

Mid Michigan Rural **Football League**

Field Commissioner Training Packet

2008 Season Updated Materials

Supplemental Documents Needed:

- 2008 MMRFL Rules Set**
- 2008 MMRFL Rules Summary Page**
- 2008 MMRFL Supplements**

Additional Reference Material Recommended

- MHSAA Rules Book**
- MHSAA Coaches Guide Book (WWW.MHSAA.COM)**

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Keep in mind that when functioning as Field Commissioner you represent the League.

This packet of material is meant as a training aid for new field commissioners but is also good reference material for you to use when performing your duties as Field Commissioner. This along with the MMRFL Rules Set, a good attitude, and an understanding of the basic rules of football will take you a long way. All materials contained in this document are available at Document Center on League Web site.

WWW.MMRFL.ORG --- [Go to Document Center](#)

What is your JOB !!

Head Field Commissioner

You are the primary Liaison between the League and your Home Area. You represent your home area in matters with the League at meetings and in communications with the league regarding all matters. You represent the League at your Home area to communicate league decisions, ensure League rules and Policies are followed in your Home Area, and at games to maintain order and control and enforce League rules.

1. YOUR JOB LASTS ALL YEAR !!
2. **In most cases you have primary voting rights for your Home area** at all league meetings and regarding any matters voted on. As such you must present and represent the interests of your area on various topics. . Your vote on issues at the league meetings needs to represent your areas voice and interests, tempered by what is best for the league. Tough job sometimes voting in support of something that may be best for League rather than your areas personal interest, But you need to balance the two.
3. **You must attend all League meetings**, or ensure that someone else is present on your behalf if you cannot be there, to represent your area and to supply record information to the league.
4. **You represent your areas voice as part of the league.** You need to insure that all papers and documents needed by the league from your area are turned in on time. (This includes insurance waivers, team selection criteria, voting rights, fees, and other documents as required). You also need to take the Leagues feedback back to your area and communicate it to the appropriate people in your Home Area organization.
5. **You are responsible to ensure that the Leagues rules are followed and enforced** at all times by your Area and its staff → Game, practices, and off season. **You represent the League's interests back to your home area. You must report violations of MMRFL and MHSAA rules by areas (including your home areas) back to the league in timely manner.**
6. **You are to represent the League at your Home field on game day** to ensure order is maintained, the league rules and guidelines are followed, and assist in game management as needed(much like the Athletic Director does for the school and school board). Remain impartial and fair in interpretation of rules, dealing with people form within or outside your area on, and in general in administration of your duties and responsibilities
7. **You need to be familiar with MMRFL and MHSAA rules and guidelines** to help keep your areas activities in accordance with these rules both during the season and in off-season. (Scrimmages, Off-Season activities, practice).
8. **Head field commissioner is responsible to oversee the division of teams within a Age/Weight Division to insure Approved Draft procedure is followed and properly documented and to insure all reasonable efforts are made to insure an equal division of players between teams.**
9. If you are not available to fulfill these duties at a game or meeting you are to see that qualified personnel are available to do so on your behalf → Thus the Alternate Field Commissioner and acting field commissioners.

See Section IV of rule set for a list of specific tasks and duties but understand that is not necessarily all-inclusive list. Here are some highlights and additional items

Alternate and Acting Field Commissioners

Your job is to assist and/or perform duties of the Head Field Commissioner from your Area in their absence as needed. When you accept the responsibility to perform the task in question to the best of your ability while representing both the League and your Area. Typically you will be asked to help do weigh-ins at the games or to monitor and maintain order and control at games while ensuring the League rules and guidelines are followed. Please make sure that if anything happens you let the Head Field Commissioner know so that they can properly report it to the League.

Tuesday Meetings

Area Field Commissioner or representative needs to attend all league meetings, and represents their area in all matters at League meetings.

What do I need to bring?

- 1) Need 30 copies of any team rosters with any changes. Remember that any corrections not made are invalid for the next Saturday's game. This includes changes in coaches, players, and other non-playing personnel.
- 2) Scores for the Saturday's games. You are responsible for bringing accurate scores of all games played by your area to Tuesday meeting and reporting them. Home team representative is primarily responsible for reporting them, but visiting area representative should verify accuracy as reported or be able to report them if home area representative is not present. If you hosted games at your site you should have those as well.
- 3) Injury Report information. League is now tracking any injuries at games or practices involving the need for medical examination by outside medical personnel (including EMT, nurse, doctor, or medical transport) or missed practices or games. Be aware of what is happening and bring injury reports to meeting along with any updates. This applies to practices or game injuries.
- 4) Officials Score cards. Home team representative is required to bring score cards with officials names and ratings. Visitors may complete scorecards if they wish.
- 5) Need 30 copies of any Protests, Disciplinary Action requests. (One for each area plus League Board). You only need to bring 5 copies for executive board of Incident reports not involving protest or request for disciplinary action. Remember that the League President or Vice-President **must** be notified by 6:00 PM on Monday of any Protests or Disciplinary Action Requests to be presented at Tuesday meeting.
- 6) Voting Rights Certification – if there is a question or dispute only those with card will be permitted to vote. I suggest you carry it. If sending someone else to represent you give them your card as proof of their rights to vote in your behalf.

