



## 2021 Football Memo – Week 7

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### **Crunch Time**

October/November is crunch time for football. The teams are fighting for conference championships and high seeds for the state play-offs. Teams want to be at their best and so should we as officials. Our concentration and game calling skills should be at optimum. We must give 100% each and every game we officiate.

There is no excuse for making errors on rules enforcement and not using proper positioning and proper mechanics. We have to get in the best position possible to clearly see the play, which minimizes our chances significantly to getting it wrong. We must use our proper NFHS mechanics to communicate with the timer, our crew members, coaches, and fans. We cannot allow laziness or lack of respect to deter us from performing to our maximum.

We are not suggesting that you are not going to miss one now and then, but it should not be from lack of effort. The miss should involve judgment, not improper enforcement or poor positioning.

If you prepare yourself, know the game, know how to apply the rules, use proper positioning, and mechanics and give 100% every game, you and your crew members can feel proud of your achievements. Remember, we only cheat ourselves when we do not give our very best.

### **Finish the Season Strong**

### **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:

**UPDATED LINK TO TRAINING VIDEOS:** <https://www.sdhsaa.com/football-training-videos/>

### **FG and PAT Kicks**

On field goal attempts, when the ball is snapped at or inside the 15-yard line, and on PAT kicks, the mechanics and positioning are the same. The umpire will position himself under one of the uprights along with the back judge. The head linesman and line judge will stay in their normal positions. Prior to moving to the upright, the umpire will remind the defense to stay off the snapper. The back judge will be beyond the end zone and behind the upright on the head linesman's side of the field. The umpire will be beyond the end zone and behind the upright on the line judge's side of the field. The back judge will rule on the crossbar and his upright. The umpire rule on his upright.

On field goal attempts when the ball is snapped outside the 15-yard line, the umpire after spotting the ball, will position himself in his regular position in the defensive backfield. Whichever wing official is looking at the back



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of the holder will remain positioned on the line of scrimmage. The wing official who is looking at the front of the holder will move back into the end zone behind upright on his side of the field. That official will rule on the upright on his side of the field. The back judge, who was also beyond the end zone, will rule on the crossbar and the upright on his side of the field. If you are one of the officials that are back under the uprights on a field goal or PAT kick attempt, take care of your own responsibility. Do not be worried about what happens with the other upright.

Rule 8-4-1 sets out three conditions that must be met in order for a field goal or PAT kick to be successful. First, the attempt shall be a place kick or a dropkick from scrimmage. Additionally, the kicked ball shall not touch any Team K player beyond the expanded neutral zone or the ground before passing through the goal. Finally, the kicked ball shall pass between the vertical uprights or inside of the uprights extended above the crossbar of the opponent's goal. If an attempted field goal is unsuccessful, it is treated the same as a punt. If the ball breaks the plane of Team R's goal line, it is immediately dead and the result is a touchback. If the kick goes out of bounds in the field of play, or becomes that inbounds, the ball belongs to Team R where it was declared dead.

**PLAY:** 4<sup>th</sup> and 10 at 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 1-yard line, or (b) in the end zone.

**RULING:** In (a) it is Team R's ball on its 1-yard line. In (b), it is a touchback.

For a scoring kick to be successful, the entire ball must pass completely over the crossbar and completely between the inside edges of the uprights. Once that has been accomplished, the kick is successful even if the ball is blown back into the end zone. It does not matter if the ball comes back above or below the crossbar

**CASEBOOK 8.4.1 SITUATION A:** The field goal attempt: (a) goes directly over and upright; or (b) is clearly over the crossbar between the uprights. In (a) and (b), the ball is blown back by the wind so that it drops in Team B's and zone.

**RULING:** In (a) it is unsuccessful attempt because the ball did not penetrate the plane of the goal between the inside of the uprights extended. It is a legal field goal in (b) and it does not matter if the ball comes back above or below the crossbar.

