

# Length of Periods

A question has been raised about the length of sub-varsity games. This memo is intended clearly state what the policy of MIAA and the athletic leagues in Eastern Massachusetts is.

First the rule book:

The NFHS Rulebook states:

Rule 7.1.1 Length of Periods: Two equal halves of 40 minutes each shall be played unless, by state high school association adoption, four equal periods of 20 minutes each are specified. It is recommended that junior high school (middle schools) play 30-minute halves unless by state high school association adoption, four equal quarters of 15 minutes each are specified.

Rule 7.1.2 Length of Periods: Period may be shortened by state high school association adoption, or if mutually agreed upon or in an emergency, by agreement of coaches or ordered by the head referee, provided it is determined to shorten the period before the game or before the second half begins and all remaining period are the same length. (EMSOA comment: Unless shortened by the state association which is MIAA for EMSOA, the periods are shortened only for extraordinary circumstances.")

The MIAA Handbook ("Rules and Regulations Governing Athletics")

77.3: Length of Contests:

77.3.1: Contests shall consist of four 18-minute quarters, two 36-minute halves, or two 40-minute halves.

These rules do not make a clear statement about sub-varsity high school games but many officials have assumed that they apply only to varsity games. To clarify the matter, MIAA was asked what they want. MIAA responded that the rules are that soccer games are intended to be two 40-minute periods at the varsity level and, unless there is a league rule to shorten the periods for junior teams, they are to be 40 minutes for ALL games.

There are some leagues within Massachusetts which have stated that sub-varsity games will have two 35-minute periods. This includes Cape Ann League and Northeastern Conference. It is not clear whether 35-minute periods for the Middlesex League is a policy or just a common practice. The Dual County League clearly stated that sub-varsity games will have 40-minute periods.

The bottom line, MIAA's policy is that the leagues and the coaches decide the length of periods for the sub-varsity games. The referee must comply with these decisions unless there is an extraordinary reason for overruling the league standards and the coaches wishes. If the referee must shorten the periods, he should explain his reason to the coaches. If an official will only contract to work sub-varsity games with less than 80 minutes of play, their Commissioners must be informed of that before accepting games!