

“LET’S GET IT STARTED”

1. Register with MHSAA (Michigan High School Athletics Association)
 - a. Pay small fee for membership (Yearly)
 - b. Open book generic officials test (first time registration only)
 - c. Receive emblem and Competitive Cheer Manual, and permanent ID number
 - d. Take the MHSAA on line or live rules meeting yearly
2. Judging is something you no doubt decided to do because you enjoy it, so be sure you are preparing yourself to be great at your trade.
 - a. Get involved; join a local association
 - b. Get training (MCJA, LMCCOA, CJAMM, MMCO and others)
 - c. Be mentored
 - d. Familiarize yourself with the MHSAA Officials Guidebook
3. How to get assignments:
 - a. Use your mentor for referrals
 - b. Contact Athletic Directors via email
 - c. Be sure you are a member of MCJA (and a local association/assignors group) in order to receive email notifications of officials needed
4. You’ve gotten your first assignment, now what?
 - a. Did you get a contract via mail or email? Be sure to fill out completely and return timely
 - b. Honor your contract, if you can’t then do your best to find a replacement for yourself
 - c. Read page 3-4 of the Cheer Manual, Code for Athletic Officials
5. Preparing for your first meet:
 - a. Be sure to have the contact information for the AD or meet manager, just in case!
 - b. Whenever possible have the contact information for at least 1 other official you are judging with, just in case!
 - c. When the weather is bad it is good practice to contact the AD or AD secretary (by phone or email) giving them your cell phone number and the time you’ll be leaving for the competition so that they can contact you in case of cancellation
 - d. Dress in the approved uniform for competitive cheer officials only. Do not deviate from the required uniform (described on page 15 of manual) as this is a reflection of not only you, but MHSAA and everyone else that officiates in your sport.
 - e. Arrive 1 hour or more before competition begins or at the time specified by the tournament director.
 - f. Take judging materials to competition.
 - i. Judging emblem appropriately attached or properly suspended by a black lanyard around the neck
 - ii. Manual, including any inserts or clarifications (check MHSAA website regularly for any updates/clarifications throughout the season)
 - iii. Highlighters, pens, pencils
 - iv. Calculator
 - v. “Cheat sheets” or extra paper
 - vi. Timer (Safety)
 - vii. Clipboard (Safety)

“BEING AN ACE”

ACT IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER AT ALL TIMES

1. Do not officiate teams whom you have any type of affiliation.
 - a. Conflict of interest, page 7, MHSAA Officials Guidebook.
2. Avoid demonstrative greetings with competitors and coaches on the day of the competition. This may give an impression of bias to anyone who sees you.
3. Introduce yourself in the judging room to your crew.
 - a. Share if this is your first meet, do not be afraid to share that as most officials are happy to help and guide you!!
 - b. It's not a sign of weakness to be new
4. Keep your eyes on the performing team at all times during their performance.
 - a. Important so that you don't miss something while judging
 - b. Also by giving each team your undivided attention you're showing that you understand they've worked hard and deserve to be there
5. Resist reaction to distractions
 - a. Falls or errors in the team's performance
 - b. Noises in the arena
 - c. People approaching the judging area
6. Do not talk about any teams, either in the judging room or at judging table; positively or negatively perception is everything and it could be perceived incorrectly
7. Refrain from conversation during or between the performances of teams unless absolutely necessary
8. Avoid negative comments on score sheets; this is an opportunity to communicate with the coach/competitors on what (*in your opinion*) could improve their scores in that category. Stay away from “personal preference” comments
9. Don't criticize the competition for any reason
 - a. Consider yourself an employee for that period of time and employees should be loyal to the employer (competition director). Say “Thank you” for any food, drink or other creature comforts you are offered as this is not required and is something above and beyond
 - b. Bring snacks in your judging bag in case there aren't creature comforts
10. STAY for the allotted amount of time required by MHSAA after the competition end.
Page 15 of manual
 - a. 10 minutes from competition end until announcement of scores
 - b. Additional 10 minutes once scores are announced for any questions from tournament director or coaches
 - c. It does not say one representative official stays – all are required to stay
11. Admit any mistakes and correct if necessary
 - a. Doesn't mean you don't know your trade; only means that you are constantly learning - which is a strength not a weakness

“I’M REALLY DOING IT”

(OFFICIATING THAT IS...)

1. Avoid any biases or prejudices for teams, whether negative or positive.
 - a. Do not score based on a team’s reputation.
 - b. Do not score based on a team’s style
 - c. Be sure to score using the criteria in the Competitive Cheer Manual, it is the link between judges and coaches.

Social Media Reminder:

The use of social media has undoubtedly changed the lives of so many people in so many ways. Social media is one of the reasons why the world has become smaller. Your reputation as a cheer official matters, maintaining professionalism in social media is a must. If you are using social media sites such as the ever-popular Facebook, be sure to set the privacy settings accordingly. If you think you can contain yourself all the time and remain professional in all your posts, stay public. You must always be careful about your comments. Perception is reality. Comments meant to be kind or flattering may be construed as bias. Clicking the ‘Like’ button can also be seen as bias. People turn to social media to express their feelings towards what they see. As the saying goes, less talk, less mistakes.

2. Judge what you are assigned to judge
 - a. Do not influence or be involved with penalties/panel discussion unless this is a part of your assignment.
 - b. Two schools of thought (discuss as a class)
3. Be sure to be consistent in scoring
 - a. Consistency doesn’t mean all judges have same score; it means being consistent yourself from team to team throughout the day
 - b. Determine your judging scale (done by practicing a lot!) and don’t be swayed by those judges on either side of you. On the other hand, do not be an official who sways/comments to the official whose score are different than yours.
 - i. It may be more appropriate to discuss/evaluate these things after the competition in the official’s room.
 - c. Take notes during performance, keeping eyes on the team, knowing you will not remember all facets of the performance for scoring categories and overall impression. Some judges use special sheets to help them take notes; there are many of these available on our website and here at the workshop.
4. When consulting with a coach
 - a. Talk to them in the judge’s room after the competition
 - b. Offer to call or email them at a later time
 - c. Do not discuss your scores for any team with anyone other than the coach
 - d. Only offer comments regarding improvement if asked by that coach