



News from the President

As cheerleading gains in popularity around the nation and the **world**, the controversy rages on about whether it is a sport or not. There are rarely any questions about the athleticism of cheerleaders, the question is are cheerleaders athletes without a sport?

MHSAA answered in a blog from Executive Director Jack Roberts...July 23, 2010

“...in Michigan where the sport of competitive cheer draws as many participants and twice the spectators as high school gymnastics and skiing combined and has been deemed by the participants, their schools, their leagues and the Michigan High School Athletic Association to be a sport.”

“The material tends to support in several ways the

characterization of MHSAA-sanctioned competitive cheerleading as a Title IX sport in that it specifies the season of sport, identifies the eligibility requirements and standardized judging criteria used by registered officials, notes the availability of some state and conference championships and scholarship monies, and certifies that this activity is recognized as a sport by MHSAA and interscholastic athletics conferences within Michigan.”

- OCR Letter to MHSAA, Oct. 18, 2001

Neena Chaudhry, senior counsel for the National Women’s Law Center,

concurring in the ESPN.com Timeout Chat Show on June 19, 2002:

“Cheerleading could be considered or counted as a sport if the cheerleading team’s primary purpose is to compete.”

In Michigan, that is the sole purpose of girls competitive cheer.

As the controversy rages, MCJA moves forward to provide training for the best Competitive Cheer officials in the state, and quite possibly, the world! ;))



What’s Your Call?

A flyer completes a suspended roll while in a braced pyramid and lands in a cradle. Is this legal?

The new rule states: A braced flyer is allowed to become free of her bases when:

The flyer has at least two bases and a spotter

There is a spotter for each bracer

The bracer(s) have continuous contact with the flyer

During the flyer’s loss of contact with the bases when the flyer is in motion

The bracer(s) does not hold the flyer in a static position while the flyer is free of the

bases

The bracers must be at shoulder level or below

Suspended rolls braced in a pyramid may not directly dismount directly to the cheering surface

Round 1 and 2 score sheets and the Round 3 description sheets were submitted to the host school at 4:00 pm the day before the competition.

Is a penalty given?

Yes, the new rule states the Round 1 and 2 score sheets and Round 3 description sheet must be

sent by 2 pm the day prior to the competition.

Junior High team fails to jump in round three. Is a penalty given?

Yes, a 22 point penalty is given since the required jump was not performed by all team members.

Special points of interest:

- Summer Workshop Roundup and Photos
- New Executive Director and Mentoring Director
- MHSAA Update
- MCJA Fall Conference

Summer Workshop

Our summer workshop for 2010 was held at Mason High School. We had a great turnout of over 50 members, many of them brand new to judging. We started the day off with a skit on professionalism. It delivered important information and got lots of laughs. The skit reminded us to be tactful but informative when working with all officials.



We would like to thank the coaches and teams from Mason, Michigan Center, and Rochester for helping to train our judges. We also want to thank the Mason moms for feeding us during the day. There was

plenty of great food to eat and drink all day!

The safety classes spent most of the morning with the Rochester demo team going over new stunts and skills. The veteran and novice panel classes went over the 3 rounds and how to score with the help of the Mason team.

After lunch the panel and safety classes practiced their judging skills with the help of the team from Michigan Center.

Everyone had a great day of learning and networking with other judges. We hope the information you gained will help you as you start out the new season this year. If you have a question for MHSAA, please contact Candy Cox as she is our liaison to MHSAA.



Thanks for joining us!



"Everyone enjoyed a great day of learning and networking with other judges!"



MCJA Fall Conference

November 6th at DeVos Place Grand Rapids

\$25 Registration Fee (includes lunch)
 Check-in begins at 8:30 am
 Training 9:00 am - 5:00pm

DEADLINE for Registration is October 29th

Register at MCJAcheer.com

Dear Marilyn...

Recently, I have been approached by several coaches asking why their Rd 3 Execution score from all panel officials is not the same?

