

2008 WIAA COACHES SCHOOL

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS

**Presented by: Dick Langum
Canfield and Associates
451 Diamond Drive
Ephrata, WA 98823**

***Please understand the purpose of this presentation and handout is educational. Nothing in either should be construed as specific legal advice for a particular situation. Sound legal advice requires an understanding of all the facts of a particular situation, something that can not occur in an education presentation.**

Officials: “No Shows or Can’t Goes”

Using registered and trained officials helps reduce the number of injuries because the game/match is supervised and monitored under a given set of rules and mechanics designed to help to protect the players. When untrained or inadequate numbers of officials conduct a game, the chance for injury increases.

Realizing junior high games are usually played during the weekday afternoons, official’s associations may have a difficult time obtaining/assigning officials to meet the needs of each school at the requested times and places. Because of the limited number of officials, we recommend the following actions.

1. All schools and officials associations will work together to recruit new officials for the junior high level. This may include but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Using retirees or college students or recently graduated students who are willing to meet the registration requirements for use by the WOA and WIAA. Junior high games are usually not as fast as high school games and therefore retirees, with training, might be able to keep up with the flow of the game. Recent graduates or college students might be found with the ability to be available during the afternoons for junior high games. Success at the junior high level might lead to officiating at the high school level.
 - b. Where possible and in accordance with WOA and local school district policies and procedures, consider training high school students who could be used to help schools comply with WIAA section 24 and the following recommendations for football and wrestling.
2. If an officials association has multiple events scheduled on one day such as Tuesdays, schools/leagues should consider moving some of their games from Tuesday to Wednesday to offset the impact on Tuesdays. Realizing Wednesday nights are sometimes set aside as “activity free evening for students”, rotating the Wednesday games throughout the league should minimize this conflict.

Jr. High Football Game Recommendations:

Having a required minimum number of registered officials at each football game is highly recommended to help assure the safety and consistent administration of the game under the rules and regulations for the sport.

For grades 7 & 8, we recommend a minimum of three officials for football games with a minimum of two registered officials.

WIAA Handbook section 24.5.0 addresses school options when officials are not available. We recommend canceling a football game if there is not at least one registered official working with 2 additional trained officials who are not coaches of participating schools available to officiate the game.

When grade 9 games are played as part of the high school, high school requirements for officials should apply.

If grade 9 is part of a junior high and the football team is solely grade 9 players, then we recommend consideration of a minimum of 3 registered officials.

Jr. High Wrestling Match Recommendations:

Junior high wrestling matches should be officiated by a registered official or an official recognized under WIAA Handbook section 24 and not a coach of a participating school.

Travel:

Officials and Travel: Schools and official associations must work together to eliminate teams traveling to an away site and not having officials show up at the appointed time or not having minimum number of officials available. Canceling or rescheduling a game ahead of time is cost effective for transportation departments, minimizes out-of-school time, and improves personal relations with the parents and public who won't make needless trips.

Team Travel:

Have schools considered:

Playing 5th quarters/extra innings or parts of extra matches as in volleyball? (saves travel and keeps kids involved)

Using parent car pools when school vehicles are not available?

Playing multiple teams at a central site and maybe rotating the site so all schools have a home event in a two-year rotation?

Training and Retention of Coaches:

Training:

1. First Aid/CPR/De-fib/Meet with 911 staff to review procedures
2. Rules Clinics on-line
3. In-house in-services—ask, you be surprised at results
4. Medical Training on-line or w CD's—Concussions Info. By CDC
5. Ask high school coaches to give skill training sessions
6. One league meeting per year with in-service attached
7. Coaches School
8. Awareness of Ejection Rules and Consequences

Retention:

1. Provide more training close to home
2. Show more appreciation to assistant coaches
3. Have a school board session with highlights of junior high programs
4. Include more trained volunteers so coaches are not overwhelmed
5. Use existing coaches to train volunteers

No-Cut Policies in a Budget Cutting Game

1. Try the idea of a shorter but more intense practice with fewer players and then rotate the players from an early to late practice.
2. Use trained volunteers—yes, at the pre-season parent meetings advertise for volunteers and also at the high school level (check out of season regulations), advertise in local papers, use as an info. item at a school board meeting emphasizing how the district is trying to keep kids involved.
3. In track, practice limited events on some nights so kids get better coaching.
4. Use the 5th quarter concept for game participation.
5. Have you considered a “taxi squad” for travel purposes?
6. Holding double-dual types of meets at one location and use different players with second game or have a varsity/sub-varsity(s) formats with multiple schools?
7. Have you been creative and held brainstorming sessions with league coaches to see if there are potential variations in scheduling or appropriate playing levels?