

MIAA Basketball Post-Game Handshake Protocol

Implementation: 2008-2009 Regular Season

The MIAA has a mission “*to promote a culture of fairness, respect, responsibility, and civility in sports and to foster initiatives which encourage positive attitudes and behaviors in athletes, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators of all ages in Massachusetts.*”

The MIAA Basketball Post-Game Handshake Committee (PGHC) is committed to promoting the expectations and goals of the MIAA initiative to increase the visibility of contest officials during the post-game handshake ceremonies in team sports.

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Council (MIAC) voted at its November, 2007 meeting that: “*Beginning with the fall season of 2008, officials will be required to remain at the team competition site until the handshake ceremony has concluded.*” All game participants (site-managers, coaches, officials, student-athletes), in full view of the spectators, will conclude the contest experience with an appropriate and structured “handshake” ceremony.

In the sport of basketball, the requirement of game official participation in the post-game handshake began with the 2008 MIAA tournament. The PGHC is in agreement that the procedures instituted consistently across the state led to a successful implementation of the post-game handshake ceremony. In combination with the desired positive outcomes, the protocol was developed to ensure the health and safety of all participants. As we enter the 2008-2009 regular season play, the PGHC respects the ongoing health/safety concerns of some basketball game officials, and as a result will recommend the continuation of a structured and consistent protocol.

Prior to a full description of the post-game handshake protocol, it is important to review two rule interpretations which impact the ceremony:

- NF Basketball Rule 2, Section 5, Article 7 has been adopted, “*When the referee either signs the scorebook following the game, or when a non-verbal confirmation is exchanged between the referee and the official scorer, the score is then final and considered approved.*” Thus, the post-game handshake will never impact the final score.
- MIAA Sportsmanship Rule 49.8 states- “*Fighting and unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be within the authority of the official at all times at the contest site. The official’s authority extends to pre and post game oversight.*” Implementation of this rule could have future consequences on the offender, but does not affect the final score.

The protocol outlined below should serve as the guide across the state. Inherent in the expectations is the belief that the post-game handshake initiative is in fact a mutual endeavor of all game participants- site managers, coaches, officials, student-athletes, and in full view of the spectators. This protocol also describes three potential scenarios where the officials’ participation in the post-game handshake ceremony would be suspended.

Suggested Protocol Including Participant Responsibilities

- ✚ *A responsible delegate of the principal at each host school will act as the site manager. In most cases, this will be a school athletic director, principal, assistant principal, or school staff member.*
- ✚ *The site manager will greet the game officials upon their arrival and discuss/plan the post game handshake. Among the most important discussion topics should be the site manager's or designated person's (possibly police/security) designated location during the post-game handshake and the plan for exiting the court following the ceremony.*
- ✚ *In game locations with a public address system, the site manager will ensure the suggested announcement be made prior to the conclusion of the game.*
- ✚ *Following the final horn, the referee will approve the final score.*
- ✚ *As the teams line up and prepare for the post-game handshake, the officials will stand at the half court area facing the scorer's table, or in front of the scorer's table. **It is most important to reinforce that head coaches (and not game officials) are responsible for their teams and student-athletes during the post-game handshake. Also, the site manager and school administration are responsible for spectator decorum at the venue.** The officials will then observe/participate in the ceremony.*
- ✚ *If while observing the handshake anything occurs which would normally penalize the actions with an unsporting technical foul or flagrant technical foul, the official will report those actions to the site manager. These actions will be penalized under MIAA Sportsmanship Rule 49.8.*
- ✚ *Following the handshake ceremony, the site manager or designee will meet with the officials at the designated location and walk them to their locker room area.*

Post-Game Handshake Cancellation- Scenario #1

- ✓ *If the circumstances of the game suggest such a decision, the officials' participation in the post-game handshake ceremony can be cancelled by the site manager and/or game officials. Potential reasons for this decision would be concerns which arise during the game involving the contest participants and/or spectators. In such cases, the "Sportsmanship Handshake Report Form" will be completed by the site manager and forwarded to the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee within 24 hours. As always, the site manager also has the authority to cancel the post-game ceremony altogether, if circumstances suggest such a need.*

Post-Game Handshake Cancellation- Scenario #2

- ✓ *In situations where the home school cannot meet all the expectations and responsibilities outlined in the protocol, it is understood that participation in the post-game handshake ceremony will be at the discretion of the game officials. These circumstances might include a school's inability to designate a site supervisor (separate from the coaching staff) to oversee the protocol, a scenario potentially common to some middle school, freshmen, or junior varsity games played at times other than preceding varsity contests. In these cases, the officials' decision not to participate would not require a formal reporting mechanism.*

Post-Game Handshake Cancellation- Scenario #3

- ✓ *In cases where the home school does not fulfill the protocol responsibilities, thereby impacting concerns over health and safety of the post-game handshake participants, the game officials may exit the court immediately following the final buzzer. In these situations, the referee will be required to make contact with the game official assignor within 24 hours. Upon receiving a report confirming the reasons for the officials' decision not to participate, the assignor will communicate these concerns to the building athletic director (first report). Subsequent reports will be directed to the school principal, followed by the MIAA District Committee chairperson.*

Additional Post-Game Handshake Rule Understandings

- ❖ *League basketball assignors, eligible high school basketball officials, and member schools understand their individual and mutual responsibilities in adhering to the MIAA Post-Game Handshake Rule.*
- ❖ *Home school athletic directors will report any officials in non-compliance of this protocol to the league assignor.*
- ❖ *Following appropriate direction/expectations and empowerment from their league/district leadership, the assignor should/can issue warnings, cancellation of assignments, or permanent suspension from league assignments for willful violations of this protocol. League assignors will be asked to file a year ending report of penalties to the MIAA District Committee chairperson.*

In the end, the PGHC wishes to stress the positive, with the hope of a shared/collegial vision across the state that leads to the enhancement of our mission as an educationally based association. A team effort can make that happen. In closing, the PGHC agrees to reconvene in the post-season to evaluate the year and to report findings to the MIAA Basketball Committee and the Board of Directors.

**Drafted and approved by the MIAA Basketball Post-Game Handshake Sub-Committee:
June – September, 2008**

Approved by the MIAA State Basketball Committee: 20 October 2008