

Fellow referees,

At this point, it's obvious - this is going to be an unusual, unpredictable, unprecedented season. It has already begun at the high school level. The most important thing for all of us -- REMAIN PATIENT, FLEXIBLE AND FORGIVING.

WHISTLES. If you haven't already done so, get an e-whistle (hand-held electronic whistle) NOW. They are back-ordered at nearly every supplier, and even on Amazon, there is often a wait of 4+ weeks for delivery. In that endeavor, I have ordered a small supply and expect to receive those within the next week or so. If you are having trouble finding one online, let me know. We have traditionally sold whistles and other equipment at our clinics, and we'll continue to so, including mailing them if in-person clinics don't happen. If you have found a reasonable supplier online, or if you have had good/bad experiences with a particular brand of e-whistle, please post that on our forum: <https://ohiovalleyregion.proboards.com/>

FACEMASKS. Take one with you to every assignment, regardless of level of play or rules code. Many facilities are requiring everyone to wear a mask or face covering upon entry. Obviously, there are a few exceptions to this requirement, but if you aren't in the exceptions category, WEAR IT! (We have to do our part to ensure volleyball resumes safely. If a major outbreak occurs, and it gets traced to volleyball competitions, we'll be shut down.) Ideally, your mask/face covering will be a solid color with no discernable logos or designs; keep them plain. (I know some of you have made or purchased masks with a volleyball design on the material. At least in the OVR, those are fine!)

FLAGS. At this point, at least in the OVR, we should expect that line judges will NOT use flags. Review the hand signals and rehearse what you'll be telling line judges if they aren't using flags.

SCORING. We're discussing a LOT of variations in tournament format and match officiating protocols/procedures. Lots of things are on the table. BRUSH UP ON SCORING! Referees may be handling scoring duties at times, so make sure you have the basics.

CONTRACTS & WAIVERS. Expect that officiating contracts may include: COVID-19 waiver/release, health verification checklist, etc. It's the nature of the beast right now. If you encounter such contracts or waivers and have any questions, please reach out to me.

Again, once some of these tournament & match protocols are established, you'll be the first to know. And one thing that I'm insisting upon: referees will NOT be the "mask & physical distance police." Our recommendation to each tournament host is that they have a designated "Safety Supervisor," who will be responsible for ensuring protocols and procedures are followed.

Let me know if you have any questions about these items or any related topics.

Thanks!
Brian Hemelgarn
OVR Referees' Chair