



## 2021 Football Memo – Week 2

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It is with great sorrow that we received the news this week that Mr. Duane Donat passed away recently. Duane, was a lifelong leader in SDHSAA activities. He is one that made a difference. Prayers and Blessings from all of us, sent to Duane's family. Duane – We love and appreciate you and all the differences you have made!

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/duane-donat-obituary?id=6384647>

### **Approved Mechanics – NFHS and SDHSAA Only**

We have done many great things as officiating crews during these first two weeks. I applaud your efforts and accuracy. We have done a good job the first two weeks of the season but we must continue to strive on growing and improving. One area of focus is mechanics consistency. All Crews across the state need to use only the approved NFHS and SDHSAA mechanics that are outlined and taught from/in our manual. By having all officials and crews working from the same base set of mechanics, we can give ourselves as officials the opportunity for consistency. Our coaches and student athletes deserve our best. We need to continue to get better and have better focus. This week let's set a goal as a crew, and use only NFHS/SDHSAA approved mechanics. I trust we can achieve more consistency with our approved mechanics across the state. I will continue to highlight areas of positive examples in our weekly memos, videos that are posted and with our team of observers. For everyone's convenience I have posted a link to the NFHS website and resources.

<https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/football/>

### **Helmet Off**

If the helmet comes completely off a player while the ball is alive without being directly attributable to a foul by an opponent, the ball remains alive unless the player whose helmet comes off is the runner. In that case the ball becomes dead immediately. If the helmet comes off because of a foul, the player may remain in the game.

The NFHS has no rule provision for when a player may remove his helmet when the ball is dead, and the snap or free kick is not imminent. Consequently, this action would be deemed legal. A player whose helmet comes off during a live ball or subsequent dead ball action related to the down must not continue to participate in the play beyond the immediate action in which they are engaged. Penalty: Illegal Participation, 15 yards (9-6-4g). No player or non-player shall initiate contact whose helmet has come completely off. Penalty: Personal Foul 15 yards (9-4-31).

A player whose helmet that comes completely off without being attributable to a foul will be treated as an official's time-out handled the same as and injured/bleeding player.



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### **Disruption of Games Due to Weather (Lightning, Etc.)**

Officials and school personnel should always rule on the side of safety and postpone or delay any outside activity when threatening weather exists. If there is any doubt as to whether the contest should be suspended, it is always better to error on the side of safety. The decision to suspend a contest lies with the game officials.

Local school administrators should not hesitate to discuss a suspension of play with the officials if they feel weather conditions warrant. Teams should be sent to their respective locker rooms or buses and fans should be instructed to leave the stadium.

In the event that the contest cannot be resumed after a delay, which is based upon mutual agreement of both schools (not the officials), one of the following may be selected:

1. Resume play from the point of interruption at a later date
2. Declare a winner or loser based upon the score at the time of interruption

If there is a delay, the game is suspended at the exact point of stoppage, so make sure you record all the game information such as time, score, down, distance, placement of ball, etc.

Review the guidelines for lightning or thunder disturbances on Appendix E Page 101 of the 2021 NFHS rule book.

### **SDHSAA Disqualification Rule**

Disqualification (fighting or two unsportsmanlike fouls) will consist of an athlete being removed for the remainder of the game as well as the entirety of the next contest. Two personal fouls alone do not constitute an ejection – one flagrant one does, but not two cumulative personal fouls – know the difference between flagrant personal fouls, personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct fouls!!! Only those ejections for “Illegal Personal Contact” as outlined in Rule 9-4-3, (a) through (i) and (k) through (o) incur a reduced sit-out.

Officials: When reporting disqualification to the coach do not concern yourself with how long a player will miss game action. Just officiate the remainder of the game and then file the ejection report, citing the rule reference for why an athlete was ejected from a game.

Ejection Report: Is it very important that if you have a disqualification in your game that the referee submits the ejection report within 24 hours to the SDHSAA Office. You can find the Officials Ejection Form on the website. Reports should include all information related to the ejection (who, what, and when) including the rule reference used when applicable (second unsportsmanlike conduct, flagrant, fighting, etc.).

Officials do need to report the disqualification to the coach and why the player has been disqualified.

