



2023 Football Memo – Week 2

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SDHSAA Resource Links: [SDHSAA Football Officials Links](#)

Properly Equipped Athletes – It is the responsibility of coaches to make sure their athletes are properly equipped. We continue to have challenges with athletes not having their pants cover the athlete's knee and knee pad. The rule clearly states that pants must completely cover the knee, thigh guards, knee pads, and any portion of any knee brace that does not extend below the pants. The image below depicts proper use of the pants and improper use.

Officiating crews will continue to be proactive in the pregame warmups but when athletes do not comply with proper equipment requirements, the athlete will be asked to leave the game for at least 1 play until corrected. Officials it our responsibility to remain diligent with proper equipped players and continue to clean up the eye black smeared all over the faces.

Rule 1-6-4 When any required player equipment is missing or **worn improperly**, an official's time-out shall be declared, If the missing or improperly worn equipment is detected during the down or subsequent dead-ball action related to the down without being directly attributed to a foul by an opponent or if a player is wearing otherwise legal equipment in an illegal manner, **the player shall be replaced for at least one down**, unless halftime intermission or an overtime intermission occurs.

Legal – Properly Equipped	<u>Not</u> Legal – Improperly Equipped
	
	

Extra Time-Out Due to Heat -Football contest officials have the authority to call an extra, officials' timeout during contests in the event of extreme heat and/or humidity. This timeout is not charged to either team, and should be taken at a time when it will not provide a significant advantage/disadvantage to either team (preferably after a change of possession or score near the midpoint of each quarter). Decisions on whether or not to utilize heat timeouts should be made prior to the beginning of the contest and made primarily in the best interest of the health and safety of participating athletes.



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Momentum Exception (8-5-2a)

The momentum rule states it is neither a safety nor a touchback if a defensive team player is inside his five-yard line when he intercepts a forward pass, catches or recovers a kick, backward pass or fumble and his momentum carries him into the endzone where he is downed or loses possession of the ball (fumbles) which then goes out of bounds in the end zone (without going back into the field of play). The rule requires the ball to be declared in possession of the team of the player whose momentum carried him into the end zone. The ball belongs to the defensive team at the spot where possession is obtained.

Notes:

- This is important – a kick ends when possession is gained
- The momentum rule clearly states possession gain inside the 5-yard line and original momentum carries the player in possession of the ball into the EZ, the momentum exception rule is enforced
- We must beanbag the spot of possession inside the 5-yard line
- Do not split hairs on a spot very near the goal line (inside the 1-yard line) – Rule touch back, not momentum

Play examples related to the Momentum Exception rule 8-5 (NFHS 2023 Rules Book, pgs. 70-71)

1. B22 is at his two-yard line and his momentum carries him into his end zone where he is downed after he (a) catches a punt, (b) recovers a punt that has bounced, (c) intercepts A8's forward pass, (d) intercepts A8's backward pass, (e) recovers A11's backward pass, (f) intercepts A26's fumble, or (g) recovers A32's fumble. **Ruling:** The momentum exception applies in each case. It will be Team B's ball on their two-yard line.
2. B21 intercepts a pass at his four-yard line and his momentum is about to carry him into his endzone. He fumbles at the one-yard line and (a) recovers and downs the ball in the endzone, or (b) B45 recovers and downs the ball in the endzone. **Ruling:** Safety in both (a) and (b). The momentum exception does not apply when Team B fumbles in the field of play.
3. First and 10 at Team A's six-yard line. A21 muffs a backward pass at his two-yard line. The ball pops up into the air and is caught by A89, who lunges for the ball from the vicinity of the two-yard line. A89's momentum carries him into the end zone, where he falls to the ground. **Ruling:** Team A remains the offensive team throughout the down. Consequently, the momentum play does not apply. The play results in a safety.
4. B25 leaps in the air over his two-yard line and has A6's pass in his grasp. He returns to the ground in his endzone inbounds. **Ruling:** B25 possesses a live ball in his own endzone and may attempt to run it out or down it in the endzone for a touchback. Momentum is not involved.
5. RB11 catches (a) a free kick, (b) a scrimmage kick, or (c) intercepts a forward pass at the B-2 and his momentum takes him into his endzone where RB11 circles around in the endzone and is downed in the EZ. **Ruling:** B, first and 10, B2. In (a), (b) and (c) the ball belongs to Team BR on the two yard-line per the momentum exception rule. It is not a touchback. RB-11 may attempt to run the ball out of the end zone because the caught or recovered ball was carried into the end zone.