### **Punts Out of Bounds in the Air**

The NFHS Football Game Officials Manual (pages 48-51) includes a recognized procedure that officials should use when a punt goes out-of-bounds on the fly.

- a. The referee is to line up the covering official at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline by using an outstretched arm.
- b. When the ball goes out-of-bounds in flight, the covering wing official should: sound the whistle and give the clock stop signal twice; move farther downfield along the sideline than where the ball went out-of-bounds; and walk back upfield until the referee spots you on the sideline.
- c. Similarly, when the ball goes out-of-bounds in flight on the head linesman's side of the field, the back judge should: sound the whistle; give the clock stop signal twice; and have the referee spot you on the sideline, and hold that spot until the ball is spotted inbounds.



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The referee will raise up his hand to line up the kick for the covering official. The covering official will move up the sideline, and stop when the referee drops his hand. Note: If there is continuing action on the kicker, the referee may need to disregard spotting the ball. In that case, the covering official will need to get the out-of-bounds spot by himself. If the covering official is left to determine where the ball went out-of-bounds, to the extent practical, seek assistance from your crew mates. Once the out-of-bounds spot is chosen, it must be sold.

### **Ball Carrier Down**

In Rule 4-2, there is a list of twelve situations where the ball becomes dead, and the down is ended. Rule 4-2-2a specifically provides that the ball becomes dead and the down is ended when a runner (according to Rule 2-32-13, this is a player who is in possession of a live ball) goes out of bounds, is held so his forward progress is stopped, or who allows any part of his person other than his hand or foot to touch the ground. We all know one exception to this particular rule – the ball remains live when a place-kick holder has his knees on the ground.

It is worth the time for every official to look over the twelve very specific situations in Rule 4-2. Some relatively common situations do not fall under the rule. For example, if a runner, while being tackled, lands on top of the tackler, and nothing other than the runner's hand or foot is touching the ground, the ball does not become dead, the down is not ended, and the runner may get up and continue the play. Similarly, in the situation where a runner touches the ball on the ground to maintain his balance, the ball does not become dead, the down is not ended, and the play continues.

### **Review Extending the Period – Time Must Expire *During* The Down**

Time must expire *during* the down; it does not matter which team fouls. It is the replay of the down which mandates the extension of the period. The accepted penalty that triggers the untimed down can be on either team.

For example, if the clock ran out during a play in which a touchdown is scored, and there is a foul by Team A during the scoring play, then when Team B accepts the penalty to nullify the score, the down would then be replayed, except under certain circumstances (loss of down penalty, etc.), as an untimed down.

### **Review Rugby Style Kick**

Any player of Team A 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, Team B 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.

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 ability when ruling whether contact is incidental. Contact may not be avoidable when it is not reasonably certain a kick will be made.

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

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

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 is whether or not the contact is unavoidable.



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### Handing The Ball

Handing the ball is transferring player possession from one player to a teammate in such a way that the ball is still in contact with the first player when it was touched by the teammate. Handing the ball is not a pass. During a scrimmage down, a Team A player may hand the ball forward provided both players are in or behind the neutral zone. The ball is never in-flight “between” the two players. If so, it would be a pass. Passing the ball is throwing the ball that is in player possession. There may be only one legal forward pass during a down. During a pass, the ball travels in flight, that is, thrown rather than handed forward.

### Eligibility

At the snap, eligible receivers are those in the backfield or on the end of the line with a number 1 to 49 or 80 to 99. Interior linemen (regardless of number) and ends or backs numbered 50 to 79 are ineligible at the snap. Players numbered 50 to 79 inclusive cannot report to the referee to become eligible receiver. Eligibility rules apply *only* to legal forward passes. Eligibility does not arise in the case of an illegal forward pass. If an ineligible player is downfield then an illegal pass is thrown, there is only one foul—for the pass, and not a second foul for the ineligible receiver being downfield. If a pass is caught by an ineligible receiver, the ball remains live and may be advanced. However, the penalty will be accepted, and the play negated, unless a subsequent fumble gives Team B possession of the ball. An ineligible Team A player by number or position can throw a legal forward pass. An ineligible Team A player can catch or recover a backward pass behind the neutral zone and advance or throw a forward pass. If an ineligible muff or catches a forward pass it is illegal touching. There are no eligibility restrictions on a backward pass. All players are eligible to catch or touch it at any time. If a backward pass is caught, intercepted, or recovered, it remains live and in play, and the ball may be advanced.