### **Kick Catch Interference**

- Any kicking player may recover a free kick if it has both touched the ground and goes beyond the plain of the returner's free kick line. The order of occurrence has no bearing on the fact that the kicking team may then recover. The kicking team may not advance the recovered kick.



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- A kicking team member can NOT catch a free kick even if there is no returning team player in position to catch the free kick.
- When you have kick-catching interference, the returning team has the option of taking the result of the play, accepting an awarded fair catch at the spot of the foul, accepting a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the awarded fair catch, or replaying the down after having the penalty enforced from the previous spot.
- Scrimmage kick has a different ruling: The kicking team may catch, touch, muff or bat a scrimmage kick in flight beyond the neutral zone if no returning team player is in position to catch the ball. There is no requirement that the receiver must make or attempt to make a catch—only that they are in a position where they could make a catch if they desired.

### **Muff Kicks Into End Zone**

Initial force results from a kick. The muffing, touching or batting of a kick in flight is not considered a new force. Force is not a factor on kicks going into the returner teams end zone, since these kicks are always a touchback regardless of who supplied the force.

It is a touchback if any free kick or scrimmage kick which is not a scoring attempt or which is a grounded three-point field goal attempt, breaks the plane of returner teams' goal, unless the returning team chooses a spot of first touching by the kicking team.

PLAY: The kicking team's free kick or scrimmage kick is muffed at the returning team's 10-yard line by the kick receiver returner and football rolls into the returning teams end zone.

RULING: The force of the kick is what puts the ball into the end zone. The ball becomes dead immediately when it broke the plane of returning teams goal line and results in a touchback

### **Unsuccessful Field Goal Kick**

In the NFHS Rule Book, if an attempted field goal is unsuccessful, it is treated the same as a punt. If the ball breaks the plane of the returning team's goal line, it is immediately dead and a touchback result. If the kick goes out of bounds in the field of play or becomes dead inbounds, the ball belongs to the returning team where it was declared dead.

Play: Fourth and 10 on the returning team's 30-yard line. The kicking team's field goal attempt is well short and the kick goes out of bounds (a) on the returning teams one-yard line, or (b) in the end zone.

Ruling: In the NFHS Rule Book, in (a) it is returning team's ball on its one-yard line. In (b), it's a touchback.

### **Rugby Style Kick/Quick-Kick Punt**

A kicker is any player who legally punts, drop kicks or place kicks. A player becomes a kicker when his knee, lower leg or foot contacts the ball. He is still considered to be the kicker



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until he has had a reasonable opportunity to regain his balance. Kicking team does not have to be in scrimmage kick formation to kick the ball.

When a team gets off a quick kick. Is the kicking team entitled to the same protection as a conventional punter? Any player of the kicking team may legally kick the ball and is eligible for protection assuming it is reasonably certain a kick will be made. A quick kick/rugby style kick are examples in which there is not reasonable certainty a kick will be made. As a result, the returning team is given more latitude than during conventional punting situations.

When the punter runs out in a rugby style kick or a quick-kick the defense must be given an opportunity to tackle the runner. The punter does not become a “kicker” by rule until they actually make their attempt to kick the ball!

If contact is slight and partially caused by the unexpected or unnecessary movement of the kicker, it is not a foul. Officials must consider avoid this when ruling whether contact is incidental. Contact may not be avoidable when it is not reasonably certain a kick will be made.

In the NFHS Rule Book, if blocking the defender into the kicker or holder is the sole reason for the contact, there is no foul.

Roughing the kicker includes any act that endangers the safety of the kicker or holder. The penalty for roughing is 15 yards from the previous spot and an automatic first down. Running into the kicker or holder is a foul that occurs when the kicker is displaced from his kicking position but is not roughed. The penalty is five yards from the previous spot with the down repeated.

The punter in a rugby style kick play or quick-kick punt play NEVER forfeits his protection from personal fouls.

Case Book 9.4.5 SITUATION B: The kicker in a scrimmage kick formation, muffs the snap, but quickly recovers and begins to run. However, the kicker changes his mind and: (a) punts on the run; or (b) abruptly stops and punts. The rusher is unable to stop his charge and forcibly contacts the kicker. The rusher did not touch the kick.