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Wind and the Football

Pass Direction

Whether a pass is forward or backward is determined by the initial direction the ball is thrown.

- Quarterback throws forward pass into a stiff wind, but wind blows back the ball, where it hits the ground—incomplete forward pass.

Free Kick -- Case Book 6.1.7 Situation B

When a free kick penetrates R's free kick line in flight, it is considered to have gone the required 10 yards. If strong wind blows ball back past 50-yard line the ball is still considered to have gone 10 yards.

Scrimmage Kicks

If Team K's punt is high and a strong wind blows it back in or behind the neutral zone—the ball is deemed to not have crossed the neutral zone. Team K may catch or recover the scrimmage kick in or behind the neutral zone and advance. If the punt touches beyond the neutral zone and rebounds behind the neutral zone untouched by Team R or Team K the ball is deemed not to have been beyond the neutral zone.

Field Goals/Extra-Point Kicks -- Case Book 8.4.1 Situation A

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

Extending the Period

Time Must Expire During The Down

Any down during which time expires *and* there is an accepted penalty that does not include a "loss of down" as part of the penalty creates a situation where an untimed down is played. The foul can be on either the offense or the defense – it does not matter.

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.

A period shall be extended by an untimed down if one of the following occurred during a down in which time expires:

- There was a foul, other than unsportsmanlike or nonplayer, and the penalty is accepted
- There was a double (offsetting) fouls
- There was an inadvertent whistle
- There was a touchdown scored, the try is attempted unless the touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period and the points would not affect the outcome of the game

A period is not extended by an untimed down if one of the following occurred during a down in which time expires:

- The defense fouls during a successful try/field goal and the offended team accepts the results of the play with enforcement of the penalty from the succeeding spot
- There is a foul that specifies loss of down and the penalty is accepted
- The score is cancelled in the event of an accepted penalty that specifies a loss of down
- There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted for unsportsmanlike fouls, non-player fouls (live-ball fouls treated as dead-ball fouls)
- Fouls for which enforcement result in a safety

If a foul occurs before or during an untimed down, it is treated the same as if it occurred during the last timed down of the period. There could be multiple untimed downs.



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Breaking the Huddle

It is not a foul for Team A to break the huddle with 12 players if any replaced player begins to leave the field within three seconds of arrival of his substitute. A player who is being replaced is allowed three seconds to acknowledge that by starting to leave the offensive or defensive huddle and continuing to his team area.

A replaced player is one that has been notified by a substitute that he is to leave the field. The replaced player needs to continue to his team area. The three second notification does not pertain as to how long it takes the replaced player to reach his team area. The replaced player only needs to be in his team box area before the ball is snapped.

Review: High School Rule Differences from NCAA/NFL Rules

- There is no such thing as an “uncatchable” ball under high school rules in regards to offensive or defensive pass interference. If there is illegal contact, whether or not the ball was catchable, it is a foul. For pass interference, there must be contact for a foul to occur; face-guarding with no contact is no longer a foul.
- On extra point plays, if the defense gains possession, the try is over. The defense cannot return the ball for 2 points. Also, if the holder is to throw or flip the ball to another player on an extra point play, the holder must rise so that his knee is off the ground.
- The only fouls that result in an automatic first down are: roughing the passer, roughing the kicker, roughing the snapper and roughing the placekick holder. Personal fouls do not result in automatic first downs under high school rules! Remember that defensive pass interference does not result in an automatic first down....only a 15 yard (or half the distance) penalty.
- Punts and field goals attempts are treated the same way under high school rules. If a long field attempt comes up short and goes out of bounds at the 10 yard line, the defense gets possession of the ball, 1st and 10 at the 10 yard line.
- Under high school rules, whenever a kick (kickoff, punt or field goal) breaks the plane of the goal line, the ball is dead immediately. No kick of any kind can be returned once the ball breaks the plane of the goal line.
- Know that high school football has a targeting rule. Any player guilty of a targeting foul can also be ejected if the act is judged to be flagrant. Targeting under high school rules does not require an automatic ejection; officials determine whether or not the act was flagrant.

