

## South Dakota High School Activities Association

# 2021 Football Memo – Week 0/1

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Thank you for the diligent preparation and efforts in preparing for the season. Many crews kicked off the 2021 season with games this past weekend. On many accounts we had a strong opening weekend performance. It is good to get the first one out of the way. Let's only focus on getting better each week. Choose 1 or 2 things to focus on at your position and as a crew and evaluate your performance. Don't be over critical, simply reflect honestly on effort and progress.

A great big thank you to our team of dedicated leaders we call our Region Coordinators. Great work in helping share information and prepare for a successful season. I encourage you to not just attend Region meetings but contribute to them. Volunteer and present at the next meeting. Well done.

Observers - thank you for your efforts and feedback. Crews take advantage of this experienced group, tap into their knowledge as we work to have all crews observed at least once this season.

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### Scrimmage Kick Mechanics

Field Goal (FG) and Point After Touchdown Try (TRY).

For consistency purposes, let's follow the mechanics outlined below. I have discussed with several who are reviewing/evaluating this mechanic after the 2021 season, but for now please adhere to the following mechanic:

For all FG's and PAT's in which the ball is snapped from the 15-yard line and in, the B and the U shall be under their respective upright. The U will position, instruct the snapper to wait for the ready for play whistle when (PAT) and then move into position under the upright. Where this mechanic becomes difficult is when we do not have a RFP whistle and teams are "hustling" into position, and we are "scrambling" into our base positions for the start of the play. It is imperative that with our U under an upright we must have a strong close down by our R, (after the kicker/holder or U).

For all FG's and PAT's in which the ball is snapped from outside the 15-yard line the B and the H or L shall be under their respective upright. H or L is determined which position is looking at the face/front of the holder. The R shall be wide, the U will be in position and instruct the snapper to wait for, the ready for play whistle and when the (PAT) they will move into position under the upright. Where this mechanic becomes difficult is when we

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### **Pre-Game Coaches Conference**

It is critical that we have quality pregame conferences with the head coaches. It should be the R and U who meet with the head coaches. There are many responsibilities for each crew member so let the R and U handle the head coach conferences. Manage your time with the head coach. Be fair and make it professional and brief. This is a business meeting. Get to the important things and do not turn it into a rules meeting, clinic, or a "complain session" from last week's game.

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### **Intention Grounding (ING)**

This is a crew penalty, but the R should be the only one that puts down a flag for the ING foul. LOS officials, U and B be ready to assist the R. Bring all information to the R so they can put the flag down or if the R puts the flag down get them all the information so that the R can take off the foul and pick up the flag. It takes all 5 officials to "piece" the ING puzzle together. One of the most misunderstood rules at the high school level is intentional grounding. Under NFHS rules, intentional grounding is a foul whenever a legal forward pass is thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, or when a pass is thrown to prevent a loss of yardage or to conserve time. The only exception to this rule is when the passer intentionally throws the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap. Under NFHS rules, it is a foul if there was no eligible receiver in the area of the pass, regardless of the passer's position on the field. Across the country, we are seeing more high school quarterbacks throw the ball away to avoid a sack when outside the pocket, thinking this is legal based on what is seen on television. High school referees need to be aware of these situations and, with the help of the L and H (U and B as well) make the correct call under NFHS football rules. This is a foul that should be called after the game officials have gathered and discussed the play. When a foul does occur, the penalty flag needs to be thrown by the referee. The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

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### **Sportsmanship**

Sportsmanship is always a priority passed down from the SDHSAA. Teams most often take on the characteristics of their coaches. When a coach is one who believes in the virtues of fundamentals, the players can usually be counted on to play crisp football as designed by the NFHS rules book. Conversely, a coach who berates officials, uses profanity, and constantly points out the supposed mistakes of officials will often have teams that follow suit.

Most officials will answer a coach's question if it is asked in a reasonable tone of voice. No one expects coaches to appreciate every call but constant comments such as "you blew that one" or "how can you make a call like that" deserve to be answered with silence and possibly a penalty flag if the comments escalate to continuing badgering. Continual complaining can serve as a distraction to officials.