RULING: No foul in either (a) or (b) because it was not reasonably certain the kicker was going to punt the ball.

COMMENT: It is always roughing the kicker if the contact could have been avoided regardless of whether or not it was apparent a kick would be made. Only unavoidable contact is ignored if it is not reasonably certain a kick will be made. The primary criteria are whether or not the contact is unavoidable.

### **Enforcement Spots**

1. Live ball personal foul (foul while ball is live)—if the runner has not crossed the goal line the penalty would be enforced from the spot of the foul.
  - If an unnecessary (but legal) block against a defenseless player occurs while the runner is still running in the field of play (live ball)—you would enforce the penalty from the spot of the foul—take away the touchdown.
    - Rationale: safety rules for contact against players who are deemed defenseless



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2. Dead ball personal foul—if the runner has crossed the goal line, goes out of bounds or is down by rule before the personal foul--you have a dead ball situation so you would count the touchdown and enforce penalty on extra point try or kickoff.
3. Live ball unsportsmanlike foul—if runner has not crossed the goal line and you have an unsportsmanlike penalty you would consider the unsportsmanlike foul as a dead ball foul—live ball foul penalized as a dead ball foul. Count touchdown—enforce penalty on extra point try or kickoff.
4. Dead ball unsportsmanlike foul—runner has crossed the goal line, goes out of bounds or is down by rule (dead ball). Count touchdown—enforce penalty on extra point try or kickoff.

Unsportsmanlike acts are those that do not involve physical contact against an opponent. Taunting, excessive celebrating and disrespect directed at officials are examples of unsportsmanlike acts. Late hits, flagrant facemask grab, unnecessary roughness, excessive or targeting fouls are among those considered personal fouls.

Coaches need to teach their players that the play kills itself. Players need to be taught when the “ball is dead by rule.” If players “hit until the whistle,” often they are hitting late as the whistle signifies the ball is already dead. The officials whistle only indicates that the down is over. Football players need to understand when a player is down by action or out of the play.

### **Punts—Back Judge & Line Judge Mechanics**

Back judges need to anticipate what can happen between the time the kick is made and when the down ends. Go through a checklist to remind yourself what to look for: a fair catch signal, first touching, kick-catch interference, legal or illegal batting, when to drop a beanbag, touchback, etc. Remind the punt receiver each and every time that if they want to make a fair catch they need to give a good signal! Make this a habit!

The Starting position for the back judge should be 10-12 yards wider than and 2-3 yards behind the deepest receiver, always wide to the Head Lineman's side of the field. Be where you can observe action on and by the receiver. You need to see if the receiver touches the punt—this is a big time call if you miss the receiver touching the punt—give a tipped signal when to indicate first touching—let everyone know what you have seen.

Line Judges – Make sure you are delayed at line of scrimmage before moving downfield. Watch for a clean snap and be alert for handoff, quick pitch or reverse before heading downfield to assist the back judge.

### **Officials Quiz 2021**

Question 1: If a first down is gained by Team A and then there is a dead ball personal foul on Team A after the play. What is the next down and distance?

Question 2: A1 catches a pass and has a clear path to the end zone. At the team B five-yard line and before he scores, A1 points at and taunts pursuing B2. The line judge throws his flag for



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taunting and reports A1's foul as (a) unsportsmanlike conduct, or (b) a personal foul. What is the ruling?

Question 3: Fourth and seven, K38, in position to punt while standing at the Team A's 7-yard line, muffs the snap from center. To prevent Team R from recovering the ball, K38 kicks it backward and out of the end zone. Is there a penalty for kicking the muff?

Question 4: Immediately after A5 snaps from a scrimmage-kick formation and before A5 has a chance to look up to defend himself, B2 tries to shoot the gap between A5 and guard A6. In the process, B2 places a hand on pushes down on A5's right shoulder, causing him to fall. Do you have a roughing the snapper violation?

Question 5: Fourth and 10 on team R's 30-yard line. K1's field goal attempt is well short and the kick goes out of bounds (a) on team R's one-yard line, or (b) in the end zone. Where is the ball spotted for the next play?

