involves coaches, administrators and officials from across the country. Every year, near the end of each sport season, the NFHS provides online questionnaires for the purpose of gathering input on recent rule changes and rule change proposals. All officials registered in a given sport have the opportunity and are encouraged to complete the applicable questionnaire.

24. OFFICIALS' UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

It is important that all officials dress professionally and in the required uniform. Coaches, players and fans will begin judging officials the moment they arrive at the game site. A professional appearance goes a long way in establishing credibility and respect. Uniforms should be clean and wrinkle-free. Shoes should be shined. Unless otherwise specified, the VHSL official's emblem and U.S. Flag are the only allowable markings on the uniform shirt unless a variance has been permitted in writing by VHSL's Director of Officiating. The VHSL official's emblem must be worn on the left chest (above the pocket if there is one), and a U.S. Flag patch must be worn on the left sleeve. The top border of the flag patch should be approximately 6 ½" down from the shoulder seam. All uniforms must be VHSL approved.

- A. Baseball – Gray slacks with a black leather belt, black socks, a navy or powder blue pullover shirt, and a navy hat/cap (fitted caps are preferred). The navy shirt has red and white trim at the collar and cuffs. The powder blue shirt has black cuffs and collar with powder blue and white accent striping. If an undershirt is worn, it should be red or black. Markings other than the VHSL official's emblem and U.S. Flag are not permitted unless authorized by the VHSL's Director of Officials. A navy blue sweater (bases only), blazer, windbreaker, or windshirt worn over the appropriate shirt is permitted. The plate umpire should wear shoes designed for safety that include hard toes. The plate umpire also needs a ball and strike indicator, a small plate brush, ball bag, lineup cards and a pen or pencil, a chest protector, a sturdy mask with a throat protector, and shin guards. Base umpires should wear the conventional oxford type baseball shoes or black oxfords with golf type cleats or ripple soles. Primarily black shoes designed for umpiring should be worn by all umpires.

- B. Basketball – VHSL approved black and white striped (2 ¼”) short-sleeved shirt, black pants (beltless pants are preferred), black belt with small buckle (if worn), black socks, predominantly black shoes, black lanyard or “Smitty,” and black “Fox-40-type” whistle. Pants may be flat front or pleated. A black or navy jacket may be worn during pre-game warm-ups.
- C. Competitive Cheer – Long-sleeved white blouse and khaki or black slacks. Business attire may also be worn. VHSL officials’ emblem shall be worn on the left chest or on a lanyard worn around the neck. The U.S. Flag should be worn on the left shoulder of the white blouse.
- D. Field Hockey – VHSL approved shirt; black kilt, shorts or slacks (shorts or kilt should be at least to mid-thigh), white or black low-cut socks or black knee-length socks, predominantly black shoes with black laces, and black whistle.
- E. Football – VHSL approved black and white striped (2 ¼”) shirt with black knit cuffs and Byron collar, all white tapered knickers with a short overlap (no more than 4”) below the knee, one-piece stockings with a modified northwestern stripe, black football shoes with black laces (shoes should be shined before each game), black baseball-style cap with white piping (referee shall wear a solid, white baseball-style cap), and a black leather belt with a plain buckle. Officials may wear full-length, lined black pants with a single 1 ¼ inch white stripe down each leg. When these black pants are worn, the game officials must wear black socks. All officials in a crew must wear the same style uniform.
- F. Gymnastics – Business attire or other VHSL approved uniform. VHSL officials’ emblem shall be worn on the left chest or on a lanyard worn around the neck.
- G. Boys Lacrosse – Black baseball-style cap with white piping, VHSL approved black-and-white 1 inch (VHSL custom 2 ¼” stripe preferred) vertically striped long or short-sleeved shirt with Byron collar (any visible undergarments should be black), black or white shorts (minimum 6-inch inseam) or full-length solid black pants, a black belt with small buckle, black stirrup socks with white over-the-calf crew socks on top, knee-length one-piece white with 4-inch black-top socks or short black socks that cover the ankle, and solid black shoes with black laces. A jacket, if worn, shall be black-and-white 1” vertically striped. Gloves, if worn, shall be solid black. Officials must also have a whistle, penalty marker, scorecard and pencil, coin, tape measure, and 20-second timing device. The penalty marker shall be a light yellow gold flag (15 inches square) weighted with sand or beans.
- H. Girls Lacrosse – VHSL approved black and white striped short- or long-sleeved shirt (VHSL custom 2 ¼” striped shirt preferred) with traditional black collar and black cuffs (V-neck shirt is permitted if both officials wear them), black kilt or shorts/pants (shorts/kilt should be at least to mid-thigh), predominantly black shoes with black laces, and white or black low-cut socks or solid black knee socks. If an undershirt is worn, it should be solid black. Hats, visors or ear bands and other cold weather gear should be solid black. Jackets, if worn, shall be black and white striped all-weather jackets, or solid black. Each official must have a black, Fox 40 type whistle and a backup; yellow flag approximately 14” square, weighted or un-weighted; green, yellow and red cards; pencil to record warnings; and a coin for flipping. If a lanyard is used, it should be black.
- I. Soccer – VHSL approved shirt, black shorts (a minimum 6” inseam is recommended) or long trousers, predominantly black shoes and black socks with white stripes. A cap, if worn, must be solid black. Officials must also have a whistle (and a backup), yellow and red cards, a stop watch, a flipping coin, and a pencil and scorecard.