Post Meeting Follow-up:

- 1) Notify appropriate area personnel of any actions taken at League meeting as required.
- 2) If league approves disciplinary action for anyone from your area it is your responsibility to notify that person of league ruling and ensure that the disciplinary action is enforced. Likewise if notified of potential Disciplinary action review to be held at Tuesday meeting it is your job to notify that person of such action and their right to be present to represent themselves.

Roster Preparation

Initial Roster Meeting Preparation:

- 1) Verify age and weight appropriateness of players for team assignments and correct as required.
 - If over age player must be moved to next higher division.
 - If over weight limits.
 - ✓ Verify parents and player knows about weekly weigh in requirement and results if over weight limit.
 - ✓ If more then 5 lb. over limit at 2 weeks before game consider strongly suggesting moving player up in weight division. He can move down later if he drops weight. Cannot move up for Saturday's game after Tuesday roster deadline. **If 10 lb or more over the player needs to be moved up.**
- 2) Verify school districts of players for Content rule eligibility.
 - **If players are from another school district within our league he/she should be sent to that area or waiver from Field Commissioner of other area must be obtained. This must be done before roster meeting and call should be made to other FC within 7 days of registering.**
 - If players are from another school district outside of our league make sure it is recorded properly on roster.
- 3) Verify accuracy of information on roster sheets
 - Are all kids on team on roster?
 - Is all information on roster filled in correctly?
 - Roster in Jersey number order.
 - Verify that only approved titles are used on rosters – Head Coach (1), Assistant Coach (3 Max), Team Assistants and Attendants (2 max). Six non-player personnel total.
 - Head coaches phone number included must be on roster for contact in event of emergency (Assistants – optional) and correct date based upon day roster is being submitted.
 - Minimum of 30 copies of rosters for Tuesday roster meetings for each team.
- 4) **Put an “F” on roster beside any female player to left of Jersey number to aid in identification and preparation for female players. Players should be listed in Jersey number order**
- 6) If insurance is purchased through the league you must have an insurance waiver form for every player on the roster. You must also have a waiver for every cheerleader. Any cheerleader or football player without a signed waiver turned into the League is ineligible to participate in the program.

Mid Season:

- 1) Any changes to roster must be submitted at Tuesday meeting prior to Saturdays Game.
 - Insure that changes are made to rosters to reflect any changes in players, coaches, or non-playing personnel.
 - Date on roster changed to date of upcoming Tuesday meeting when revision will be submitted.
 - Bring 30 copies to roster meeting for update to the league and review changes.
 - Review changes with league at meeting.
 - If insured through MMRFL, Insurance Waiver must be provided fro any new participants added after initial roster meeting.
- 2) Maintain file of current (most recent) official rosters for your teams and opposing teams for use during weigh-ins. *These are the official copies of the rosters submitted and approved by league to determine player eligibility Only use latest approved roster.*

Game Day Activities

1-2 Hours Before First Game:

- Check playing field for any debris, foreign objects, or holes that could result in injury.
- Check clock/score board to insure they are in proper working order.
- Verify that your scale is available and in proper working order.
- Towels available for cleaning and drying football. Should have these available at all games. Sweat and or dew on field in early mornings will also make the ball wet and slippery – not just rain or snow.
- First aid equipment available and stocked.
- Emergency phone available and in working order.
- Do you have official league rosters for all teams playing at field today? You must use most recent roster reviewed and approved at League meeting.
- Do you have complete copy of League Rules? You will need it before the day is over.
- Do you have properly inflated Game ball?
- Do you have your Yellow MMRFL Armband? You are supposed to wear it at all times when acting as Field Commissioner at game.

