

COME ON - IT'S NOT THAT HARD TO SECURE & TRAIN LINE JUDGES

ARTICLE FOR 2010-2011 NFHS VOLLEYBALL PRE-SEASON GUIDE

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Referees, has this ever happen to you? 20 minutes before the match is to begin you discover the host school has not secured line judges; 2 people, wearing flip flops, who have never served as line judges before are recruited from the stands; as the R1 you give a crash course in line judge duties & protocol; the match starts & one of the line judges clearly does not understand their role nor do they pay attention to the play going on; during a time out you remind the line judge to signal every call, then as play resumes, you find it necessary to overrule one of their calls, at which time they take offense and return to the stands as a spectator.

This situation should never happen if the host team is doing their job in preparing well in advance for a volleyball match.

Hosting an athletic event requires advanced planning and preparation on the part of the host school. It is most important that all volleyball assistant officials, especially the line judges, be secured and trained in their responsibilities and duties.

ARE LINE JUDGES IMPORTANT?

YES! Each year, with the increased athleticism of players, advancements in player equipment and carefully crafted offensive and defensive patterns, the game of interscholastic volleyball continues to grow and advance as something many never imagined. Changes in NFHS rule codes have kept up with these ever-changing advancements, however one fixture remains the same and continues to be an important part of calling the game – the role of the line judge.

A volleyball match is administered by the first referee and the second referee in addition to a score keeper, libero tracker, timer and line judges. All officials play an important role. Good line judges are an especially important part of a volleyball match. The referees rely on these assistant officials to assist them in making calls during a match. It is important to remember that the line judges assist the R1 but do not make final decisions.

SECURING LINE JUDGES

It is the host schools responsibility to secure, instruct and train all line judges. Most school schedules are set well in advance of the season which will provide schools hosting volleyball events plenty of time to identify the number of home matches and line judges needed. Many schools require/prefer that adults serve in this role.

When securing line judges, school administrators and coaches must know the following:

- ▶ Per negotiated agreement, does the school district require that all supplemental duties be given to faculty members at a stipulated rate per hour? If so, you now know the pool you have to choose from.
- ▶ If faculty members are not required, first consider: former players & knowledgeable adults.

Schedule line judge needs based on:

- ▶ The number of days for home matches
- ▶ The number of matches/courts used per day (example: if you are hosting a varsity quad using 2 courts, you will play 6 matches, therefore needing a minimum of 4 line judges).

Communication:

- ▶ Set/communicate a master schedule with all line judges prior to beginning of season
- ▶ Notify/remind one week prior to time needed
- ▶ Identify a time for the line judge to be on site, ready for a meeting with the R1.

Compensation for line judges- If you are lucky, you will be able to use volunteers to serve as your line judges. Unless required faculty members (paid per contract agreement), consider:

- ▶ Free admission to contest and refreshments as needed;
- ▶ Giving them a special shirt to wear while working;
- ▶ Invitation to & special recognition at season-ending athletic banquet/event; etc.

INSTRUCTING & TRAINING LINE JUDGES

Once your line judges are identified, they should be instructed/trained well in advance of the scheduled contests. The 2 primary methods for training are:

1. Classroom Training: Items to discuss are not limited to the following-

- A. Attire (appropriate attire and comfortable shoes - no flip flops or sandals)
- B. Primary Responsibilities & Duties-Think FLATS

The primary duties of the line judge can be easily remembered by using the word **FLATS: Foot Vault** (indicate foot vault by server), **Line** (indicate ball in/out of bounds when it lands on the floor), **Antenna** (indicate if served ball or ball crossing net not between antennas, or if ball touches net, antennas, standards not between antennas), **Touch** (indicate if player touches ball going out of bounds on players side of net), **Stand** (where LJ is to stand during set, time-outs, if server serves from left third of service area, etc.)

C. Other important things they should know:

- Make the call – then chase the ball
- Signal every call – it keeps the LJ in the set/match
- Ignore spectator criticism and keep complete concentration on the game.

2. On-court Training: LJ needs court time (school scrimmage/practice) to practice-

- Court protocol: Where to stand during play, time-outs, between sets
- Communication: Signals to use
- Comfort level: experiencing competition and situations before actual match

NOTE: Referees put in the position to give a “crash course” in how to be a line judge” prior to a match should consider the items previously identified.

HOW CAN THE HOST SCHOOL FURTHER ASSIST LINE JUDGES?

The role of an official can be a thankless task because decisions made will never be approved by all. Some ways to alleviate spectator disapproval include:

- ▶ Match Supervision: Host schools must provide crowd supervision for athletic events. Any unsporting conduct must be dealt with immediately.
- ▶ Coaches must model leadership, self-control & good sportsmanship and they should inform players and fans that the line judges are assistant officials – they assist the first referee.

High school athletic events are exciting, educational experiences. Attention to detail by those hosting these events can make them a memorable time.

Well-managed athletic events are not the result of accident. Attending well in advance to all details pertaining to a home event is evident of effective administration and of good planning.