

2020 Nebraska High School Volleyball Pre-Season Points of Emphasis

Friday August 21 (today) is the final day for you to watch the NSAA pre-season clinic and to enter your test answers. Do not wait until the last minute to get those items completed. The test and clinic will close at 11:59 pm tonight. So even if you are in the middle of completing either of those items, the system will shut down and you will have an incomplete.

Is your uniform ready?

- Black shoes, black socks, black dress pants, white polo, whistle, red/yellow cards, ball pump, net chain, small ref bag. White polo can be the certified officials polo or a plain white polo. (If you need a white polo, I have some available to give away.)
 - Have you tried on your pants?
 - Do they still fit?
- Within approximately 10 days after August 21, the NSAA will send to all new referees a patch for your shirt. If your patch does not arrive prior to your first match, you can still officiate.

Preseason Reminders:

- Know the rules of the game. As an official you should take pride in knowing all of the High School rules and procedures. Take time to read through the rules book, watch the online rules meeting, attend a clinic, take the test, etc. There is always something new you can learn.
- If you are assigned by an assignor, keep your schedule up-to-date.
- Confirm matches with your partner via email or text 2-3 days out.
- Each of you should confirm the match with the school AD. This is especially important with everything going on this year. A simple email that says "Good morning AD (name), I see that ?? and I am scheduled to work your JV and Varsity matches Thursday night starting at 5:30. We will be there at 5:00. Please confirm and let us know if there are any special procedures you would like us to follow at this time. Will the teams switch benches? Are masks required? Thanks!"
- You should plan to arrive at the site at least 30 minutes before the match. This gives you time to check the net, check the balls, use the restroom, talk to the match administrator/AD (even more important this year) and get your thoughts together for the match or matches ahead of you.
 - The coin toss should be conducted 20 min before the match start time. Remember social distancing and all should wear masks, if required by the school.
 - Typical warm ups are 5/5/5/1, but schools can choose their own times.
 - It is not automatically within the authority/duties of the referee to dictate the warm-up schedule. If the match officials are to direct warm-ups, host school management should make prior arrangements with the officials.
 - It shall be the official timer's responsibility to notify each team when it is time to change drills.
- When the match is over, you and your partner should thank your table crew, take your belongings and leave together immediately. If you want to debrief, do it on the way home or outside at your car.
- If you are running late for some reason, communicate with your partner and/or the AD.
- If a coach has a single sheet of paper for their roster and their lineup, that sheet must be turned into the table after the coin toss. The coach is not allowed to take the sheet back with them. When they want to enter their lineup, they should return to the table to do so. In between sets, you can return that sheet to the coach, but during the match, the sheet must remain at the table.

SPECIAL ITEMS of NOTE

- During this time, the home school will dictate most of the match procedures, especially regarding whether teams switch benches or masks are to be worn. If the school requires masks, then you should wear them properly and set an example for the rest of the teams and spectators. Many schools are limiting the number of spectators, so the gyms could be fairly empty.
- Many, but perhaps not all, schools will NOT switch benches.
- Absolutely no handshaking. Teams should be called to the 10' line to begin and end the match.
- I cannot say it enough, sanitize your hands when you arrive at the school, sanitize before you go to the coin toss, sanitize when you approach the table, sanitize when you leave the table, sanitize before you go to the stand, sanitize before you pick up the lineups to check them prior to the start of the match, sanitize after you lay the papers down, sanitize after you touch a volleyball. If you need some good-smelling sanitizer, I will send you some.
- Home schools will control how the gym and volleyballs are sanitized. If a school chooses to 'wet' wipe balls throughout the match and a team complains about the ball, that question should be directed to the host management.
- As a referee, we are only to facilitate the rules as noted in the rulebook.
- We are not the mask police, but we should set the example.
- We as referees do NOT want to be the reason the sport shuts down. So if wearing a mask over our whistle prevents further problems, then I ask you to do what is right and to do what we need to do.
- As a referee, you need to do what you can to support the players and teams. Wearing a mask, whether it is required or not can be one of those supportive ways,