If the comments turn personal, then no leeway should be given to the coach who is complaining. There is a large difference between disagreeing with a call and having your integrity questioned. Once a head coach has crossed that line, the necessary penalty should be enforced swiftly. That is the exact purpose of a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. If the coach is not penalized, his conduct may become more offensive.

Coaches who let the officials officiate serve the game much better than one who constantly questions every call and berates the officials. The head coach can help officials by keeping players in the team box and by moderating the behavior of assistant coaches. The head coach should be the only one communicating with the officials.

## Let Officials Officiate

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### Video Review

The SDHSAA has found that the most effective training tool for promoting consistency and improved officiating is through video review.

With the help of SDHSAA coaches and Mark Smith of Pierre, the SDHSAA is working on compiling a video review of unique plays and situations.

The SDHSAA is hoping the plays will allow discussion areas of mechanics, crew communication and rules study with football officials on high school mechanics and rules.

The plays are not meant to pick on any one official, crew or team. These plays are meant to be a learning tool to help promote what we all want to see from our officials.

Take ideas from these plays that you find helpful and apply them to your football officiating game. This week's video plays:

SDHSAA Website - Football specific resources:

<https://www.sdhsaa.com/activity/football-officials/>

Please UPDATE if we are able <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8IZtI4fMrw>

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### Extra Time-Out Due To Heat

The SDHSAA authorizes all football officials to call a “heat time-out” in the event of heat/humidity. The heat time-out will be 120 seconds. This time-out is not charged to either team. The officials are authorized to call a heat time-out somewhere close to the mid-point of each quarter. It should be taken at a time when it will not strategically benefit or work to the disadvantage of either team-- after a change of possession. DO NOT take a heat time out when team is driving for a score.

The decision as to whether heat time-outs will be taken should be dealt with prior to the start of game—it is always better to error on the side of safety. The rationale for taking these additional time-outs is concern for the safety and health of the student/athletes. The additional time-outs will enable the athletes to cool down a bit and get a drink of water or some other appropriate fluids. Each student/athlete must have his or her own water bottle.

If you use heat time-outs during the first half, you must use the heat time-outs during the second half even if there is a change in the weather conditions.

Officials plan to allow for longer breaks during the natural course of play (i.e.: going 120 seconds between score and kick-off, etc.) so athletes can cool down and get a drink of water. Officials have the authority to call an extra (two a quarter), officials' timeout during contests in the event of extreme heat and/or humidity.

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### 35-Point Rule/50-Point Rule

When a team secures a 35-point lead in the second half, the clock will continue to run. Regulation timing is followed in the first half regardless of the score.

Beginning with the ensuing kick-off, the following changes (and only these) will be made regarding rules determining when the clock will and will not be stopped. The clock will run continuously except for the following situations when it will be stopped:

- Any time-out charged to a team (re-start with the ensuing snap)
- After a score (re-start clock with the ensuing kick-off when legally touched by R, or by the ensuing snap—kick out-of-bounds or touchback)
- Intermission between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (re-start with snap)
- Extended injury time-out—only if coach is brought out (re-start with ready for play)
- Any time officials deem it necessary for safety reasons (re-start with ready for play)

Once the mercy rule is in effect, the clock will continue to run until the completion of the game. Regulation timing will not resume if the score differential drops below 35. If a team is 50 points or more ahead at the end of the first half or if it secures such a lead during the second half, the game is ended immediately.

The 35-Point Rule/50 –Point Rule only applies to Class 11A, Class 11B and 9-man games.

- The game clock will continue to run during the enforcement of penalties unless the issues surrounding the enforcement take significant time than officials would signal for an officials' timeout.
- The game clock will continue to run after a change of team possession.

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## Are You Ready For Your First Game?

