



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

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WELCOME

Welcome to the 2023 SDHSAA sports season and specifically football. I am again honored to serve you our SDHSAA member schools, officials, coaches and student athletes. Please understand my “door” is always open. I look forward to feedback and we continue to develop, and grow opportunities to play across our entire state.

Another football season will soon be starting. The SDHSAA hopes everyone is excited for another football season and is beginning to prepare for the 2023 football season. You recently received your 2023 SDHSAA football rules books, online testing, online rules meeting information and other important information for the 2023 football season. Review the information carefully. Please note your mailing address—it is very important to keep your mailing address and email address up to date with the SDHSAA Office.

**Do Not Wait Until After Your First Game To Fulfill Your Meeting and
Test Requirements!
Start Preparing for The Season NOW!
Before Your First Game**

Website Resources and Video Review

The SDHSAA has found that one of the most effective training tools for promoting consistency and improved officiating is through video review. We have updated our FB specific page to include new resources and will be posting all communications to this website for easy, one source access.

SDHSAA About Us Athletics Fine Arts Forms Officials Media Awards & Honors

Football Officials

Football Officials Links

- 2021 Deadlines & Reminders →
- Pre-Game Conference →
- Classification of Holding →
- NFHS Uniform Regulations →
- SDHSAA Coin Toss Mechanic →
- Instructions for Game & Play Clock Operators →
- Instructions for Line-to-Gain Crews →

Region Meeting Information

- 2021 Meeting Sites & Dates →
- Deviations From NFHS Officials Manual →
- NFHS Officials Manual Points of Emphasis →
- Referee Position →
- Umpire Position →
- Back Judge Position →
- Working The Wings →

www.sdhsaa.com/activity/football-officials



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

Go to www.sdhsaa.com □ Officials □ Sport-Specific Information □ Football

Content on this page will be updated throughout the season

Play close attention to the “Rules Information” sections at the bottom the page for additional video and rules review

A special and great big thank you to Mark Smith of Pierre, for his work on compiling our videos and the new voice over commentary.

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.

South Dakota Changes – Updates for 2023

1. Team Box shall be extended down to the 15-yard lines
2. Scrimmage Kicks – SDHSAA will change to and follow the NFHS scrimmage kick mechanics on all punts, FG and PATs. The U will be positioned on the defensive side of the ball on punts and remain in the middle with players on all FG and PAT's. Your presence matters in the middle. Referees will have to hustle and cover sideline/pylon should the FG/PAT break down or be “faked”. Review pages 49-54 of the NFHS Officials Manual for detailed instruction by position.

2023 NFHS Points of Emphasis – 2023

Please pay particular attention to the Points of Emphasis from the NFHS and Officiating Manual Committee. Very detailed information involved in our pre-season handout and the rules and mechanics on-line meetings.

2023 FOOTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS HELPING THE RUNNER

Rule changes have been made at higher levels of football allowing offensive teams to pile in behind and directly push the runner. Because of these changes, we are now seeing similar plays at the high school level. As guardians of the game, it is imperative that all stakeholders work together to remove “helping the runner” from our high school game. Administrators, coaches and football game officials all have a responsibility to know, respect and teach/enforce the NFHS rules of high school football. Football is a vigorous, physical contact game and, for this reason, much attention is given to minimizing risk of injury to all players. Each respective rules code (NFL, NCAA and NFHS) has rules that coincide with the physical development of competing athletes and their goals for the game. The NFHS Football Rules Committee's main focus is risk minimization, followed closely by assurance of a balance between offensive and defensive rules. Because the players on defense must guard against the pass, they are not able to counter the advantages created by “helping the runner” formations. Allowing teams to help the runner by illegal techniques swings the balance heavily in favor of the offense. Football game officials need to change their view of “helping the runner” to a risk issue (clipping, chop block) and remove it from the “pioneer call” category and refocus on ending plays when forward progress is stopped. Pushing the pile is legal; direct contact and pushing, pulling, lifting of the runner is not. The NFHS Coaches Code of Ethics states: “Coaches shall master the contest rules and shall teach the rules to their team members. Coaches shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules. Coaches have a tremendous influence, for good or ill, on the education of the student, and thus shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.” If school administrators/athletic directors truly believe that activities are an extension of the classroom, they must be actively involved with programs they supervise and redirect coaches when they observe them teaching prohibited tactics. Removing “helping the runner” from high school football will at times be met with resistance. School administrative support of football game officials, re-focus of coaches