- J. Softball – VHSL approved powder blue, pullover style shirt with black and white striping on the collar and cuffs, heather gray slacks, black belt with a small buckle, black socks, black shoes, and a navy blue fitted cap. If an undershirt is worn under the powder blue shirt, it shall be white and short sleeved. If a long-sleeved undershirt or turtle-neck is worn, it shall not be exposed. Navy blue pullover style jacket or knit sweater may be worn. The plate umpire must have a mask with a throat protector, an inside-style chest protector, leg guards, shoes with a hard shell or steel reinforced toe and tongue, ball and strike indicator, ball bag, and plate brush. Base umpire(s) should have a ball and strike indicator.
- K. Swim & Dive – White polo or jacket, or VHSL approved white polo with Navy shoulder accents (preferred), navy slacks/shorts, and white shoes. The white polo with Navy accents will be required in 2016-17.
- L. Track – Required in 2017 – Tan/khaki slacks or shorts (minimum 8” inseam recommended), VHSL track official’s shirt (white performance polo with black accents at the shoulder), and appropriate shoes. A black or navy windbreaker/windshirt may be worn during inclement weather. A tan/khaki VHSL cap is optional.
- M. Volleyball – VHSL approved white short or long sleeved performance polo shirt with black shoulder accents (VHSL custom shirt), black slacks, black belt with small buckle (if worn), black socks, and black shoes. A long sleeved white sweater may be worn over the white polo shirt if conditions warrant. The first referee must also have a black or white lanyard, a black or white whistle, a set of yellow and red cards, a coin and a watch. In addition to the equipment needed by the first referee, the second referee must also have a lineup “card” and a pen/pencil.
- N. Wrestling – VHSL approved gray short-sleeved shirt with black pinstripes, or an event provided shirt common to all referees at that event, full-length black trousers, black belt with small buckle (if trousers have belt loops), black socks and black wrestling/gym shoes without colored highlights. The referee shall also have a colored disk, a black lanyard and black whistle, red and green armbands (red armband on the left wrist; green armband on the right wrist), and a kit to complete a random draw.

25. OFFICIAL’S CODE OF ETHICS (as provided by the NFHS)

Officials at an interscholastic athletic event are participants in the educational development of high school students. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all interscholastic officials.

- Officials shall master both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
- Officials shall work with each other and their state associations in a constructive and cooperative manner.
- Officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interaction with student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public.
- Officials shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
- Officials shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
- Officials shall remain mindful that their conduct influences the respect that student-athletes, coaches and the public hold for the profession.

- Officials shall, while enforcing the rules of play, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to student-athletes. Where appropriate, they shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.
- Officials shall take reasonable steps to educate themselves in the recognition of emergency conditions that might arise during the course of competition.
- Officials shall maintain an ethical approach while participating in forums, chat rooms and all forms of social media.

26. SCRIMMAGES

Scrimmages are practice sessions between two or three schools. Each team in a scrimmage is limited to 1 ½ times the length of a regular season contest. Scrimmages are also practice sessions for officials, and therefore no game fee may be charged except in situations where the scrimmage occurs after the first official contest date. Then a negotiated fee may be charged. The number of scrimmages required of each official is determined by each officials' association.