The judges are each expected to evaluate all scores individually—not as a consensus of the judges. If all scores are the same, I would suspect coaches would think that there is a collaboration for the Round 3 Execution scores. Sadly, judges are also criticized for diverse scores in this category. Throughout the cheer there are so many skills to be evaluated for each team member--tumbling, jumps, gymnastic skills, flairs, transitions, preps, and stunts—that it is unrealistic that each judge has recorded every technical error. Also, it is unlikely that each judge has evaluated the errors with the same degree of severity [Very Minor (.01), Very Minor (0.2-0.4), Moderate (0.5-0.8), Major (.09-1.0).]

Ask questions of other officials and try to incorporate their judging techniques you believe will work for you.

-Excerpt from Better Officiating
Referee Magazine

Within these parameters, it is important that we do the best we can and always remember to be consistent. Practicing by using CD's, practicing with other officials, attending conferences which have sessions on Round 3 Execution, participating in discussions with other judges in break-out sessions, practicing judging competitions when you are not officiating, and studying the Cheer Manual for details on degrees of error assessment.

CHEERS!

New MCJA Executive Director Candy Cox

Candy Cox is now the MCJA Executive Director. She has taken the position vacated by Marilyn Bowker this past June. Candy has many great qualities and an extensive cheer resume!



MHSAA Registered official since 1994

Current member of MCJA, CCCAM,
SMOCCA, LMCCOA

Former cheerleader and coach at
Coldwater High School

MCJA Founding member-Served as President and Vice President and currently the Executive Director

Former MCCA Membership Secretary and Regional Rep

MHSAA and MCJA Trainer

Served on various committees for MHSAA

"I have judged at the local, regional, state and national level. I enjoy judging cheer competitions and also mentoring new officials. I feel honored when coaches ask my opinion or why I gave the score I did. We all need to work together as a team.

I have been employed at the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency for 34 years. I am the Clinic Manager and also serve the community as a CPR and First Aid Instructor.

I am married to Kevin, my High School Sweetheart-Yes he was the football player and I was the cheerleader! We have been married for 35 years and have 2 cats, Lotus and Missy. I am a member of St Charles Catholic Church, Exchange Club, United Commercial Travelers, Bronson Polish Festival Committee.

My cheer mentor was Marilyn Bowker and without her expertise I would not be the judge I am today."

Congratulations Candy and Thank You for ALL you do!



MHSAA Updates

MCJA NEWSLETTER

September 21, 2010

Kathy Vrugink Westdorp, MHSAA Assistant Director

The start of the MHSAA Competitive Cheer season is right around the corner with a Monday, November 8, 2010 start date and competition may begin on November 22, 2010. Again, this year, there will be six districts in each Division from which four teams advance to each of two Regionals in each Division. Districts may be held either Friday, February 18 or Saturday, February 19, 2011. Regionals are held on Saturday, February 26 with the Finals set for Saturday, March 5, 2011.

All Competitive Cheer Rules Meetings will be online starting Monday, October 11 and ending Tuesday, December 7, 2010; except for a Friday, November 5 rules meeting as part of the MCJA/CCCAM Summit at DeVos Place or a Monday, November 22 meeting at the MHSAA Building. This is already more than an eight week period of time to complete a rules meeting and there will be no additional consideration to those who have not completed a meeting in this period of time. To be considered for the MHSAA Tournament, all officials must complete an online rules meeting **OR** attend one of the other two available "in-person" meetings. As judges begin to prepare their schedules for the upcoming season, remember to send a copy of the schedule to the MHSAA (form available at mhsaa.com – sports – Competitive Cheer). This will be utilized by the Selection Committee to determine where the judge has officiated; the quantity of times a judge has officiated as well as whether the judge has officiated a predominance of the season as a safety or panel judge. Please make certain that your schedule is sent and is accurate.