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

and education of players will lead to a smooth transition. All those directly involved in our great game must stay committed to trying to minimize risk to all players and maintaining the balance between offensive and defensive play.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COACHES AND GAME OFFICIALS

Coaches and game officials must demonstrate respect for one another. This mutual appreciation is the foundation of appropriate and professional communication. Football is an emotional game. Coaches and game officials must realize that competition often leads to intense interactions on the field. Both must work together and strive to manage verbal and nonverbal exchanges in ways that avoid escalating conflict. Game officials must recognize their role in the game: to provide a service to the coaches and student-athletes in an unemotional and impartial manner. Game officials must always be respectful and maintain a calm demeanor in their comments to coaches, especially when tension is high. Game officials must avoid the urge to argue with coaches who disagree with their decisions. Coaches may ask questions, and game officials should make every effort to be approachable, actively listen, and provide correct and complete answers as soon as possible. Game officials should aim to be direct and concise in their communication of essential information. When emotions are running especially high, game officials should de-escalate tensions and demonstrate empathy and understanding of the coach's perspective. Game officials must anticipate circumstances where coaches may become upset and preemptively diffuse the situation. A game official should never threaten the coach with consequences for their behavior, nor should a game official become defensive. If a coach exhibits inappropriate behavior and "crosses a line," the game official may choose to penalize the coach for unsportsmanlike conduct. However, throwing a flag should be a last resort. A better approach is to clearly and calmly tell the coach that the comments or behavior are unacceptable, and that it's difficult to focus on the on-field action if the coach continues to distract the game official. Coaches model acceptable and unacceptable behavior for their student-athletes. If coaches disrespect game officials and make derogatory comments, players will behave in the same way. Coaches should win with grace and lose with dignity. Coaches must understand that the football field is an extension of the classroom and must exhibit proper conduct. This includes respecting the decisions of game officials even when they disagree, and handling differences of opinion in a civil and dignified manner. Dialogue with game officials should be constructive and respectful, not confrontational. Handling disagreements in a business-like manner teaches players good sportsmanship, which is a perennial focus of the NFHS. Coaches and game officials have a professional responsibility to demonstrate respect for one another and communicate appropriately. Coaches and game officials love the game and desire to positively impact young people. Proper communication during competition teaches players a valuable life lesson about conflict resolution.

GAME MANAGEMENT

Each school community must take pride in hosting an athletic contest or event. Proper advance planning is key to an orderly, secure, safe and enjoyable activity. Planning begins with clearly defined tasks for game administration and event personnel. Beginning with the arrival of players, game officials and spectators, each school must have a purposeful plan to address any and all expected issues, as well as the unforeseen. Preparation begins with clear and concise communication between the host and the competing school regarding the logistics of arrival and departure. Meeting and greeting the visiting team is certainly the beginning of good sportsmanship. Clearly communicated information, such as parking information,



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

location of ticket booths and entry gates, when given to the visitors is another step in assuring a great experience for all participants. Game officials should be afforded the same communication considerations given the visiting school community. Host administration must provide accurate information for the officiating crew so as to ease any pre-game apprehension or uncertainty. Clear, concise communication is of utmost importance. Having assigned personnel to greet game officials and address all their pre-game and post-game needs is a bare minimum for the host school. Security of game officials must be an absolute priority. Make sure the locker room is properly supervised and access is limited to proper personnel only. During the game, security of game personnel begins with ensuring that the sideline is properly secured and the playing field is restricted to essential game personnel. For safety and security reasons, essential game personnel would include game participants, reporters, photographers and game administration. All other, non-essential personnel should be located in the bleachers. All non-participants on the event level should be credentialed and restricted to being no closer than 2 yards from the sideline. Game officials are responsible for securing the team boxes and coaches' area. Sideline management begins with the consistent enforcement of game rules pertaining to the restricted area and the team box. The restricted area is