27. JAMBOREES

Jamborees are practice sessions involving more than three schools. Jamborees are to be played under game-like conditions. Each team in a jamboree is limited to 1 ½ times the length of a regular season contest. Officials must be paid for working a jamboree. Schools and associations should negotiate a fee schedule for jamborees.

28. BENEFIT GAMES

A benefit game is a unique opportunity for two schools to play a game that might not otherwise fit in their schedule. The purpose of the game is to build enthusiasm and school morale. For those reasons, benefit games are often played near the beginning of a sport's season. The revenue from benefit games is divided equally between the two participating schools and the VHSL Foundation.

29. GAME FEES

Fees for regular season, conference tournament, and region tournament games are determined locally by contractual agreement between an officials association and the sponsoring entity. State tournament fees are determined by the VHSL's Executive Committee. State tournament fees are listed in the officials' section of the VHSL website.

30. PHOTOGRAPHER AND MEDIA POLICY

VHSL encourages media coverage of regular and post-season events. Game administrators, with input from game officials, will make the determination as to where photographers may position themselves during play. Flash photography is permitted except in gymnastics, diving and competition cheer, unless it is determined by the officials and host management that the flash or strobe hinders the actions of or endangers the participants.

31. ELIGIBILITY OF ATHLETES

VHSL member schools have adopted eligibility requirements for student-athletes and activities participants. These requirements and regulations can be found in the VHSL Handbook. The eligibility of athletes is NOT the responsibility of contest officials. As a contest official, your only responsibilities are those associated with the rules of the contest you are officiating.

32. VHSL RULE ADOPTIONS

BASEBALL

1. Suspended/Interrupted Games

VHSL Handbook 56-3-1 Suspended/Interrupted Games – A game called for any reason where a winner cannot be determined (less than 4 ½ or 5 innings have been completed or the game is tied) or anytime for mechanical failure (e.g., artificial lights, irrigation systems, etc.) will be treated as a suspended game. The game will be continued from the point of interruption with the line-up and batting order of each team exactly the same as the line-up and batting order at the moment of interruption subject to the rules of the game.

VHSL Handbook 56-3-1 Exception – Prior to the beginning of the season, an appropriate council (District, Conference or Region) may opt not to use this rule.

2. 5-inning doubleheaders permitted

VHSL Policy Manual 56-4-3 BASEBALL/Doubleheaders (5-00) – By mutual agreement of the competing schools, doubleheaders may consist of only five (5) innings per game.

3. Ten-Run Rule

VHSL HB 56-4-4 The Ten-Run Rule – The Ten-Run Rule required for regular season, district and conference tournament games is not in effect for region and state tournament games.

VHSL Handbook 56-4-4 Exception – Prior to the start of the season, a District or Conference Council may elect not to use the Ten-Run Rule for its regular season, district or conference tournament games. When schools play outside of their district, the home district's policy applies.

BASKETBALL

1. Coaching Box

VHSL Handbook 58-4-2 Coaching Box Rule – Provisions as listed in the NFHS Basketball Rules Book dealing with the Coaching Box Rule (10-5-1) shall be used in all VHSL basketball contests. NOTE: VHSL has adopted a 14-foot box.

FIELD HOCKEY

1. Suspended/Interrupted Games

VHSL Handbook 66-3-1 Suspended/Interrupted Games – In the event a game must be suspended by the officials because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the officials/tournament director shall: (a) Declare it an official game if one complete half or more of the game has been played and one team is ahead; (b) At any point after completion of the first half the score is tied, resume the game from the point of interruption; (c) If less than one complete half has been played, resume the game from the point of interruption.

2. Regular Season Tie-Breaker

See the field hockey page on the VHSL website for a printable copy of the overtime procedure.

3. Post-Season Tie-Breaker

See the Field Hockey page on the VHSL website for a printable copy of the overtime procedure.

4. 6-Goal Rule

VHSL Handbook 66-4-4 Six-Goal Rule – The Six-Goal Rule shall be in effect for all regular season, district and conference tournament games. The Six-Goal Rule provides that if, at any time after the mid-point of the second half of play, one team leads by six (6) or more goals, the game shall be terminated. When schools play regular season games outside their district, the home district's policy applies.

VHSL Handbook 66-4-4 Exception – Prior to the start of the season, a District Council may elect not to use the Six-Goal Rule for its regular season and/or district tournament games.