The new Competitive Cheer Manuals will be sent to schools and judges in October. There have been photo and clarification updates to the Manual as well as a full 14 Middle School/Junior High section in the back. The glossary has been added to the Manual and the changes that were approved through Committee have been included. These are:

1. Changed the deadline for paperwork to be turned in prior to a meet to 2 p.m. the day before the meet. (Changed from 4 p.m.)
2. Adopted the following technical recommendations:
 - a. Increase of the number of Round 2 skills for coaches and the team by adding:
 - Front walkover (tumbling & flexibility) – 1.2 skill
 - Front handspring (tumbling) – 1.2 skill
 - Back extension rolls (tumbling) – 1.2 skill
 - Handstand forward roll (tumbling) – 1.0 skill
 - b. Addition of a 7-point category for tumbling skills to provide teams that are doing flairs on tumbling skills an adequate way of receiving extra points for their difficulty. A comprehensive list of included 7-point skill is listed in the 2010-12 Manual.
 - c. Allowance for hand-to-hand or arm-to-arm contact for forward suspended rolls to be provided by bases, back spots or bracer(s) in pyramids as long as the bracers are held to all of the same rules as in any "release" pyramid. This allowance is only to a cradle or sponge – not to the floor or a stunt and the flyer must be in continuous motion until no longer inverted.
3. Adopted the allowance to utilize five panel judges (currently three) and two safety judges at the Regional level. The District and Finals levels will remain the same.

The new Manual continues to emphasize the process for coach's inquiries which allows a coach to question the addition of scores or check for areas left blank on the scoresheet. In addition, if a penalty is imposed that needs to be addressed, the steps to follow are:

- a. Approach the safety judges respectfully after they have judged the last team in the round, at the safety judge's table.
- b. The inquiry may only be made regarding the coach's own team.
- c. The final outcome of the inquiry will be made by the judge.

MHSAA Update...cont'd

Further emphasis within the Manual includes the uniform and emblem requirements. Judges of Competitive Cheer are required to wear a solid white blouse/shirt or top and solid black skirt or dress slacks. Any additional garments such as a blazer shall be black. Judges must wear their MHSAA Officials Emblem on the left chest pocket area of the blouse or jacket/blazer or suspended by a black lanyard around the neck.

In addition, the MHSAA 2010-11 Officials Guidebook includes this information on page 7 under "Conflict of Interest – MHSAA Tournaments & Regular Season".

In all cases, officials must be neutral and may not officiate in any contest involving relatives or other similar close relationships. It is the official's responsibility to notify tournament management as soon as possible of a conflict of interest so that a possible switch may occur.

- a. *Official's son/daughter attends or is a recent graduate (1-5 years) of a participating school.*
- b. *Official (or an immediate family member) is a current or former staff member (teacher, coach, employee or board member) at a participating school.*
- c. *Official has a close connection or relationship to the coach of a participating school.*
- d. *Official is a recent graduate (1-5 years) or connected alumni of a participating school.*

It is preferred that an official who is also a coach in the sport he/she officiates decline a tournament invitation in that sport in any class. Depending on the sport, a qualified official who also has coached that sport in that season and who works a full regular-season schedule may be considered for tournament assignment or replacement by MHSAA staff.

In all sports, it will be considered a "conflict of interest" for any MHSAA registered official to be hired or employed by a member school or coach to provide a sport-specific clinic or training session for students at that school when that official later officiates contests involving that school for the next 12 calendar months.

An example would be a competitive cheer official who is hired by a school or coach to provide a training session or clinic by which the official prepares the rounds of competition or provides judging/coaching/skill assessment to a school coach or athletes. If this occurs, it is considered a conflict of interest for that official to officiate any contests at any level for the school(s) involved for the next 12 calendar months during both regular season and MHSAA tournament competition.

This policy is not intended to discourage officials from participating in preseason sportsmanship programs which may involve coaches, students or parents or from officiating preseason scrimmages (intersquad and intrasquad).

Officiating is such an honorable avocation. Remember the many athletes and coaches who are watching you. Hold to and maintain the basic tenets of officiating which include honesty, integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, professionalism, discretion and tactfulness. Clothes and behaviors do influence the perceived image of the official and help to build confidence with players, coaches and spectators because the official looks the part. It is a great time to be involved in Competitive Cheer – enjoy the season and continue to be involved in MCJA!