0-1 Hour Before First Game:

- Start Weigh-in for first game 1 hour prior to game start time. You do not have to wait for both teams to have everyone there to start. Delaying weigh-in will result in reduced warm-up time that could cause injuries and will often cause delays in game starting.
- Make sure field markers are properly setup for game.
- Make sure down-marker & chains are on field and properly set for game.
- Make sure you have reliable Chain Crew, Time keeper, announcer, and ball handler available
- Set Clock to monitor time for game to start.
- Meet officials and review MMRFL Rules with them prior to game.
 - ✓ Highlight KEY MMRFL rules (4th down clock, Deadman zone, no rush rule as applicable, etc.).
 - ✓ Highlight divisional specific rules (rush vs. no rush, scoring, penalties, etc.)
 - ✓ Answer any questions they may have and let them know if you are playing National Anthem or not.
 - ✓ Makes sure they have Game ball. If visiting team is using their own game ball make sure they have it and know which belongs to each team.
 - ✓ Make sure officials have place and know where to go to get away from the crowds at half time and between games. They need this time to relax and even discuss the game sometimes.
 - ✓ If possible go out to field with them to meet with coaches and introduce chain crew and ball handler.
- Insure that any pre-game announcements, team introductions, and national anthem are complete before kickoff time. **This means that you MUST start team introductions at least ten (10) minutes before kick-off time.** Suggested timetable and format will be provided in attached.

During Game(s):

- You can relax a little and get your second cup of coffee or a quick snack – but stay alert.
- If any players were ruled ineligible for any reason (not on roster, no jersey, over weight limit, etc.) make a point to verify during the game that they do not have shoulder-pads or helmets on along the sidelines and do not participate in the game.
- Keep an eye on the game and activities around the field and make yourself available for consult if needed. This is where some pro-active actions can help keep things running smooth.
 - ✓ Watch the score. A lopsided score tends to raise tensions. {Remember a 12-0 game in first quarter may be a sign of trouble while a 12-0 score in the third is not an issue.} Do not hesitate to talk to either set of coaches if you get concerned but be careful to do it tactfully.

- ✓ Watch the coaches and officials. Look for signs of friction. If you see any signs move closer and head them off quickly -- Coaches and officials talking frequently face to face, officials looking to the bench or over shoulder towards coaches frequently, coaches arguing calls, or large number of penalties.
- ✓ Watch the crowd. Parents and others unhappy on the sidelines with coaches or officials can get rather loud and obnoxious. This can cause tensions on field to rise quickly. A gentle reminder "why we are here" or an inquiry into the problem can sometimes diffuse this.
- ✓ Spend a little time near field to hear what is going on. Don't be afraid to chat with coaches. A friendly word to officials during break in action to make sure things are OK may not be a bad idea.
- ✓ **MONITOR the sidelines for non-team related personnel. Nobody is allowed in 2-yard area around field per MHSAA rules (must be enforced) that includes School Staff and Area Staff. In addition there are specific rules limiting photographers and use of tripods or chairs that must be enforced.**
- ✓ Check out the officials. You are the League representative if they have any questions or to address any misinterpretations of the rules, and you are responsible for evaluating their performance. Are they enforcing "Deadman Zone" effectively, what about 30-sec. Play clock, 21-point spread rule, etc? If not a gentle comment during a break in the action or at half time can prevent later problems.
- At one hour before next game you need to start weigh-in for next game. Make sure somebody knows where you are at if something comes up. It probably would be a good idea to have someone (another certified field commissioner) keeping an eye on things while gone since you will be gone for up to 15-20 minutes. You may even want to take a minute step out between teams to check on things.
- Makes sure Officials are taken care of at half time. Make sure they can get to area to relax without hassle and get refreshments if they desire them. It is common practice (but not required) for the officials to be able to get something to eat and drink during this time from concession stand without charge - please have this set up in advance or discuss with officials if it is not your areas practice.

Between and After Games:

- Record scores.
- Make Sure Officials get to designated area to relax, or out of stadium if it is their last game, without hassle.
- Review with officials any rules changes for next game resulting from changes in weight division (Penalties, field, 4th down clock, rushing, etc.).
- Make sure game balls are returned to appropriate people if not being kept by officials for next game.
- Make sure Chains and field is properly set up for the next game.
- Verify Chain Crew, Timekeeper, Announcer (if one), and ball handler are available for next game.
- Make sure introductions and announcements are completed prior to kick-off time for next game. Again use the 10-minute rule in default of other guidelines.
- Alert officials at 10 minutes to kick-off if needed.

Other Notes:

- Checks are to be made available to officials at half time of last game they are working that day at your location.
- You are the league representative at the game site. Protect and administer the rules and regulations of the League.
- ❖ **Support all judgment calls of the officials. If it is a MMRFL rule interpretation – interpret the rule and work with the officials to rectify it if needed.** If not correct it for future reference and move on. {Most will work with you if you have a proposal --- Do not over-rule the official if he takes a hard stand}. The official has final authority on interpretation of rules
- ❖ **Do not overlook infractions or make special arrangements contrary to the rules of the league. NO "Gentlemen's agreements" to ignore a rule or requirement. (weigh-in, photographers, extra sideline personnel, etc)**
- ❖ Enforce the rules of the league impartially on both teams.