FOOTBALL

1. Football Point Rule

VHSL Policy Manual 68-4-1(1) Football Point Rule (3-06) – When a thirty-five (35) point differential is reached at half-time or at any point during the second half, the game clock will continue to run anytime there is an incomplete pass or the runner goes out of bounds. Should the point differential subsequently be reduced to less than thirty-five points, game officials will discontinue the use of this timing adjustment. This adoption will be utilized during regular season and playoff games and at all levels of play (varsity and sub-varsity). This adjustment may not be utilized when NFHS Football Rule 3-1-3 is in effect.

2. Non-Varsity Games – Length of Quarters

VHSL Handbook 68-4-3 Non-Varsity Games – Ten-minute quarters shall be used for sub-varsity games. For games involving only 8th graders, eight-minute quarters shall be used.

GYMNASTICS

1. Interrupted/Suspended Meets

VHSL Handbook 74-3-1 Interrupted/Suspended Meets – In the event a meet must be suspended by the Meet Referee because of conditions which make it impossible to continue competition on that day, if all teams have completed at least two "common" events (the same two events), the meet will be considered official and the results final based on scores in the completed common events. If all teams have NOT completed at least two common events, the meet, if rescheduled, shall be resumed from the point of interruption.

INDOOR TRACK

1. Suspended/Interrupted Event

VHSL Handbook 76-3-1 Suspended/Interrupted Event – Suspended/interrupted meets shall be resumed from the point of the last completed heat unless the schools involved agree not to continue the event.

BOYS LACROSSE

1. Interrupted/Suspended Games

VHSL Handbook 77-3-1 (2) Suspended/Interrupted Boys Games – In the event a game must be suspended by the referee because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the game shall: (a) Be declared an official game if three periods or more of the game have been played and one team is ahead; (b) After completion of three

periods or more of the game and the game is tied, resume the game from the point of interruption; (c) If less than three periods have been played, resume the game from the point of interruption.

GIRLS LACROSSE

1. Interrupted/Suspended Games

VHSL Handbook 77-3-1(1) Interrupted/Suspended Girls Games – In the event a post season tournament game must be suspended by the referee due to conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the game shall: (a) Be declared an official game if 80% (40 minutes) of the playing time has elapsed and one team is ahead; (b) After completion of 80% (40 minutes) of the playing time, the score is tied, resume the game from the point of interruption; (c) If less than 80% (40 minutes) of the playing time has been completed, resume the game from the point of interruption.

SOCCER

1. Suspended/Interrupted Matches

VHSL Handbook 78-3-1 Suspended/Interrupted Matches – In the event a match must be suspended by the officials because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the officials/tournament director shall: (a) Declare it an official match if one complete half or more of the match has been played and one team is ahead; (b) At any point after completion of the first half if the score is tied, resume the match from the point of interruption unless both teams agree to the tie; (c) If less than one complete half has been played, resume the match from the point of interruption.

2. Regular Season Tie-Breaker

VHSL Handbook 78-4-2 Breaking Ties, Regular Season Play – If a tie exists in regular season play, the teams shall play two five-minute overtime periods. At the end of the first overtime period, teams shall change ends of the field. If a tie still exists, the game shall be recorded as a tie.

3. Post-Season Tie-Breaker

VHSL Handbook 78-4-3 Breaking Ties, Post-Season Play – If a tie exists during post-season play, the tie shall be broken by the Tie-Game Procedure posted on the Soccer page of the VHSL website.

4. 8-Goal Rule

VHSL Handbook 78-4-4 Eight-Goal Rule – The Eight-Goal Rule shall be in effect for all regular season, district and conference tournament matches. The Eight-Goal Rule provides that if, at any time after the mid-point of the second half of play, one team leads by eight (8) or more goals, the match shall be terminated. When schools play outside their district, the home district's policy applies.

VHSL Handbook 78-4-4 Exception – Prior to the start of the season, District or Conference Councils may elect not to use the Eight-Goal Rule for its regular season and/or tournament matches.

Suspended Game Rule

SOFTBALL

1. Suspended/Interrupted Games

VHSL Handbook 79-3-1 Suspended/Interrupted Games – A game called for any reason where a winner cannot be determined (less than 4 ½ or 5 innings have been completed or the game is tied) or any time for mechanical failure (e.g., artificial lights, irrigation systems, etc.) will be treated as a suspended game. The game will be continued from the point of interruption with the line-up and batting order of each team exactly the same as the line-up and batting order at the moment of interruption subject to the rules of the game.