Question 6: With fourth and four from R's 40-yard line, K1 punts. The kick is bounding near R's goal line and K2, in an attempt to keep it from penetrating the plane of the goal line, bats the ball at the 2-yard line back towards his own goal line. What is the ruling on the bat by K2?

Question 7: After Team K's kickoff from their 40-yard line, the ball bounces high near the sideline. R1 leaps from inbounds and grabs the ball while airborne over the field of play. After securing the ball, R1 lands on the sideline at Team R's 35-yard line. Is this a foul for a free kick out of bounds?

Question 8: K1 punts and R2 signals for a fair catch. R3 catches the ball and is immediately tackled cleanly by K4. R3 fumbles when hit and the ball is recovered by K5. Does Team K get to keep possession of the football?

Question 9: Fourth and seven, K38, in position to punt while standing at his own seven-yard line, muffs the snap from center. To prevent Team R from recovering the ball, K38 kicks the ball backwards and out of the end zone. Is there a foul for an illegal kick?

Question 10: A1 is headed for the end zone to score a would-be touchdown (a) on the five-yard line (b) has broken the plane of the goal line with the ball; when teammate A2 throws a blind-sided block on an opponent completely out-of-the-play at the 50-yard line. What is the penalty for enforcement?

Question 11: While tackling runner A23, B54's helmet comes off as a result of the legal tackle. Does B54 need to leave the game for one play?



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### Football Officials or Coaches Concerns

- 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 concern to me.

### Quiz Answers

**Ruling 1:** The penalty will be marked off 15 yards from the dead ball spot and it will be 1st and 10. The only way it can be 1st and 25 is if the dead ball foul occurred AFTER the ready for play, which is going to be very rare

**Ruling 2:** In (a), that is a live-ball foul penalized as a dead-ball foul. Team A keeps the score and the penalty is enforced on the try. In (b), the personal foul is a live-ball foul during a run. The penalty is enforced from the spot of the foul (team B's five-yard line). It would be Team A's ball, first and 10 from team B's 20-yard line and the score would NOT count. A big difference based on how that infraction is reported. Unsportsmanlike conduct is the correct call on the play. Officials need to know what are personal fouls and unsportsmanlike fouls. Report the foul correctly to the referee.

**Ruling 3:** The result of the play is a safety. It is illegal to kick a loose ball. Team R may accept the penalty, which would be enforced half-the-distance to the goal from the spot of the foul with fourth down replayed.

**Ruling 4:** Legal play by B2 because he did not play directly through A5.

**Ruling 5:** NFHS, in (a) it is team R's ball on its one-yard line. In (b), it's a touchback.

**Ruling 6:** The bat by K2 is legal because it occurred beyond the neutral zone. Officials should drop a bean bag at the 2-yard line--spot of first touching.

**Ruling 7:** No Foul. Team R will put the ball in play at its own 35-yard line.

**Ruling 8:** The ball became dead when caught by R3. Regardless of when the whistle was blown, R3 fumbled a dead ball and there cannot be a recovery by Team K. Team K does NOT retain possession of the football as they recovered a dead ball.

**Ruling 9:** The result of the play is a safety (Team R declines penalty). It is illegal to kick a loose ball. If the player muffs the snap and kicks the ball while it is on the ground, you have a backward pass and a foul for illegally kicking the ball. Team R may accept the penalty, which would be enforced half-the-distance to the goal from the spot of the foul with fourth down



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replayed. If the ball is inadvertently kicked in an attempt to obtain possession, it is a muff and not a foul.

**Ruling 10:** Personal foul, 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul on Team A player in situation (a); in situation (b), count the score and the defensive team has their choice of penalizing Team A on the PAT or succeeding kick-off (exception, if this occurred on the last play of the game, penalty can only be enforced on the PAT).

**Ruling 11:** B54 must be replaced for one down unless the halftime intermission or an overtime intermission occurs. An official or charged team time-out does not exempt the player from being replaced for one down.

### **Take Your Time – Slow Down – Slow Down – Slow Down With Penalty Enforcement**

#### **Quick Tip**

Officials: *DO NOT* search for penalties and violations instead let the play, fouls and violations come to you.