- ❖ Use your best judgment in resolving disputes or making a ruling regarding rule interpretations not clearly defined. If in doubt error to the side of the kids.
 - An out of control audience member or coach is best removed rather than subjecting the kids to abusive language or actions, or forfeiture of a game.
 - Safety First ... missing or defective equipment must be fixed.
 - Play the game subject to forfeiture rather than not playing the game.
- ❖ Keep your cool.
- Check with your school administration regarding school policy regarding Cheerleading and POM squad's routines regarding mounts and throws. Make sure to advise visiting teams of any restrictions or guidelines.
- As the field commissioner you are responsible to maintain order at the game site to the best of your ability.
 - ❖ Be proactive in dealing with unruly fans, parents, and coaches. It is easier to deal with them before they get too far out of control. This means both sides of the field fairly.
 - ❖ Deal with unruly fans quietly if possible with gentle reminders. If they are from other team area don't be afraid to enlist the assistance of the opposing teams field commissioner or assistant coach if they are available.
 - ❖ Talk to the coaches as soon as game starts to look like it may get out of control on scoreboard with gentle reminder. You can step it up with more forceful action later if needed.
 - ❖ If an altercation breaks out make your best effort to break it up, But, do not put yourself in harms way unnecessarily. If needed you have the authority to have someone removed by the police fro trespassing if they are out of control.
- Report all suspensions, game forfeitures, blatant rule violations, or significant incidents, or injuries to the league executives promptly. Better to let us know about any problems (games or practices) then to let us find out when someone calls us to complain. If we know about the incident before they call we can address the issues if needed, help to diffuse the issue, and of course our knowledge gives your actions more appearance of due process if we get a call.
- **League executives are available on game day by pager or cell phone to assist you if you need it. If you need help, support, or just to confirm somethingcall us.**

Weigh-In Procedure:

- **Call both of the teams together at one hour prior to game kick-off time near weigh-in area.** To minimize weigh-in time needed and avoid confusion each teams players should be lined up in numeric order.
- Get one coach or team representative from each team in weigh-in area. Do not allow extra coaches or parents in weight room this just adds confusion and slows things down.
- Determine which team will weigh in first. If in dispute the home team will decide.
- Coaches or representatives exchange rosters. Field Commissioner should have official League Rosters from his files. **DO NOT USE COACH'S COPY.** If rosters are different the official league roster is the final official document.
- Field Commissioner is in charge and will run the weigh-in and has final decision regarding weight compliance. **YOU RUN THE WEIGH-IN – NOT THE COACHES.**
- Field commissioner should set scale to Zero with both team coaches present to confirm zero balance of scale. **If electronic scale is used, place League approved master weight on scale in front of two team representatives and verify that weight is within 0.5lbs of specified weight.**
- Field commissioner should set scale to exact setting of appropriate weight division limit. {For JV Light division with weight limit of 120½ lb. The scale should be set at 120½ lb. – **Not 120 or 121**}. Disregard for electronic scale.
- Conduct Weigh-in for each player as described below:
 1. Players should enter weigh-in area one at a time.
 2. Player to show opposing coaches his jersey (with correct number) and state last name.

3. **Field commissioner should verify that player is on approved roster (correct Jersey).**
4. Player should then step gently up on scale in center of scale platform and remain there until instructed by field commissioner to step off.
5. Be sure player is not leaning or holding on to anything while on scale
6. Be sure player is in center of scale – standing on edges will cause improper reading.
7. Needle on scale should remain down indicating player is under weight limit or balance below upper stop. If indicator needle touches upper stop the player is considered over limit and ineligible. Electronic scale must read less .5 or less above weight limit when rounded to .1 decimals. (Example for weight limit at 120.5 scale must read 121.0 or less to be ineligible for JV division. 121.05 is over the limit down to 120 and would be eligible). *Note: Doctors scale needle is at set weight when in the middle – it is about .4-.5 lb over when it hits the top bar so this method is consistent between electronic and mechanical scales.*

8. If player has any articles of clothing on he/she may remove those articles of clothing down to their underwear and try again. PLAYERS MAY NO LONGER STRIP COMPLETELY TO MAKE WEIGHT