Back Judges

Starting position of back judge should be 10-12 yards wider than and 2-3 yards behind the deepest defensive back/kick returner in a punting situation. The back judge must maintain a “cushion” with the punt receiver(s) to observe first touching, blind side blocks, and blocks in the back.

Back Judges do not be in a hurry to hustle to the dead ball spot. As the back judge you may miss fouls because you are too concerned with dropping your bean bag. Simply throw your bean bag and continue to watch the action.

Wing Officials

Ask yourself after each down if you know the down and distance for the next down. After the play wings need to come-on-to the field to maintain a “cushion” from the pile when space permits to observe dead ball action. Two situations when the Wings must hustle into the pile: Close plays at the goal line and close to a 1st down.

Position of the Ball

If the ball DOES NOT break the plane of the goal line the receiver can advance the kick, or the kicking team can down the kick. The key is the ball not the position of the receiver or kicking team member. That is why the back judge on punts or referee on kick offs need to straddle goal line to get the best



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position to look at this play. Unlike other levels of play, the position of the ball and not a player's feet determine whether the ball has broken the plane of the goal line. The situation is most often seen when a Team K player is trying to down a scrimmage kick before it reaches the end zone and results in a touchback.

Victory Formation Mechanics

If winning team Head Coach informs officials, we are "going to take a knee" as the opponent is out of team Time Outs. Officials need to pinch in close. Referee/Umpire: Inform Team A and Team B that Team A will take a knee—nothing rough. Quarterback has protection once his team indicates he will take a knee. Referee informs quarterback he MUST take a knee ASAP – NO fakes. The referee needs to tell both teams to "defend themselves and play football."

Fair Catch: Invalid, Valid Signals

Any receiver may signal for a fair catch while any kick is in flight. This applies to both free and scrimmage kicks. When a receiver gives a fair catch signal, he is requesting protection in exchange for forfeiting the right of his team to advance.

A valid fair-catch signal is made by a player of Team R when he extends and laterally waves only one arm at full arm's length above his head and waving it from side to side. The rule doesn't specify how many waves are required.

An invalid signal is any signal that is not a valid one, such as a chest-high flick of the hand, a quick wave-off motion like that of an outfielder calling for a fly ball, a limp wave, partially extending and waving one hand in front of the face or chest or fully extending and laterally waving both hands above the head. An invalid fair-catch signal also is one which is made after the kick touched a receiver or is made after the kick touched the ground.

When a receiver shades his eyes during a kick, he must do so with a bent arm and without waving so it cannot be interpreted as an invalid signal. A player commits a foul by giving an invalid signal, and the penalty is five yards. The receiver loses his protection if he muffs the ball. It does not matter if he still has a chance to complete the catch after the muff; he may be legally contacted immediately. If, after a receiver signals, a catch is made by a teammate, it is not a fair catch, but the ball becomes dead. That also applies if the signal is not valid. Contacting a receiver who has given an invalid signal is not a foul unless the contact is judged to be unnecessary roughness or some other type of personal foul. The ball becomes dead as soon as the kick is caught or recovered.

An illegal signal can only be given by a runner—a player in possession of the ball. The ball remains live after an illegal signal is given. The penalty is five yards enforced from the spot of the foul.

Medical Coverage

The SDHSAA Football Handbook states: For medical coverage – all games and practices, the SDHSAA recommends the following emergency procedures be in place:

1. Have physician or other medical personnel (P.A., EMT, etc.) available by phone or on location.
2. Phone location and phone numbers available for contacting physician and/or ambulance service.

The SDHSAA recommend you have medical coverage, but in the cases where it is not available or the ambulance needs to leave for another emergency call the game may proceed.

Very Few Folks Will Remember How Your Season Started, But Certainly Will Remember How It Finishes... Where Do You Fit???