

2020 Regular Season Assignor Report

Assigning was very different this fall from previous years. First, this is the only season in my four years as the assignor for which there were no weather postponements - it has been a dry fall. Second, Covid-19 made things very unpredictable for game postponement/cancellation. I lost track after I deleted the games, but between 30 and 40 games were lost due to Covid-19 caused school issues.

We did not have any referees who reported positive Covid-19 tests during the season, but I did have to replace, or leave two-man, three games while a test result was awaited. Myself and others have observed that schools have made great efforts to protect players, coaches, and referees from possible infection. Spectators have seemed less vigilant, but overall I feel referees who chose to officiate this fall have been reasonably safe.

We had 38 referees take at least one assignment for us this fall - another two would have worked with us but had assignments lost due to Covid-19 game cancellations. This is 15 to 20 less referees than we normally have had in seasons past, and a number of refs who took a lot of games last season chose to sit out this season. Due to many games on Friday this fall, some refs from the Southern Metro area were able to help us as the metro schools stayed with Thursday night games and left Friday open. A few C games got moved to less busy days, and some C games were played with no referee when none was available. One C game had a referee no show. Especially in the beginning of the season, before Covid-19 postponements, we had a number of varsity matches with two referees. In all, due to many referees being willing to travel when they could, and take multiple games in a day, sometimes at two different sites, we were able to serve 13 schools this season. Three referees who missed the certification deadlines also worked with us to referee sub-varsity games.

Over the regular season, I was able to assign referees to 167 games. This was much less than the 400 or so in other years. There were fewer students playing soccer, which resulted in less sub-varsity games. Also, MSHSL guidance had schools only playing two games a week within their own conference. So instead of a 16 game regular season, most schools had 10 or less games.

There will be 14 section playoff games for boys and 15 section games for girls. The MSHSL has a new certification level called 'Section Eligible' referee. A regular season referee needs to do concussion training, pass a background check, take online video training, and pass the rules test. To be a section referee a two hour clinic must be attended - this year on Zoom. For a 'State Eligible' referee another video must be watched. Most of our referees are section or state eligible, but about a half dozen chose to do only the regular season certification. So for the 1st round of boys and girls games, I must be creative to have enough eligible referees to fill all the positions.

Thank you to all the referees who helped kids have games with officials. I hope most of those who chose to take off this year will return as referees for the 2021 season, along with all of you from this season.

Jerry Baerg
SCMSOA Assignor