



2023 Football Memo – Week 5

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Equipment Issues to be Addressed – Stay with it...

Do NOT leave this for next week's crew to handle.

We continue to improve but let's all, official and coaches stay on properly equipping our student athletes. It is critical for all game officials to continue to strengthen their efforts to address all issues that deal with the current equipment requirements. Game officials must focus on these three areas of concern:

- (1) Required equipment not worn properly (i.e., pants that do not cover the knees)
- (2) Required and/or legal equipment missing or not being used correctly (no knee pads, thigh guards or hip pads)
- (3) Wearing illegal equipment (a hard cast not properly covered)
- (4) BE PROACTIVE in our pre-game warm-up. We want the student athletes to participate but also legally equipped.

Crew members are encouraged to be observant throughout their pre-game responsibilities and to be prepared to immediately address any equipment issues with the player and a coach in a professional, calm manner. Appropriate communication with the player in the presence of the coach allows for correction to be made prior to the beginning of the contest and avoids problems during the game.

Unsuccessful FG – Treat it as a Punt in the NFHS Rules

This exact item was in last week's memo. I have been made aware that we had 2 instances where we spotted the ball at the previous spot for the succeeding snap. Officials, this is incorrect and unacceptable. 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 inbounds, the ball belongs to Team R where it was declared dead.

2023 Football Region Meetings

The annual region meeting requirement must be completed by September 30 (date of our last meeting this year in SD). Each football official must attend a region football officials' meeting to be eligible to officiate football play-off games.

Playoff Application and Mechanics Exam

The football playoff application will be available to be submitted online starting **September 22nd**. The **Crew Chief** is required to submit the playoff application. The application will be **due by Noon CT on Friday, September 29**. In addition to the online application, the online mechanics exam must be submitted by the **Crew Chief by September 29**. The mechanics exam is available now **until Noon CT on Friday, September 29**.

To access the exam, please go to <https://www.sdhsaa.com>, click "Official Login", and sign into your Varsity Bound account (be sure to use the account you used when registering/paying your fees). Once on your Officials Dashboard, click the South Dakota state icon in the left sidebar and then click "Rules" in the light gray area to the right of the colored sidebar. Finally, click the green arrow next to the "2023 Football Mechanics Exam" to submit your exam. You can also print the exam by clicking the "Go to Print View" button after clicking the green arrow.



2023 Football Memo – Week 5

Penalty Options for Fouls by Kicking Team

If the kicking team commits a foul other than kick-catching interference during a free kick or scrimmage kick, and the kicking team will not be next to snap the ball, the receiving team may choose to have the penalty enforced at the end of the down. The receiving team has all the previous options as well as accepting the distance penalty at the end of the down.

PLAY: Team K's free kick from its 40-yard line goes out of bounds untouched at team R's 20-yard line.

RULING: Team R may accept a five-yard penalty from the previous spot and have K re-kick; put the ball in play at the inbounds spot 25 yards beyond the previous spot (in this case, its own 35 yard line); decline the penalty and put the ball in play at the inbounds spot; or accept a five-yard penalty enforced from the dead-ball spot (in this case, that would be at Team R's 25 yard line).

PLAY: Fourth and 10 from Team K's 20-yard line. At the snap, Team K is flagged for an illegal formation. K1's punt is caught by R2 at the 50-yard line and returned to Team K's 40-yard line.

RULING: Team R may have the five-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot, or have the penalty enforced from the end of R2's run.

Kick-Catch Interference: Penalty

When you have fair catch interference, the receiving team has three options:

- Team R may accept the results of the play
- An awarded fair catch after enforcement of a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul
- A 15-yard penalty from the previous spot and a replay of the down

Blocking After a Fair Catch Signal

A Team R player who has given a fair catch signal (valid or invalid) is prohibited from blocking an opponent until the kick has ended. The kick ends when a player gains possession or when the ball becomes dead by rule. The rule prohibits the receiver from signaling for a fair catch near his goal line, purposely making no attempt to catch the kick and then blocking an opponent to prevent the opponent from downing the ball before it goes into the end zone. Violations of that rule result in a 15-yard penalty enforced using post-scrimmage kick enforcement.

Kick Catch Interference

The kicking team is responsible to know the location of the kicked ball. If a receiver must run around a kicking team player while moving toward the ball and attempting to catch it, it is kick catch interference even if there is no contact. The receiver has a right to an unimpeded path to the ball and unhindered opportunity to catch the kick. It is kick catch interference if the kicking team contacts the receiver before or simultaneous with his first touching of the ball. A kick receiver is defenseless and most vulnerable when (1) his attention is on the downward flight of the ball or (2) he has just touched the ball. Kick catch interference can also include a kicking team member standing close to a receiver; running in front of him; waving his arms at him; yelling,



2023 Football Memo – Week 5

shouting, or screaming at him; or otherwise obstructing his path to the ball. This means you do not have to have contact to have a foul. A receiver need not give a fair catch signal to gain this protection. Kick catch interference is strictly a judgment call. There is no “halo” or hard and fast distance to be used as guide.

Option Involving the Game Clock

RULE 3 – SECTION 4 STARTING AND STOPPING THE GAME CLOCK ...

ART. 7 . . . When a foul is committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half, the offended team will have the option to start the game clock on the snap.

Rationale for Change:

Changed the offended team's game clock options following a foul committed with less than two minutes remaining in either half.

The converse is not true – a team never has the option to start the clock on the ready when it is to start on the snap by rule.

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 team's 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

Before, During or After the Play

When to Throw the Flag Determined by Foul Intervals

All team A players are set before a snap. Then two backs go in motion. Both are still moving just before it appears the snap is imminent. Is that a foul at that point? Does the play need to be shut down? Or should officials wait until the ball is snapped before launching a flag?