Find us on Facebook!

MCJA now has a private group for registered MHSAA Competitive Cheer Officials.

What's Up with our Membership...

Kayla Anderson wants everyone to know that after 5 years of dating she is now engaged to long time "beau". Congratulations Kayla, we all wish you the best!

Soni Latz is a proud "first time" Grandma!! Her beautiful grandson's name is Brady Adam Latz. Hmm...sounds like the name of a future president!

Hiawatha Francisco is deservedly bragging about his beautiful daughter as she finished 4th runner-up for the Miss Michigan Pageant held in June! He also got a promotion to principal at Cassopolis High School!! Way to go!

Mary Kuk-Wieber and her husband are proud new parents! They welcomed Avery Claire Wieber into the world on June 10, 2010. Congratulations to you both and we hope she brings you tons of joy!

Jan Deters and her husband are "first time" grandparents!! Their grandson, Jobe Makal McDonald was born to their daughter Lauren and husband Mikal. This is doubly special because after Mikal served 2 tours in Iraq they have settled close to home in western Michigan. Congratulations grams and gramps! And a big THANK YOU to Mikal for his generous service to our country!

Gaye TenBrink is so excited to share that her son has started a full time job in Bloomington, Minnesota on Sept. 1. Good for him, we wish him the best in Minnesota...hear it's somewhat cold there...brrr!

Nancy Lepekas will have some time on her hands as she is retiring on Sept. 30th, after 40 years of teaching!! Wow is all we can say!! She's also celebrating the graduation of her daughter Jane; who is now a doctor of PM & R (Physical Medicine and Rehab) she'll join her husband in the doctor world as he is a doctor of Neurology! If we need a good doctor, we know who to contact!!

Janelle Holland has landed her dream job at the school of her choice in the Gull Lake School district at Kellogg Elementary School. She's teaching the "Young 5's" class. Great work Janelle and we have no doubt that you are wonderful with your kids!!

Carol Peters says "She's going to be a "Mamaw" again! (go ahead say it with the Carol Peters drawl) Her daughter Andrea Danielle Nicole Peters-Russell and her husband Bradley have been married for 4 years and are expecting their first child in March 2011. Carol says she's looking forward to having a little one to entertain them again! Congratulations Mamaw!!

Cynthia DePetro is in her 22nd year of teaching and still loves it as much as she did the first day! Her son Tom, is a junior at Ferris in the pre-med program and her daughter, Alicia is a sophomore at Central in secondary education (following in Mom's footsteps no doubt!) She is enjoying helicopter photography! Pretty impressive group!!

Erin O'Conner loves being a mom!! She had her first child on may 30th. Mason Ryan O'Conner was 7lbs and 8oz. He is already 4 months...and she can't believe how fast they grow!! Congratulations Erin...enjoy every minute of it because it does go fast!!!

Jodi Boehringer wants everyone to know that she got engaged to Eric Kramarczyk and will be getting married on June 17th, 2011 in East Lansing. That's great news Jodi, we wish you all the best!!

Sheila Brownlee and her family walked in the Pancreatic Cancer walk held at the Detroit Zoo on September 12th. While walking they ran into long time friend, Susan Wood and her team, who were there just to "cheer" on the walkers throughout the event. How awesome that a team would take time out to do that! Kudos!! Sheila and her husband, Keith are also busy raising a puppy for Leader Dogs for the Blind. They are hopeful that Stirling will be helping someone in just a year's time! Stirling walked in the Cancer Benefit walk as well and even got his picture taken with the Rochester Cheerleaders!

Fall Conference Class Descriptions

NOVICE PANEL CLASS

“Let's get it started.” This class is recommended for those who have never judged before or have judged less than 4 years. This class will go in depth and teach on all aspects of officiating for round 1, 2, and 3. There will be an opportunity to practice judging with video as well as live teams.

VETERAN PANEL CLASS

For those who have “been there, done that” this class will discuss any changes for the upcoming season as well as have an open format discussion to explore issues that beg the question “what's your score?”. We will break it down with video and live demo teams to really work our observation skills.