### Complete a Catch

For a completed catch, one foot must be inbounds by a player who is in firm control of the ball. The one foot must physically come down in bounds. If the ball is lost after the receiver has touched the ground, due to contact or not, it should be ruled an incomplete pass instead of a fumble unless the receiver has clearly demonstrated complete control of the ball. Complete control is indicated by taking a step tucking the ball away or some other action ordinarily associated with running with the ball.

The fact the receiver may have a firm grasp of the ball while airborne is *not* a factor in determining whether the pass is complete. If the receiver loses control of the ball when he hits the ground, through being tackled, knocked down or falling on his own there is no catch. The ground can cause an incompleteness.

A player who returns to ground inbounds without firm control must remain inbounds until he obtains secure possession of the ball.

### Fouls Before or After Change of Possession

When both teams foul during a change of possession down and the team in final possession gets the ball free of a foul (with “clean hands”), they have the opportunity to retain possession. The fact that their opponent’s foul occurred after the change of possession has no bearing on the enforcement. However, when Team B, the “clean hands” team, retains possession by declining the opponent’s foul, the penalty for Team B’s foul shall be enforced.

RATIONALE: The “clean hands” rule prevents an inequity that once appeared in the rules. If A2 were illegally in motion and B1 intercepted a pass, a foul by B2 during the runback would have constituted a double foul and caused the down to be replayed. The current rule allows Team B the option of accepting the penalty for the foul by A2 or declining it and retaining the ball. If the penalty for A’s foul were declined in order to keep the ball, the penalty



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for the foul by B2 would then be administered. The rule separates the two fouls and removes them from the double foul category. A foul by the team after it has gained possession is penalized.

**PLAY 2:** During a legal forward pass which crosses the neutral zone, A1 is illegally in motion at the snap. B1 intercepts and during his return, B2 clips A2.

**RULING 2:** The illegal motion by A1 and the clipping by B2 are both live-ball fouls, but because the foul by B2 followed a change of team possession, they do not automatically constitute a double foul. If the coach of B declines the penalty for the illegal motion by A1, B will retain possession, but the penalty for clipping by B2 must be enforced. If B accepts the penalty for the illegal motion by A1, it is a double foul and the down will be replayed

### Officiating the Backward Pass

On passing plays, the Referee observes blocking by the backs as the quarterback drops back. The Referee should move to maintain the 12- to 14- yard distance between himself and the quarterback (e.g. if the quarterback drops back seven yards, the Referee retreats seven yards at a 45-degree angle from the quarterback maintaining spacing between himself and the quarterback).

The wider view allows the Referee to determine if the pass is forward or backward yet to continue to focus attention on the passer. The Referee will use an extended arm towards the offensive team's backfield to indicate a backward pass.

Wing officials when you read pass, do not be too quick to release downfield—be patient. Read your keys. Be prepared to determine whether a quick pass thrown toward you is forward or backward and to assist the umpire if he needs help in ruling whether or not a pass crosses the line of scrimmage. When in question, it is a forward pass. If you determine the quick pass is a backward pass you need to punch your arm toward the offensive backfield to alert the other officials the pass is backwards.

As a crew during your pre-game discussions, talk about how the crew is going to rule whether a pass is forward or backwards. Only rule an incomplete pass if the pass is thrown in your area of coverage and the ball has bounced at least two times on the field.

### Quiz 2021

**Question 1:** Quarterback A12's forward pass is deflected by B76 at the line and caught by A62 behind the line. Is this a legal catch?