designated to make the sidelines safe for all participants and to give game officials ample space to work. Game administration should be alert to requests of game officials in addressing problems beyond the team box and coaches' area. The conduct of non-participants is the domain of game and school administration. Expectations for the behavior of spectators and other attendees should be clearly, and repeatedly, communicated to all attendees. The reading of a sportsmanship script before the game is one method of communicating expectations. Good sportsmanship must become part of the culture of any school community. Behavior not acceptable in the school's hallways should not be acceptable on the courts or playing fields. Appropriate conduct of the public-address announcer is vital to the game atmosphere. The public-address announcer must be the first line of sportsmanship and must exemplify expected and acceptable conduct. The goal of the public-address announcer is to inform and not entertain. Giving play-by-play of game action and/ or critiquing game officials is unacceptable. The public-address announcer must be positive and respectful to all involved in the game.

MINIMAL GAME ADMINISTRATION EXPECTATIONS

- Clearly communicated event itinerary
- Required field markings and game equipment
- Clock operator(s)
- Line-to-gain crew
- Game Official accommodations
- Visiting team accommodations
- Support personnel
- Medical personnel
- Security personnel
- Hospitality for game personnel and administration, inclusive of game officials



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

What is Your Plan to Get Ready for the 2023 Football Season?

Two non-negotiables as a SDHSAA official:

- **Absolute #1** – Correct rules knowledge and correct rule application. Setting aside and not knowing the rules as an official cannot be defended.
- **Absolute #2** – Fitness and mobility, all officials must have the ability to Physically move and perform well at a high level. This is a personal responsibility and an expectation. Let's all commit to putting in the time to improve our fitness and mobility.

What are you doing to get ready for the 2023 SDHSAA football season?

- Rules Knowledge—acquire a reverence for the rules and be guided and inspired by them
- Current Mechanics—Study and Understand—Right Place—Right Time
 - Be in position to manage and officiate the play
 - Physical Workouts/Health

Be the Very Best High School Football Official You Want to Be!

- Going into the Season--What Are You Going to Work On--We All Have Weakness
 - Build on your strengths
 - You can always get better

Work on Being Excellent—Be The Best You Can Be—Preparation

Maintain good communication with all participants

Decisive—Consistent Decisions and Signals—Same Body Language

The SDHSAA Expects Your Best

SDHSAA Standardized Coin Toss Procedure—Review and Reminder

The coin toss mechanic MUST be used in all SDHSAA varsity football contests this fall as listed on Pages 14 through 16 of the NFHS Football Officials Manual, with the toss occurring at the SDHSAA Mandated time of immediately prior to kick-off after all introductions, starting line-ups, announcements, National Anthem and other associated pre-game items have been completed. Officials shall escort the captains to the center of the field, with their backs facing their own sidelines where the actual flip will commence. Once decisions have been made, the captains will return to their sidelines and officials will meet to discuss any final instructions from the referee. Once complete, officials will proceed to their positions for the opening kick and teams are expected to be ready to go. The rationale from the football advisory committee was to ensure a standard process that would fit all schools, and also reinforce mechanics that are already laid out in rule code but simply have not been adhered to in the past. Having the toss occur immediately prior to kick-off not only matches all other levels of competitive football, but additionally allows for:

- Consistency among all officials and host sites,
- An additional opportunity for recognition of a team's captains for each game,
- Elimination of players being taken out of warm-ups and pre-game preparation
- Elimination of any advantage/disadvantage a team might gain by knowing the outcome of the toss with multiple minutes to prepare based on the result.

Coin Toss Takes Place as The Absolute Last Item Before the Kickoff



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

Pre-Contest Medical Time Out – Review

Prior to each competition officiated by SDHSAA Registered officials, head coaches or on-site administrators will need to be prepared to answer the following five questions before the game begins.

1. Who is the game administrator for each team?
2. Is there a qualified medical professional on site?
3. Is there an emergency action plan for this venue?
4. Is there an AED available?
5. Where is the emergency exit/entrance for the facility?

The “Pre-Contest Medical Timeout” must be conducted prior to every contest. If acceptable answers are not provided, officials must contact the SDHSAA to inform the SDHSAA staff of the situation.

The “Pre-Contest Medical Timeout” can be conducted with the host-site athletic director prior to the coaches meeting, but must be done day-of, on-site.