- Team Officiating: If you see something, say something, if it will help make the game better and right a wrong
- Wing Officials: Be great at sideline signals and mirroring spots
- Clock Awareness: Own the clock—everyone
- Count-Count-Count: Every play
- Referee's: Be great with your signals and stay back off of the line of scrimmage
- Umpire's: Be active, get the ball down and be precise with penalty administration
- Equipment Reminders: Knee pads must be worn over the knee and under the pants
- Wing Officials: When players go into the bench area your primary responsibility is to go in after them and walk them back onto the field
- Dead Ball: We need to watch players until they are clear of any threat of fouls. Never turn your back to players
- Sideline Control: Get coaches and players back. Show them the restricted area when the ball is live where you need to officiate
- Linesman and Line Judge: Pinch in after a kicked PAT. Help the umpire with cleaning up players

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## Officials Quiz 2021

Question 1: Fourth and 20 for Team K at its own five-yard line. The ball will be snapped from the hash mark on the line judge's side of the field. Which official in a crew of five is responsible for the goal line if the play breaks down (blocked punt, bad snap, etc.)?

Question 2: As Team A players are taking their positions on the line, B57 imitates the quarterback's cadence as used on the previous plays. When is this penalty?

**Question 3:** Following a penalty and before the ready-for-play, snapper A50 puts his hand on the ball. He then rises and removes his hand from the ball, to speak to the quarterback. Is this a foul?

**Question 4:** Standing in his end zone, R27 catches the kickoff and hands the ball forward to R30 who crosses the goal line and is tackled at the R12. Where is the penalty enforced?

**Question 5:** On a third down play, A43 fumbles short of the line-to-gain. The ball crosses the line-to-gain before going out of bounds, last touched by B41. What is the next down and distance?

**Question 6:** On a try, A86 holds B46 in the end zone during a legal forward pass that crosses the neutral zone. Eligible A27 catches the pass in the end zone. Team B accepts the penalty. Is the try down replayed?

**Question 7:** Quarterback A1 is positioned directly behind the snapper. (A) A1 muffs the snap but is able to take the ball from the ground and spike it forward; or (B) A1 received the snap, but his spike attempt hits snapper A2's leg and ricochets into the air. A1 catches the ball and immediately spikes it forward. Are the plays legal?

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### **Football Officials, Coaches, Coordinators or Observers**

- If you have any play situations during your games that officials statewide should know about to help them become better officials, please send plays to be included in weekly bulletins.
- If you have questions about rule interpretation, please forward your concerns to [coordinator@sdhsaa.com](mailto:coordinator@sdhsaa.com) or call me at 605-201-9721 (cell).
- If you have any questions or comments about any information you will receive this football season--please forward your concerns to me.

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### **Quiz Answers**

**Ruling 1:** Ordinarily in NFHS mechanics, the line judge moves downfield at the snap while the linesman holds to ensure the ball crosses the neutral zone. SDHSAA recommends that, when the ball is snapped near the goal line on a scrimmage kick, both wings hold momentarily to observe the action. If the snap is bad, the punter may not be able to get off a normal punt; as a result, the wings won't have that much distance to travel, and the hesitation won't be as detrimental to downfield coverage. If the line judge senses a heavy rush that could produce a blocked kick, goal line coverage is crucial. However, if the line judge sees a good snap and its obvious team R is not rushing to set up a return, the line judge should move downfield shortly after the snap.

**Ruling 2:** Once Team A players are set and the quarterback is trying to call the signals, it would be a dead ball foul if B57 continues the imitated cadence. Disconcerting acts result in a five-yard penalty.

**Ruling 3:** No foul since the snapper is not restricted until the ready.

**Ruling 4:** The ball is dead when the kick breaks the plane of Team R's goal line. There is no foul for handling the ball forward. The result is a touchback.

**Ruling 5:** Following a forward fumble out of bounds, the succeeding spot is the out-of-bounds spot which gives Team A a first down. The clock starts on the snap.

**Ruling 6:** The foul is for offensive pass interference rather than holding. It does not include loss of down, so the try is replayed.

**Ruling 7: An illegal forward pass in both (A) and (B). Once the ball touches the ground, a player or a spike attempt is unsuccessful, it may not be grounded legally thereafter using this exception.**

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**MIBT--Make It Be There!**

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