



2023 Football Memo – Week 7

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Observations Have Been Positive – Keep it up!!

- A bunch of great officiating going on out there every week. Officials are doing their best to follow proper mechanics, philosophies and communicating.
- **U** – Controls the tempo and be sure to be consistent in ball placement (goal is 28-32 seconds remaining on the play clock).
- **BJ** – We need you to get to the end line when it is threatened. If the goal line is threatened, that is the priority and then we need to make our way to the endline to be stationary to rule as seen on previous training tapes. Further, we need to turn our hips and run when the receivers are making their way downfield in routes. Never let a receiver get beyond you. On any snaps from the 15-yardline and in, our initial position is the endline and we should shift along the endline to place ourselves in optimal position to see receivers or blocks.
- **R** – Please clear yourself before announcing penalties. We are seeing referees that are lost in the crowd which makes it difficult for the press box to see, especially when the referee does not have a field mic. Let us continue to work on efficient and accurate penalty enforcement with our crews which requires excellent and comprehensive communication.
- **LOS** – We need to know the down and distance in advance during our pre-snap routine. If we are turning around to look at the stakes, we are not thinking about that information in advance.
- **LOS** – Our initial position should place us 1-2 yds off the sideline and additionally, we must ensure our sideline is clear. Coaches and players should stay out of our “office” and we will stay out theirs.
- **Crew** – We are seeing some lost focus on dead ball officiating. We are in too much of a hurry to get the new ball in many cases. Clear the area and get players where they need to be before getting a new football.
- **Crew** – Check rule 4-2-3 regarding inadvertent whistles. In most cases, the team in possession will have the option to take the result of the play or replay the down. These are entirely preventable. We cannot blow the whistle until we see leather and the ball carrier is down by rule. Secondly, we have the whistle in our mouth too much. If we want to have it in our mouth and then drop it at the snap, that is fine. However, I would recommend holding the whistle in our hand and then placing it in our mouth when we know the whistle needs to be blown. This extra time element will assist us in slowing down and hopefully will prevent inadvertent whistles. Finally, we do not want whistles coming from officials that are not covering the play. This means that back judges and umpires will blow their whistle a handful of times per game. We are seeing back judges with whistles in their mouth way too much. It is a bad feeling to blow your whistle on a pileup only to see the runner running down the sideline with the ball. Slow down! The play will kill itself and we do not want to be in a hurry to blow the whistle.
- **Crew** – Conferences with crewmates should not take place near the sideline. Move onto the field of play to have these conversations.
- **Crew** – If a coach requests clarification on a rule, they can call timeout to do so. They will get their timeout back if we reverse a rule aspect. If it is judgment or is it a rule question where we do not have a break in the action, tell the coach we will connect with you when we have the first opportunity to do so. Referees should go to the team box to have this conversation and bring the line of scrimmage official with you.



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- **Crew** – We are hearing of situations where we have encroachment on free kicks, and we are not blowing it dead quick enough or at all. Remember, we will give leniency on free kicks that are kicked away relative to encroachment. Their foot needs to be on the ground beyond K's restraining line for a foul. If it is an onside kick, we officiate K's restraining line as a plane of glass. If they break the plane, foul. If we have encroachment, come onto the field immediately and kill the play so we do not have unnecessary contact.
 - **Crew** – We still have some coaches and officials that believe that if a free kick goes out of bounds and the receiving team elects to take the ball 25 yards from the spot of the kick, then they also think they should get five more yards as they believe that is part of taking the ball five yards from the succeeding spot. That is NOT an option. Either penalize five yards and re-kick, place it five yards from the spot where the ball went OB or take it at the 35 (on the normal kick from the 40). If R does not choose to re-kick, the ball must be spotted at the inbounds spot and R does not have a choice to place the ball anywhere between the hash marks.
 - **Crew** – Work with the players during pregame for uniform or equipment concerns. If you have widespread concerns, please complete a contest report so we can address the school.
- H/LJ** – Do not nitpick on formations, encroachment, shifts or false starts. Work with the players to make them legal whenever possible. Provide a warning to the coach first if you are able. One formation warning per team in non-egregious situations.

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% every game we officiate. There is no excuse for making errors on rules enforcement and not using proper positioning and proper mechanics. We must 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 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 absolute best.

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.



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Not Just Finish – Finish Strong
All Officials Must Have Clock Awareness

Referee Football Quiz Questions

1. 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 R's dead-ball personal foul is then enforced.
 - b. Double foul. The penalties offset and the down is replayed.
2. Third and one on team A's 30-yard line. After tackling A1, B2 jumps to his feet, stands over A1 and taunts him. A1 rises and curses B2. B2 responds by cursing A1.
 - a. All of the fouls offset.
 - b. Team B is penalized 15 yards, team A is penalized 15 yards and team B is penalized B yards.
 - c. Team B is penalized 15 yards.
3. Team A is in a normal scrimmage formation. All five of team A's interior linemen lock legs.
 - a. No problem.
 - b. Locking legs is illegal under any circumstance.
 - c. The snapper and the player(s) on either side may lock legs, but no other linemen may do so.
4. Third and five on team A's 20-yard line. A1 drops back to pass. From his 10-yard line, and into a stiff wind, A1 throws the pass forward, but the wind blows back the ball to team A's five yard line, where it hits the ground.
 - a. Incomplete pass: the ball is dead.
 - b. Backward pass: the ball remains live.
5. After the referee whistles the ready, team A players move to the line and snapper A1 puts both hands on the ball. As A2 is calling signals, A1, slowly and without simulating action at the snap, removes his right hand from the ball.
 - a. Dead-ball foul, snap infraction, five yards.
 - b. No foul as long as A1 keeps at least one hand on the ball.
6. With four minutes left in the fourth quarter, team A scores a touchdown but misses the try. This makes the score, team A 6, team B 56. Team B's captain tells the referee he wishes for his team to kick off.
 - a. The request is granted; that is a legal option.
 - b. The request is denied; that is not an option.

Referee Football Quiz Answers

- 1 — NFHS — a (10-2-1, 10-2-5a, 10-4-2 Exc., 10-2-5)
- 2 — NFHS — a (2-11, 9-8-1 Pen., 10-2-5b, c)
- 3 — NFHS — c (7-2-2)
- 4 — NFHS — a (2-31-2)
- 5 — NFHS — b (7-1-3a)
- 6 — NFHS — a (8-3-9)