Distributed with each official's packet this year was a card that has the five questions on it. Officials please carry the card with you and be sure to ask these questions prior to the game contest so you are aware of the answers to these questions, should there be an emergency.

SDHSAA Requirement Reminders

Officials must work during the current football season a minimum of five (5) regular season football games to be eligible for selection for quarterfinal, semifinal or final football playoff games (not applicable to 1st round games).

Only officials having certified status will be hired to work the playoff games. Crews having a “registered” official(s) will be allowed to replace the “registered” official(s).

Coaches and Officials—Online Rules Meeting

Online rules meeting PowerPoint presentations will be available from August 1 to August 31, 2023 (11:59 PM CST). All officials and coaches will need to view individually to receive credit. If you plan to view the presentations together as a coaching staff or officiating crew, each coach and official will need to be logged into a computer (you could use the computer lab at your local high school).

Coaches and Officials—Online Test Requirement

During the 2023-24 school year, the SDHSAA will be using the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) online exams system for conducting the open-book test requirement for each sport.

The online football open book test will be available August 1 to August 31, 2023 (11:59 PM CDT). You can print a hard copy of the test from the SDHSAA website prior to accessing it online. You will complete the test online. The test questions will be in the same order as the hard copy you print.

The SDHSAA strongly suggests you use the hard copy of the test to write your answers beside each question, then log in and submit your test answers online. This must be done before August 31.

When you submit your answers online, you will immediately receive your test score. You WILL NOT receive information as to which questions you missed until after the test window closes on August 31.



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

Score required for the Part I open book test is 80%. You will only be allowed two tries to take and pass the test (80%) and this must be done prior to the August 31, 2023 deadline.

Officials—Online Mechanics Requirement

Officials only are required to view the online mechanics meeting. This requirement is in addition to the official's requirement to view the online rules meeting.

The SDHSAA strongly suggests that coaches view the mechanics meeting, so you have an understanding of the mechanics and positioning of the officials on the field.

The online mechanics meeting will be available from August 1 to August 31, 2023 (11:59 PM CDT). All officials will need to view individually to receive credit. If you plan to view the presentations together with other officials, each official will need to be logged into a computer (you could use the computer lab at your local high school).

Officials: A \$25.00 fine and probation is assessed if the online mechanics meeting requirement is not met.

SDHSAA Supervised Test Supervised Test Date—Wednesday, August 23

- To move from “registered” classification to “certified” classification, officials must take and pass the supervised test (closed book)—score at least 75% to pass.
- The supervised test will be offered at Aberdeen Central, Faith, Mitchell, SDHSAA Office, Rapid City Central, SF Lincoln, Sioux Valley (Volga, SD), Watertown and Yankton.
- An official may stay in the “registered” classification indefinitely.
- Registered officials are restricted to working only regular season contests.
- Please contact Marsha at the SDHSAA office as to the location in which you would like to take the test by August 14th. (605-224-9261)

SDHSAA Football Jamborees

Football Region Coordinators have scheduled Jamborees for you to attend and meet the requirements. Achieving all requirements, including update to date Jamboree attendance is a requirement for post season assignment eligibility.

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 me Justin Ingalls – email = coordinator@sdhsaa.com or phone = 605-201-9721
- If you have any questions or comments about any information you will receive this football season--please forward to me.
- If you have any ideas for newsletter topics that would benefit all the SDHSAA officials, please let me know your topic(s).



2023 Football Memo – Pre-Season

2023 Football Observation Program

Again, we have in place the FB observers for the 2023 FB season. This group of dedicated veterans are here to grow and support officials across the state. My goals this year are to observe 100% of our crews at least once – whether that be in person or via video review. Please be open and cooperative with our observers as they provide feedback. This is a valuable program as we strive for consistency and growth. If you and crew would like to be observed, drop me a note and I will make sure we have someone onsite to help.

2023 Football Region Meetings

You have received a list of football region dates for all 11 regions. Mark the dates for the region meetings in your area on your calendar.

Plan to attend more than one region meeting. With the rules and mechanics meetings online, this will be your opportunity have face-to-face discussion with other officials in your region.

Be the official to step up and be a presenter at a region meeting. This will give you the opportunity to research a topic for discussion, which will make you a better official.

Best of luck for a safe and successful 2023 SDHSAA
football season.

Remember, MIBT = Make it be there