MASKS

- If masks are required at a school, then you (and all other participants) MUST wear the mask correctly at all times.
- If masks are required then all participants at the coin toss must wear a mask. Yes, sometimes it can be difficult to hear and understand, but usually the opposing players will repeat what is called during the coin toss. We might have to start relying more on non-verbal communication signals.
- I get it, wearing a mask is tiresome. But during a timeout or when you are waiting for the players to retrieve a ball, release the mask for a few seconds to give yourself a break. Removing it entirely at anytime while in the gym is not acceptable.
- There will NOT be mask breaks for teams. If a team needs a mask break, they can call a timeout (or the players can take a second or two here and there to release the mask.
- If players are wearing masks and a mask falls off, it should be treated as if it were a foreign object on the court. If it interferes with play, then play must be stopped and unnecessary delay should be issued. If the player takes the mask and controls it (ie, throws it off the court or stuffs it in the waistband of their shorts), then let play continue.
- If a mask comes loose and contacts the net, you can treat it like 'loose hair'. But if the player was going to contact the net regardless if the mask was there or not, then it is still a fault.

WHISTLES

- At this time it is preferred that all referees use an electronic whistle. You can still order an electronic whistle and it should arrive before the season starts. (go to Fox-40 USA or roofsportswear.com)
- If you choose not to use an electronic whistle, a mask should be used over your regular mouth whistle. There are specially designed masks that go over whistles, but it is not necessary to have that specific mask.

- Using an electronic whistle takes a little getting used to. Practice as much as you can before you go to a match. Most referees have found that placing the whistle on a lanyard around your neck is a preferred method. That way you can allow the whistle to drop and both hands are then free to signal.
- But if you have the whistle on your arm/hand, it is okay to hold the whistle while making your signals.
- Communication through signals will be even more important this year. There should be more eye contact and there will be lots more nodding (or head bobbing).

Match Protocols from NFHS:

1. Face coverings are permissible for athletes, coaches, officials, game administration, and spectators.
2. Officials are permitted to use electronic whistles.
3. Score table is limited to essential personnel only.
 - a. Scorekeeper, clock operator, libero tracker, announcer if using
 - b. Maintain social distancing
4. Pre-match and post-match handshake protocols are prohibited.
5. Not switching team benches/courts between sets is permissible.

The NSAA wants to remind you:

- If you are feeling sick or are experiencing even a low-grade fever, don't go out and officiate. Stay home and find out what the problem is. Do not do something that could cause harm or impose a health risk to someone else. Maintain physical distance as much as possible.
- Be vigilant about social distancing (6 feet), which will take concentration during the time you are at a game site: before, during and after. Do your very best to keep your distance protected. This protocol will be challenging of course. There are going to be times when proper social distancing gets violated. Minimize those incursions. Learn to physically keep yourself at as safe a distance as you reasonably can. Stay away from handshakes. Plan ahead.
- Pay special attention to your personal hygiene. Wash your hands. Make sure hand sanitizer is available for your use. Minimize touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Carry sanitizer in your car.
- Get a mask and use the mask. When in doubt about wearing a mask, wear one. If the assignment you are fulfilling has a requirement for mask usage, embrace that and wear the mask. Explore ahead of time ways your decisions can be heard while working with a mask. Use an electronic whistle for the safety of everyone.

You can view on the NHSOA website current information regarding warm-ups and other protocols.

I will start having regular zoom meetings throughout the season. If you have an unusual situation that occurs during a match, send me a comment or come on the zoom meeting to discuss it. These meetings will be very informal and will not have a specific agenda. Meeting link info will be posted on the NHSOA website a couple of hours prior to the meeting.

SU 9-13 7:00 pm

MO 9-21 7:00 pm

SU 9-27 7:00 pm

MO 10-5 7:00 pm