2. Double First Base

VHSL Policy Manual 79-4-1 (2) Double First Base (9-99) – Schools may use a double first base.

3. Doubleheaders

VHSL Policy Manual 79-4-1 (3) Doubleheaders (5-00) – By mutual agreement of the competing schools, doubleheaders may consist of only five (5) innings per game.

4. Pitching Machines

VHSL Policy Manual 79-4-1 (4) Pitching Machines (2-91) – Pitching machines are prohibited in state playoff games.

5. Ten-Run Rule

VHSL Handbook 79-4-2 Ten-Run Rule – The Ten-Run Rule required for all regular season, district and conference tournament games is not in effect for region and state tournament games.

VHSL Handbook 79-4-2 Exception – Prior to the start of the season, a District or Conference Council may elect not to use the Ten-Run Rule for its regular season, district or conference tournament contests. When schools play outside their district, the home district's policy applies.

6. Courtesy Runner

VHSL Handbook 79-4-3 Courtesy Runner Rule – The suggested courtesy runner rules as listed in the NFHS Softball Rule Book shall be allowed in all VHSL softball contests.

7. Tie-Breaking Procedures – “Olympic” or “International” tie-breaker

VHSL Policy Manual 79-4-4 Softball Tie-Breaking Procedure:

- (1) The VHSL Softball Tie-Breaking Procedure is to be used beginning in the 9th inning of any regular season contest. The tie-breaking procedure (often referred to as the “International” or “Olympic” tie-breaker) shall use the following procedure:
 - a. Each half-inning shall begin by placing a runner on second base.
 - b. That runner is the player in the batting order who precedes the lead-off batter in that inning, and this procedure is maintained until a winner is determined in that inning or subsequent innings.
- (2) Prior to the beginning of the season, District Councils may opt to not use this tie-breaking procedure.
- (3) This procedure may NOT be used in conference, region or state tournament play.
- (4) Local commissioner of officials shall be contacted so their association may be prepared to implement this rule.
- (5) If opponents are in conflict over implementation of this rule, the home team's policy will prevail for that contest.

SWIMMING AND DIVING

1. Relay Teams

VHSL Handbook 80-4-2 Relay Teams – As allowed by State Association adoption, schools may enter their relay teams without individual names. It shall not count as an entry unless the competitor actually competes in the event. Any individual on the team may swim in the preliminaries, swim-offs and/or finals provided he/she does not exceed the permitted entries for the meet.

VOLLEYBALL

1. Suspended/Interrupted Matches

VHSL Handbook 86-3-1 Suspended/Interrupted Matches – Matches which are suspended or interrupted prior to completion shall be resumed from the point of interruption unless both schools agree to accept the score at the time of interruption as final.

2. Length of Matches

VHSL Policy Manual 86-4-1 (1) Length of Matches (12-04) – Districts are allowed to approve two-out-of-three game matches in regular season play.

3. Match Scoring

VHSL Policy Manual 86-4-1 (2) Match Scoring (9-03) – Prior to the start of the season, a district council may adopt a modified match format for series other than dual-varsity matches; the match format for non-district, non-dual varsity matches (including invitation tournaments) shall be set by the host school. Match format in volleyball would include the number of points that constitute a game and the number of games that constitute a match, but would not include the manner in which points are scored. Districts could opt, for example, to play non-varsity matches (or a non-dual varsity match) in a best two-out-of-three games format, with each game played to 21 points.

4. Tournament Officials

VHSL Policy Manual 86-4-1 (3) Officials (5-98) – Four certified volleyball officials are required for all conference, regional and state playoff matches.

WRESTLING

1. Match Limitations

VHSL Policy Manual 88-3-1 Match Limitations (3-83) – Wrestling teams may participate in tournaments as long as they do not exceed 5 matches per day in a 2-day tournament.

2. Suspended/Interrupted Matches

VHSL Handbook 88-3-1 Suspended/Interrupted Match – Matches which are suspended or interrupted prior to completion shall be resumed from the point of interruption unless schools agree to accept the results at the time of interruption as final.

