



2023 Football Memo – Week 4

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

FG and PAT Kicks

On all field goal attempts and on all PAT kicks, the mechanics and positioning are the same. We will follow the NFHS manual. The linesman or line judge will position, under one of the upright, opposite the back judge. The back judge will rule on the crossbar and his upright. The linesman or line judge will rule on their upright. 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: 4th 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 the 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 end zone.

RULING: In (a) it is an 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 (starting on page 49) 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.



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- 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 up field 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.

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 avoidability 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



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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.

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 0 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



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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 was declined in order to keep the ball, the penalty 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: 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: 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.

- **Be aware to not stop the clock when forward progress is stopped inbounds, but when runners are legitimately OOB, the clock should be stopped. Be great here.**
 - **All Officials Must Have GREAT Clock Awareness**
 - **Both game and play clock (when visible, B when not visible)**
 - **Not Just Finish – Finish Strong**



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Referee Football Quiz Questions

- 1. Fourth and four from team A's eight-yard line. A1 drops straight back into his end zone under a heavy rush. To avoid being sacked in the end zone, A1 intentionally throws a forward pass to the ground into an area with no player from either team in the area.**
 - a. Team B can accept the penalty and have fourth down replayed from team A's four-yard line.
 - b. Team B can decline the penalty and begin a new series at team A's eight-yard line or accept the penalty and take the safety.
 - c. Team B scores a safety whether or not the penalty is accepted.

- 2. A12 enters the field as a substitute and joins team A's huddle. Two seconds later, the huddle breaks up and A1 jogs to his sideline without hesitation and enters the team box as team A is calling offensive signals.**
 - a. No problem.
 - b. Illegal substitution: team A cannot have 12 players in the huddle.
 - c. Illegal participation: having 12 in the huddle is considered using substitution to deceive.

- 3. Fourth and 10 at team R's 32-yard line. K1's attempted field goal is successful. R2 is flagged for holding while the ball is in flight.**
 - a. Team K may only have the penalty enforced from the previous spot and replay the down.
 - b. Team K may only keep the points and have the penalty enforced on the succeeding kickoff.
 - c. Team K may have the penalty enforced from the previous spot and replay the down or keep the points and have the penalty enforced on the succeeding kickoff.
 - d. The penalty must be declined in order to keep the points.

- 4. During a run by A1, A2 is holding B3. Thereafter, A1's fumble is recovered by B4, who advances for a touchdown. While the ball was loose during A1's fumble, B5 is flagged for a blindside block.**
 - a. Team B may keep the touchdown by declining the penalty for A2's hold. The penalty for B5's block is enforced on the try.
 - b. Team B may decline the penalty for A2's hold. The penalty for B5's block is enforced from the spot of the foul and team B starts a new series after enforcement.
 - c. The penalties cancel and the down is replayed.

- 5. Fourth and goal on team B's 20-yard line. As A1 crosses team B's five-yard line, an official signals a touchdown but does not blow his whistle. A1 crosses the goal line.**
 - a. The ball is considered dead when the official signals; it's team A's ball on its own five-yard line.
 - b. The inadvertent signal is the same as an inadvertent whistle; team A may replay the down or choose the result of the play.
 - c. The signal is ignored, touchdown for team A.