NOVICE SAFETY CLASS

This class provides a complete teaching of safety judging for rounds 1, 2 and 3. It goes in depth to teach all the “ins and outs” such as where to stand for the best view whether counting formations or watching those most intricate stunts. We will be using live demo teams to demonstrate a variety of skills and stunts.

VETERAN SAFETY CLASS

Training for this class will discuss any changes for the upcoming season as well as delve into some of the most common penalty issues. Bring any issues that have been “eating away at you” from last season and get another officials perspective in an open format discussion.

CHEER OFFICIATING MECHANICS

This class is designed for all officials as a reminder for the practices and protocols we have learned up to now!

GYMNASTICS and SKILLS

This is an exciting class for all officials, panel or safety! There will be a live demonstration of specific skills with an MHSAA official present to guide you in scoring. All officials will benefit from this detailed training.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT WITH JR. HIGH / MIDDLE SCHOOL?

The new Cheer Manual will highlight a section just for Jr. High/Middle School! This training will also highlight any changes or additions.

PROFESSIONALISM WITH MHSAA

What a great way for officials and coaches to come together and discuss communication, professionalism and other topics near and dear to our sport!

PRACTICE OFFICIATING-LIVE DEMO AND VIDEO

Veteran Officials will lead practice judging with different media. This is another terrific way for veteran and novice officials to share their expertise and mentor.

ROUND THREE DESCRIPTIONS AND OTHER CHARTS

Veteran officials will work together with novice officials disseminating Rd 3 description sheets in a low pressure, high functioning atmosphere. The veteran official will get a jump start to the upcoming season and the novice official will be able to glean a plethora of wisdom!

Official of the Year

It's that time of the year again, time to select an individual that represents the best of cheer officiating. As we approach the new season, I would like you to think back to last season and that judge you worked with that left a real impression on you. Perhaps she was the one who was spending extra time with the new officials

and helping them to understand their role. Or perhaps it was that judge who truly understood the complexities of an issue and did her best to make it clear for everyone. Or maybe it is someone who, throughout the years, has always been a contributor to the advancement of the sport. This sport is filled with outstand-

ing individuals, so please take a moment to fill out the nominating form and let your choice be heard. The Official of the Year will be announced and recognized at Fall Conference following the luncheon; we look forward to considering your nomination.

MCJA Official of the Year 2010

I want to nominate (name) _____

Nominee's address _____ City _____

Phone _____ Email address _____

Tell us what you know about your candidate's judging history (how long, what level):

Tell us what you know about your candidate's training:

Tell us about contributions your candidate has made to the sport (mentoring, speaking, coaching, training, etc.):

Tell us anything you think we should know about your candidate that hasn't already been listed:

Your name(optional) _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please email completed application (and you may use additional sheets) to:

Jane Plaisted at jplaisted@sbcglobal.net **no later than October 8th**.

Take a moment and do this right now!



MCJA CHEER OFFICIAL BAG

THE PERFECT BAG FOR JUDGING!!

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Custom embroidery.

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MCJA Announces New Mentoring Director

My name is Jill Lansky and I am new to the MCJA Board in 2010 and the new Mentoring Director.

I have been an MHSAA Competitive Cheer official since 2003. Prior to officiating, I coached cheerleading for three years.

I love being involved in educational athletics and am excited to take on this new role within MCJA. I have my B.S. from Western Michigan University and live in Kalamazoo with my husband, three children and two dogs.

Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a mentor or a mentee. Let's work together to make officiating



competitive cheer a CHEERful experience for everyone involved!

Call or Email Jill!

jilll@kpl.gov

269-806-0476

HAPPY NEWS FROM ONE OF THE BOARD...

Amelie Delphyne Snyder was born to Laurie Bilkie-Snyder and her husband on August 30 at 9:50 am.

She was named after her Great Grandmother, Great-Great Aunt and Great Aunt.

According to Mom Laurie, she was 20 inches long and 7lbs and 8oz of feistiness!