33. REGULAR SEASON CONTEST DELAYS

- A. **Delay by the visiting team** - Occasionally, you may get to a game site and the visiting team has not yet arrived. What should you do? If the contest is a regular season contest and the host management has been notified of the reason for the delay and projected arrival time, the officials must stand by for 60 minutes beyond the scheduled starting time. When the team arrives, a reasonable amount of time must be provided for the visiting team to conduct a pregame warm-up. The warm-up shall not be less than 15 minutes. If the host management has not been notified that there is a delay and the reason for it, the officials may leave the site, without obligation, 30 minutes after the originally scheduled start time has passed.
- B. **Delay in arrival of officials** – If a confirmed member of the officiating crew fails to arrive for a scheduled contest, those officials who are present may 1) officiate the contest with less than the usual number of officials; 2) replace the absent official with another registered official; or 3) work with home management to postpone the contest. The assigning commissioner should also be contacted.

34. HEAT RELATED DELAYS

The weather in Virginia can be very hot and humid during the months of May through September. These conditions can be difficult for even the best-conditioned athlete or official. Every effort should be made to ensure that neither athletes nor officials are subjected to unnecessary risk of heat illness. The officials must work cooperatively with home contest administration on decisions related to the application of local policies designed to

protect participants from heat related illnesses. This may be as simple as giving soccer teams or field hockey teams a water break at the half-way point of the first and second periods of play, or it could involve a temporary suspension of play until conditions improve.

35. LIGHTNING POLICY

Lightning can kill! Officials of outdoor sports must be aware of weather conditions, and must be prepared to suspend play when necessary. Each school should have a policy in place which addresses who will be assigned to monitor weather conditions, what criteria will be used for suspension and resumption of play, and where people will go if evacuation is needed. Officials need to know what that school policy is. In the absence of a specific policy, whenever thunder is heard or cloud-to-ground lightning is seen, play should be suspended immediately and all participants should take shelter. At that point, the “thirty minute rule” should be implemented. The thirty-minute rule requires that once play has been suspended, a wait of at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is seen is required prior to resuming play. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count resets the clock and another 30-minute count should begin. Officials and school administrators must work together to determine if/when play should be suspended for the day. If play is suspended for the day, make sure that before you leave, everyone is clear on all of the particulars regarding score, time remaining, players in the game, fouls, etc.

Officials must allow school administrators and/or game managers to make the call to suspend play when lightning is involved. Many schools have access to radar and other tools that help them monitor the weather. Work together for the best outcome.

In considering resumption of competition, the following steps must be followed:

- A. Delays for contests scheduled prior to 3 p.m. should not exceed three hours. Delays for contests scheduled for 3 p.m. or later should not exceed 90 minutes. Delays on nights not followed by a school day for the competing teams may be longer as determined by host management and game officials.
- B. A decision to resume the contest within the provided time frame must be made by the contest officials in consultation with host management and any visiting school administrator who might be present at the contest.
- C. The host school is responsible for facilities and will be given priority consideration in the final decision if there is no consensus among the three parties.
- D. The final decision must consider liability and conditions of facilities as well as future schedules, need to play the contest, and quality of all other options.

36. CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

If an athlete exhibits signs and/or symptoms of a concussion, officials must let the sideline know and the athlete must be removed from play for evaluation by appropriate medical personnel. Do not make a specific reference to “concussion.” It is not your job to diagnose or to determine when an athlete may return to play. Stay within your role as an official.

37. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

It is important that officials understand the importance of maintaining an ethical approach while participating in various forums, chat rooms, and all other forms of social media. The VHSL advocates and applies the recommended policy statement of the National Association of Sports Officials that states –

- A. DO be aware that posts on social media are visible to the general public. Even if you limit access to your page to friends, it is likely that your post will be viewed by someone beyond the circle of people you intended to see it.
- B. DO find out your association or league expectations regarding social media. Your association may not have hard and fast rules, but find out if it has an unofficial policy.
- C. DO think twice before you post. If there is anything in your post that could be construed as a criticism of officials, of officials' decisions, or of schools, coaches or athletes ... it's better left unsent.
- D. DO assume that your post will be seen by the two teams you will see in your next game and the teams you worked in your previous game, as well as your partner(s) in those games.
- E. DON'T post anything relating to the schools you have worked or will work. It calls your objectivity into question.
- F. DON'T include anything in a post that makes reference to an upcoming assignment. If teams want to find out who is going to be working their game, they should do so through official channels, not your tweet.
- G. DON'T post details about other people's assignments, to playoff games for instance, until that information has been officially released. Don't use your page as a news service.
- H. DON'T use social media to criticize state or local association policies, assigning practices, etc.
- I. DON'T make posts regarding calls made by officials in other games, whatever the level. You and your buddies might debate the call you saw on TV, but debating the call on Facebook, Twitter or other forums and social media is a no-no.