That scenario highlights the requirement to know the timing of fouls. Put another way, when do you blow your whistle, throw a penalty marker, and stop the clock? There are four intervals in which a foul can occur: before the snap, when the ball is snapped, during a live-ball play and after the ball is dead.

Fouls before the snap. Prime examples are false start, encroachment, and illegal snap. When observed, first blow your whistle to prevent further action. Second, throw your penalty marker high into the air (though it doesn't have

to go into outer space) to alert every one of the fouls. Then signal the clock to stop (in some areas, that is to be done even if the clock is not running). Execute those tasks in that order. Again, it is most important to stop further action by preventing a snap. Fouls when the ball is snapped. Those are not fouls until the ball is put into play. The most common examples are illegal shift, illegal motion, and illegal formation. The mechanics here are to allow the play to continue, toss your flag high into the air, cover the play until its normal completion and stop the clock at the end of the down. Your flag need not be thrown to a specific location as penalty enforcement is from the previous spot, the same spot for interval one fouls.



2023 Football Memo – Week 5

Play 1: All team A players are motionless. Then, two backs go in motion and are still moving when (a) the ball is snapped, (b) team A calls timeout, or (c) A1 false starts. Ruling 1: A live-ball foul in (a). There is no foul in (b) because the ball did not become live. In (c), only the false start is penalized.

Fouls during a live-ball play. There are no dead-ball fouls and no infractions at the snap. So, we have a regular play to make rulings. Any fouls now happen during a run, pass or kick play. When you observe a foul, throw your flag to the foul spot. Continue to cover the play until the ball is dead by rule and then signal to stop the clock. Examples during playing action are holding, illegal blocks and pass interference. In NFHS, no live-ball foul causes the play to end or the clock to stop.

After the ball is dead. Examples are late hits and excessive celebrations. When seen, toss your flag into the air as penalty enforcement is from the succeeding spot. Stop the clock if it is running. At the end of plays in those four-time frames, report your foul to the referee for the referee to properly enforce the penalty. You can first state if it is a live- or dead-ball foul. Then, give the standard order of foul reporting such as which team, player number, foul spot, etc.

So far, we have only covered fouls relative to a snap. The other method to put the ball into play is a free kick. There could be a dead-ball foul before a kickoff as well as fouls when a kickoff is made.

Play 2: K1 is past his free-kick restraining line by two yards when K2 kicks off. Ruling 2: That is a dead-ball foul for encroachment in NFHS. Blow your whistle to stop the action and toss your flag.

There can be other live- or dead-ball fouls when a free kick is made like a pop-up kick in NFHS (6-1-11). Once the ball is kicked, absent of live- or dead-ball fouls, interval three fouls or touching violations are possible. For example, first touching (NFHS 6-1-7), kick-catch interference (NFHS 6-5-6). As with a play from scrimmage, there could also be dead-ball fouls after a free-kick down ends. In summary, you must know when to sound your whistle, when to stop the clock and how to throw your flag when fouls happen in those four intervals.

**Be the Football Official to Save The Crew
If Penalty Enforcement Is NOT Correct.**

Officials Football Quiz Answers – Memo #4 (September 13, 2023 memo)

- 1 — NFHS – c (7-5-2d Pen., 8-5-2c, 10-5-4)**
- 2 — NFHS – a (3-7-1, 3-7-2)**
- 3 — NFHS – c (8-4-3)**
- 4 — NFHS – c (10-2-1b, 10.2.1A)**
- 5 — NFHS –c (2-1-1, 4-1-5)**

Officials Football Quiz Questions – Week 5 questions



2023 Football Memo – Week 5

1. First and 10 for team A from its 20-yard line. Quarterback A1 drops straight back to pass but is under pressure. B2 grabs the inside back of A1's jersey and pulls backward, bringing A1 to the ground.
 - a. No problem.
 - b. B1 is guilty of an illegal horse-collar tackle.
2. B1 makes sounds that disrupt team A's snap count.
 - a. No problem.
 - b. Foul; the penalty is five yards.
 - c. Foul; the penalty is 15 yards.
3. A1 is in possession of the ball and has a blocker A2 in front of him. B3, attempting to reach A1, hurdles A2, who has both feet on the ground.
 - a. No problem.
 - b. Foul on B3.
4. Team B is not on the field when the halftime intermission ends and the timer immediately and appropriately starts the three-minute warm-up period. Team B does not arrive on the field until the three-minute warm-up period has expired.
 - a. Team B is assessed one 15-yard penalty for not being on the field for the warm-up period and another for delaying the second half.
 - b. Team B is assessed a 15-yard penalty for not being on the field for the warm-up period and a five-yard penalty for delaying the second half.
 - c. Team B is assessed one 15-yard penalty that covers not being on the field for the warm-up period and for delaying the second half.
5. K1 punts on fourth and eight from team K's 20 yard line. Team K is flagged for an illegal formation. After the ball is dead, R2 knocks down K3.
 - a. Team R may elect to accept the distance penalty from the previous spot and a replay of the down, or accept the penalty from the dead-ball spot. The penalty for Rs's dead-ball personal foul is then enforced.
 - b. Double foul. The penalties offset and the down is replayed.

Officials Football Quiz Answers – Week 5 answers

- 1 — NFHS – b (9-4-3k)
- 2 — NFHS – b (7-1-9)
- 3 — NFHS – b (2-22, 9-4-3d)
- 4 — NFHS – c (9-8-1g-3)
- 5 — NFHS – a (10-2-1, 10-2-5a, 10-4-2 Exc., 10-2-5)