- As previous player exits scale the next player may enter and repeat weigh-in steps 1-7 above.
- At field commissioner's discretion other players may continue to weigh-in while over limit players are removing articles of clothing. Be careful to respect the privacy of players and their feelings.
- During weigh-in process periodically check scale setting to verify it is still set correctly. Especially if someone jumps on or off scale or scale gets moved. Once a player leaves the weigh-in area, and starts eating, it is too late to question it.
- **Do NOT move scale setting to check weight of individual player during normal weigh-in process.** *This may be done before or afterwards to check weight of players' known to be over weight limit.*
- At field commissioner's discretion you may want to weigh all players that are likely to be over limit or have to disrobe at start or end of regular weigh-in process to conserve time.
- Any player still over the weight limit after disrobing may attempt to weigh in again up until 5 minutes before kickoff. **If unable to make weight by then....He cannot participate in the game and cannot attempt to weigh in again at half time.**
- Any player unable to make weight or otherwise ruled ineligible may remain on the sidelines with his team but must remove his shoulder pads and helmet. If seen on sidelines during game with shoulder pads or helmet on, the game is subject to forfeiture by his team for ineligible participation.
- A player that is late for the start of the game may attempt to weigh in at half time but is ineligible to play in the first half of the game. A player who attempted to weigh in before game but was overweight may NOT try to weigh in again at halftime.
- The weigh-in is a good time to check out cleats as wellThe **MMRFL allows Rubber Molded Cleats only.** As player approaches scale on hard surface be alert to sound of cleats. A load or clicking noise when walking on hard surface typically means they are wearing illegal cleats (molded rubber cleats make a softer thudding type sound). White or colored soles on shoes are another sign. If in doubt check them (99% of all screw in type cleats are illegal). At least first two weeks of season you should check all players cleats at weigh-in for illegal studs (less than 3/16" diameter at tip) and other illegal cleats. If found players may trim studs to legal size or change shoes (you need to verify this before start of game. The only other option is to ruled ineligible and not play).
- Once player has meet weight requirements check them off as OK. Any player not making weight may be on sideline with team but shoulder pads and helmet must be removed and left in inaccessible location (with parents in stands or in car).
- **Special accommodations must be made if a female player is to be weighed in:**
 1. The mother or another woman should be asked to be present during the weigh in of a female player in addition to normal 3 individuals present at weigh in.
 2. If it is necessary for a female player to remove articles of clothing to make weight it should be done in the presence of women only. **The home area needs to provide a certified female field commissioner to conduct this portion of weigh-in.**

Proposed Game Announcement Timetable

The objective here is to have the teams introduced and anthem played before the scheduled kick-off time. The start of the game should not be delayed because announcements were not started until game time.

When you get behind with the start of one game you can quickly start running into time constraints and delaying other games. So please start announcements early

1. As soon as possible before start of game set clock to time out one minute before scheduled kick-off time.
2. At 12-13 minutes on the clock call the teams to the sideline.
3. While teams are going to sidelines you can do “Welcome announcement” to the audience and League Sportsmanship Statement.
4. At 10 minutes on the clock start to introduce team players and coaches (most areas will introduce the visitors first – but this is optional).
5. Play National Anthem (if being played for this game).
6. Announce results of Coin Toss when completed. *

* Coin Toss results are usually announced whenever the toss is done but can be summarized later if needed.

Note: Most areas will introduce cheerleaders at half time after they have done hello cheer for opposing teams. If not done then you may want to do it during third quarter.

Clock, Scoreboard, and Announcers

Please insure that reliable people are selected to run Clock, maintain scoreboard, and announce the game.

1. Clock and scoreboard operators need to be familiar with game and officials signals regarding clock operation. They should study clock operators instructions before hand and watch the officials. Know the difference between signal for starting the clock and signal for play clock. Know signal for stopping clock and who to watch.
2. Clock Operator must pay attention to officials. Special attention should be paid to Referee (official in offensive backfield) or official at receiver end of field on kicks to start the clock. If in doubt the referee is in charge.
3. Limit people in booth around clock and scoreboard operator to those that are needed. Extra people will only distract them from their job, causing issues with officials, coaches, and sometimes fans getting upset.
4. We do not recommend that announcers do play by play announcing during the play. This can be considered coaching by some and all too often this gets one sided (or at least seems to be to some in stands) frequently because of familiarity with plays and players names. Also, Silence during a play is OK and better then constant chatter.
5. Caution announcer and spotters regarding side conversations in booth and avoid excess people in area. All too often a microphone will get left on or someone will make some inappropriate statement (loud enough to be heard) while announcer is talking. {Foul language, derogatory remarks about officials, coaches, players or cheerleaders, jokes in poor taste are amongst things that I have heard coming from announcing booth and personnel}.
6. At halftime...Clock should be set to 12 minutes and started. At end of that, reset to 3 minutes for warm-up time.