Accountability and integrity should always be our guiding principles. Jeopardizing your impartiality or professionalism should never be a part of your actions or posts. Think twice before you do or say anything that could compromise your integrity or the integrity of the profession of officiating.

38. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES – BE A GOOD HOST

Before the contest

- Make sure the official's dressing area is clean. The area should have a clean shower, hot and cold running water, and a toilet. The official's locker room is "off limits" to everyone but the contest officials before, during and after the contest.
- Make sure the field or venue is properly prepared for play.
- Provide properly trained individuals to perform needed game functions – scorekeepers, timers, announcers, etc.

When the officials arrive

- Have an administrator meet the officials when they arrive and escort them to their locker room. Make them feel welcome – they are guests in your building.
- If it is "senior night" or some other special occasion, let the officials know.
- Let them know who is "on duty" as a site manager, and where that person can be found during the contest.
- For outdoor sports, especially on cloudy days, let the officials know who will be monitoring the weather, and where they should go in the event of a weather emergency or inclement weather.

During the contest

- Have water, soda or energy drinks available for the officials, especially at half-time and after the contest.
- Set high expectations with your coaches in regard to their sportsmanship and insist they do the same with their players.
- Keep all locker rooms, dressing areas, and other areas used by officials clear of unauthorized personnel.
- Have supplies available to clean up any blood/bodily fluids.

- Be proactive when it comes to insisting on positive fan behavior. Do not wait for officials to identify a problem spectator(s).
- Support officials and assist fully with any request that they might have in regard to problems with spectators. Remove a spectator when requested or needed.

After the contest

- Have a game manager or other administrator escort the officials to their locker room.
- Do not allow unauthorized individuals access to the officials.
- The locker room should be “off limits” to everyone but the contest officials.
- If necessary, escort officials to their vehicles.
- Regardless of the outcome, show respect and appreciation for their work. Thank them for their efforts.

39. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES – BE A GOOD GUEST

Arriving at the school

- Dress appropriately.
- Get there early.
- Park intelligently.
- Check in with the AD or game administrator.
- Be courteous to all you meet.
- Say “please” and “thank you” and “you are welcome.”

Dressing area

- Leave it in better shape than when you arrived.
- Don't leave bottles or trash strewn about.
- If you work a sport that is played outdoors and you must dress in your vehicle, be discrete (park intelligently).
- Don't expect or ask for special favors or entitlements.
- Appreciate whatever is provided – not all schools will be able to provide food or drink at half-time or after the game.
- Say “please” and “thank you” and “you are welcome.”

At the venue

- Arrive and leave as a crew.
- Be friendly but firm as needed to gain cooperation to have any necessary site changes made. Explain the need. Be patient. Player safety is important.
- Smile occasionally. Let your body language reflect that you are glad to be doing the game.
- Ignore fans unless they are inciting opposing players. Do not tolerate gestures or behavior that prevents you from performing your duties.
- Treat players and coaches with respect.

After the game

- Shower and pack in a timely manner – everyone wants to go home!
- Clean up after yourself.
- Leave with only what you brought – no souvenirs!
- Say “please” and “thank you” and “you are welcome.”

40. DO'S AND DON'TS

- DO dress appropriately before, during and after the contest.
- DO be courteous before, during and after the contest.
- DO arrive early for your contest.
- DO communicate with your partners prior to your contest to verify such things as time and location of the contest.
- DO let the school and your partners know if you are going to be late.
- DO introduce yourself to the contest administrator and to all head coaches.
- DO work every contest as if it were a state tournament event.
- DO NOT be late!
- DO NOT socialize with parents, students, coaches or school personnel before, during or after the contest.
- DO NOT work a contest with someone who is not a VHSL registered official.
- DO NOT interact with spectators.
- DO NOT make up rules.

41. OFFICIATE WITH "PRIDE"

- Be PROFESSIONAL – Arrive early. Look sharp. Give your best effort.
- Be RESPECTFUL – Treat players, coaches, administrators and fans with respect.
- Work with INTEGRITY – As an official, you are a "protector of the game."
- Be DEDICATED – Study. Practice. Work hard to become better.
- Have ENTHUSIASM – Officiating is supposed to be fun!

42. HAVE FUN!