**Question 2:** Second and 10 on Team A's 30-yard line. Ineligible A76 tries to catch A10's forward pass at the (a) Team A's 28-yard line, or (b) Team A's 35-yard line, and touches the forward pass. Is the touching by of the forward pass by A76 legal?

**Question 3:** With Team A in a shotgun formation, the ball is snapped over the head of quarterback A12. A12 recovers the ball and immediately throws the ball forward to the ground. Is this a legal forward pass?

**Question 4:** With about a minute remaining in the first half, Team A is deep in their own territory facing third and long. With the clocking running, A66 commits a false start. When will the clock start after false start penalty is enforced?

**Question 5:** Ineligible receiver A88 is behind his neutral zone when a forward pass by A12 is muffed by A88 or caught by A88. Is this a foul for illegal touching?

**Question 6:** With five seconds remaining in the first half, A12 completes a pass to A82. Time expires during the down and B32 piles on after the play. When is the penalty enforced?



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Question 7: At the snap, Team A is illegally in motion and B79 illegally uses his hands during his initial rush. A12's legal forward pass is intercepted by B23. During the return, B63 blocks below the waist. Does Team B get to retain possession after the interception?

Question 8: Second and eight at Team A's 25-yard line. A20 gains five yards to Team A's 30-yard line and is still running when the whistle blows. How is the inadvertent whistle enforced?

Question 9: B68 is the nose guard lined up directly opposite the center and A72 is the right tackle. After the ready and before the snap, B68 lurches into the neutral zone. Simultaneously with B68's first movement, A72 finches and lifts his hand from the ground. The officials cannot determine who fouled first. Which foul is enforced?

Question 10: Quarterback A1 drops back 15 yards and throws a legal forward pass intended for A2, who is 5 yards behind the neutral zone. Before the pass reaches A2: (a) B1 tackles A2; or (b) B1 blocks A2. What is the ruling?

### Quiz Answers

Ruling 1: Legal catch. All ineligible players become eligible when Team B touches a pass.

Ruling 2: In either case it is illegal touching, a five-yard penalty with loss of down. In (a), it will be third and 17 from Team A's 23-yard line (the penalty is enforced from the spot where A76 touched the pass). In (b), it will be third and 15 from Team A's 25-yard line (the penalty is enforced from the previous spot).

Ruling 3: This is an illegal forward pass because the ball touched the ground and the pass was not immediate. Team A is penalized five yards from the spot of the foul plus loss of down.

Ruling 4: The clock normally starts on the ready since the foul was the only reason for stopping it. Team B may choose to have the clock started on the snap.

Ruling 5: The muff or catching of the pass is illegal touching. If a Team A ineligible intentionally touches the ball it is a foul for illegal touching.

Ruling 6: The 15-yard penalty is enforced on the second half kickoff. Any dead ball foul that occurs after time for a period expires, is carried over to the succeeding spot in the next period, including an overtime period.

Ruling 7: The fouls offset, and the down is replayed. Team B committed a foul (illegal use of hands) before gaining possession, so the clean hands exception does not apply.

Ruling 8: Team A may put the ball in play, third and three at Team A's 30 or replay the down, second and eight from Team A's 25-yard line. Team A has one of two options: to take the ball where it was *blown dead*, or to replay the down at the previous spot.

Ruling 9: When the officials cannot determine which foul occurred first, the fouls cancel and no penalty is enforced.

Ruling 10: In (a), tackling A2 is a foul, as it is a form of holding. Defensive players are prohibited from grasping an opponent other than the runner. The foul in (a) occurs during a loose-ball play, and the 10-yard penalty will be administered from the previous spot. In (b), the contact by B1 is not pass interference and, if the block itself is legal, there is no infraction. Option Play: The defense **MAY NOT** tackle the pitch man prior to receiving the pitch as defensive players are prohibited from grasping/hold the pitchman as he is not a runner. The defense may block the pitchman if the block is from the front and above the waist.

**All Officials Must Have Clock Awareness**